

A FRAMEWORK FOR
LEVERAGING COACHING APPROACH FOR
MORE EFFECTIVE PARENT ENGAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to explore the assertion that when **parent engagement** is leveraged by a **coaching approach**, it leads to improved relationships between educators and parents building a community of practice in schools with the ultimate aim of improved student outcomes. It will look at the current state of parent engagement, suggest the overlay of the instructional coaching model to influence school-parent relations then provide examples of putting this into practice in schools.

Three school executives were interviewed to ascertain if their staff training in coaching has had an impact on their relationships with parents or on school practices in relation to processes involving parents. I have included their insights in the body of this paper.

Parent Engagement

The parent engagement agenda has been embedded in education reform since the time of Gillard/Rudd/Gillard and has been applied variously by subsequent governments. More than 50 years of research in US, UK and Canada¹ confirms improved student outcomes when parents are engaged (not just involved) in their child's learning at school.

With such compelling evidence that parent engagement leads to better student outcomes in areas of achievement, behaviour and wellbeing, it begs the question why this agenda is being progressed so slowly or worse not at all. Possible reasons for resistance are the current realities of: demanding parents; overburdened schools' staff and an exigent education system with an unwavering focus on standardised testing. With so much negativity surrounding parents being involved or engaged in their child's schooling, it prompts the need for a new lever to lift the status quo for better relationships and student outcomes.

Coaching Approach

Using a coaching approach to **leverage** parent engagement may just be the game changer needed. In this paper, the underlying principles of instructional coaching are juxtaposed with similar principles of parent engagement to see where synergies exist and where they can be leveraged for greater effect.

¹ Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp (2002) A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement. Austin, Texas: National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools

SECTION 1 – the current situation

There is an unceasing negative narrative promulgated in the media characterising school parents as a problem for schools and downright dangerous for their children with headlines like:

- *Profoundly dangerous: A generation at risk from concierge parents*
- *School charter welcomed to deal with parents behaving badly*
- *Parents Behaving Badly*
- *Badly behaved parents placing more pressure on school staff*
- *Teacher knows best? Not any longer as parents muscle in on the classroom*

Parents are being chastised for their bad parenting by the media, by their own parents and now esteemed adolescent author John Marsden has even weighed in with a damning missive on the failings of parents today, titled *The Art of Growing Up*.

The negative impact of this kind of objectification is recognised in van Nieuwerburgh 2012 in the chapter on empowering parents through coaching stating that “*We share the view advocated by Guldberg (2009) that parents can often feel undermined by media stories and our safety obsessed culture. (p 133).*”

Meanwhile, the other side of the story is not so rosy either with school staff being subjected to troubling rates of bullying by parents and even students, this trend leading to higher teacher attrition, a shortage of principals and staff burnout.²

Unfortunately, this all takes place in a climate of pressurised testing regimes with an unhealthy emphasis on competition for top marks, the result being heightened anxiety in students which negatively impacts their schooling and perception of future possibilities. Van Nieuwerburgh 2012 highlights the effect of too much emphasis on extrinsic goals at the expense of self-motivation.

If people associated with schools solely value the pursuit of extrinsic goals (i.e. high academic scores equals higher education entry equals increased material wealth), then they might inadvertently be supporting misguided ambitions that could lead to disillusionment and self-destruction (Wong 1998.) (p 119)

This applies now more than ever in NSW as we see an increase in a standardised testing regime, competition around ATAR scores, literacy testing at points in education that are too late to make a difference, all of which ends up punishing students for bad teaching or socio-economic disadvantage.

Such a nail-biting educational environment instils anxiety and tension in parents who have serious concerns for the future prospects of their children which are being borne out in study after study by institutions like the Foundation for Young Australians, Grattan Institute and Mitchell Institute.

² <https://www.principalhealth.org/au/info.php>

It is not surprising then, that schools are reluctant to seek out ways to invite parents to engage in their child's learning even though the research unequivocally shows that doing so leads to improved student outcomes.³

There is no manual for educators and parents to establish and maintain good relationships in what is the highly emotional and tense environment of school. But, there have been signs of success in building effective interpersonal relationships between staff members where schools have used a 'coaching approach'. Therefore, it is worth exploring what the outcome would be if these same practices were extended to parents, to build a community of practice and go some way to alleviating the tension between schools and parents for the benefit of student achievement and wellbeing.

The next section of this paper explores the ways that a 'coaching approach' can be used to leverage parent engagement strategies and suggests a framework to underpin relationships and interactions between schools and parents.

³ <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/framework/FE-Cap-Building.pdf>

SECTION 2 – the coaching approach

In a recent tweet from the World Congress of Positive Psychology 2019, a slide from Anthony Grant's presentation confirmed that coaching "works": Mr Grant affirmed solution-focussed, goal orientated cognitive-behavioural coaching is effective and the most validated approach

- Coaching enhances goal attainment
- Coaching enhances well-being and SF thinking skills
- Effects of coaching generalise to other areas.

Knowing that coaching 'works' and seeing the benefits for staff in schools where there is a coaching culture, leads one to wonder if the same principles of coaching were applied to interactions with parents, would it empower parents to become more solution-focussed?

In fact, this was a strong point that came through in an interview with Assistant Principal of Wellbeing, Nathan Beckett. Mr Beckett spoke about his attempts to get parents to be solution focussed in difficult conversations, so that conversations which could be over in 10 minutes would no longer take an average of 40 minutes. (See Case Study One).

Naturally, parents can be very emotional when it comes to 'that difficult phone call' about their child but Mr Beckett confirmed that because of the coaching training undertaken by all of the school staff, the quality of the conversations with parents had already improved just by modelling a solution focussed approach.

The jump need not be so far to get parents on board to a 'coaching approach' since we know that by and large parents and schools share the same objective for their children. After managing hundreds of parent complaints over ten years in a diocese of fifty-six schools, it was my experience that most parents (with very few exceptions) desired the same thing for their child: fair treatment and the best outcome.

Similarly, in van Nieuwerburgh 2012 it reinforces the good intentions of teachers for students in "that coaching in education is driven by a desire to make a difference to student learning" as found by Creasy and Paterson. This is the point at which it intersects with effective parent engagement which also has as its aim to improve student achievement.

Meanwhile, schools are struggling with attaining real parent engagement. Parent involvement on the other hand persists in most schools with the same parents turning up for P&C meetings, canteen duty, reading, sports carnivals, fetes and other fundraising events. However, this does not naturally lead to effective parent engagement which happens when the interactions parents have with the school are linked to student learning. Often when parents try to get a closer 'look in' at student learning they feel sidelined. Or alternatively, if they don't fit the typical parent profile and are perceived as 'hard to reach' parents, they may be held back from engaging even though it is actually the school that is 'hard to reach'.

Is it possible then that applying the skills of coaching to interactions with parents could lead to better access on both sides? Knight and van Nieuwerburgh 2012⁴ referred to Creasy and Paterson's seminal booklet in which they identified five key skills for effective educational coaches:

- establishing rapport and trust
- listening for meaning
- questioning for understanding
- prompting action reflection and learning
- developing confidence and celebrating success

with one of the aims of this non-directive approach, to support the development of the thinking and learning processes of the professional learner.

So, what if the skills listed by Creasy and Patterson above were utilised to establish productive relationships with parents instead of the authoritative, even punitive approach educators sometimes adopt in difficult conversations with parents? If educators used these same skills to understand and develop the thinking of parents to find their own solutions or co-construct a solution as they do with other staff members or coachees, just imagine the possibilities.

The first skill mentioned by Creasy and Paterson is establishing rapport and trust. When there is trust in a relationship it grants de facto permission to engage more closely and work with the parent to develop their problem-solving and parenting skills. In a recent conversation with children's author, John Marsden, he said that so often parents appreciate the advice he gives them because they aren't getting it elsewhere. No doubt, he has spent much time and effort building trust with these parents to be able to nudge them to develop their own thinking and problem-solving.

Mr Len Nixon who works as a teacher coach in a large independent school referred to the videos on Dr Jim Knight's Instructional Coaching website during my interview with him in which Dr Knight raises the issue of prejudice by one group of teachers towards African American students, saying that "Judgment is a relationship killer". This is one example of prejudice, but is it possible that educators are prejudiced against parents as a group, forgetting to see them as individuals with hopes and dreams for their children rather in a deficit way? What chance is there of developing fruitful relationships as the precursor to effective parent engagement when the relationship is already 'killed' before it even gets a chance.

In interactions with parents, if educators overcome their inherent bias against 'pesky parents' and instead listen for meaning and question for understanding by using effective coaching style questions, they may gain valuable insight into the background or circumstances of the student and their family. Knowing this, educators are better equipped to prompt action, reflection or learning that is best-suited to their situation. When this is done well it lifts the confidence of parents and feelings of success which translates into greater success for students.

⁴ Jim Knight & Christian van Nieuwerburgh (2012) Instructional coaching: a focus on practice (p2)

Just as in teacher coaching, approaching parents with a coaching 'way of being' can lead to self-awareness and personal responsibility as in:

The coaching approach focuses on the use of powerful questions to enable parents to understand themselves and their children better; a total belief in parents' ability to succeed; asking instead of telling; the idea that people have the solutions to their problems within them, and that by owning their own solution they will be more likely to implement it. (van Neiuwerburgh p 133).

The skills of effective coaching encased in a 'coaching approach' set up positive relationships with parents which open the door to improved parent engagement.

But how can this be brought to life? How can schools create a climate and processes to enable teachers to interact with parents in a way that is non-threatening, non-judgmental but leads them to self-awareness and greater personal responsibility?

SECTION 3 – a familiar framework for a new paradigm

One way is to transpose the familiar framework of instructional coaching onto the principles for effective parent engagement. The Instructional coaching model is an appropriate one to use to shape relationships between educators and parents since it respects the ‘professionalism’ of the coachee even though the coach has knowledge or expertise the coachee may not. This sets up “an authentic partnership between equals and not a relationship between an expert and a novice”⁵ unlike other forms of traditional training which can undermine the recipient’s willingness to change.

Teachers have the knowledge of the curriculum, the content taught in the classroom and even the way a child behaves in class which is why the instructional coaching model which recognises that “instructional coaches **teach** others how to learn very specific, evidence-based teaching practices

Mid-2018, ACER reported its findings from *Measuring Parent Engagement*, one of which pointed to the perceptions of teachers around parent capacity for effective engagement in their child’s learning which found that

- only 40% of primary school teachers and 31% of secondary school teachers agreed that **parents understood how to support their children’s learning**
- only 27% of primary school teachers and 17% of secondary school teachers agreed that **parents reinforced at home what their children were learning at school**
- only 22% of secondary school teachers agreed that parents **understand the work given to their children** compared to 65% of primary school teachers

This shows that there is a need for teachers to help parents engage in their child’s learning but to do so in a way that is not perceived as authoritarian, judgmental or even dismissive. The ‘partnership approach’ of Instructional Coaching easily transposes into a Parent Engagement Framework which when applied to relationships and interactions with parents, opens up a new way to build a community of practice, one that supports student growth and achievement.

This rubric shows how the principles of Instructional Coaching relate to Effective Parent Engagement:

<i>Instructional Coaching Principles</i>	<i>Parent Engagement Principles</i>
Equality – everyone’s thoughts and beliefs as valuable	Parents as Equal Partners
Choice – individuals make their own choices, they are not made for them	Parents as first educators
Dialogue – engage in conversation to learn together to arrive at decisions	Co-constructors
Praxis – putting ideas into practice to derive their own meaning	Meaningful engagement
Voice – opportunities for all to express their point of view	Parent knowledge
Reciprocity – recognising that success benefits everyone and so everyone is there to learn	Leveraged outcomes

⁵ Ibid p 4

Following is a breakdown of the principles of parent engagement:

Parents as equal partners – though educators and parents may have different backgrounds and experience, no one is above the other when it comes to seeking the best outcomes for students. This principle recognises the professionalism of teachers and the role of parents as first educators of their child, that their voices need to be ‘heard’ and valued in a way that maintains their place as parent and not imitation of a teacher.⁶ It reinforces that everyone’s thoughts and beliefs are valued since both parties bring different expertise to the relationship.

1) Leveraging the knowledge of both educators and parents leads to greater insight into the best outcomes for the student.

Parents as first educators

That children have already amassed a stockpile of learning and experience even before they enter pre-school or formal schooling recognises the critical role a parent has already played and will continue to play in their formation long after the student’s school experience is finished. Amy Graham (PHD) came to see that “parents/carers are a child’s first and forever teacher and so what they invest alongside the environment they create during these formative years affects the scope and extent to which the school can make a difference”.⁷ And yet more than half of educators surveyed admit that parents are not equipped with the skills they need for effective engagement.⁸

2) Schools showing parents how to ‘invest’ and opening up opportunities for this to happen will leverage the school’s ability to make a difference.

Co-constructors

Ms Graham also says that schools have a “responsibility to leverage parents’ knowledge and understand the beliefs or activities to which children have been exposed”. Understanding the context of a child’s background provides a base point from which schools can build on the child’s learning more effectively. Powerful questioning to decipher meaning and expectations aids the educator in constructing or co-constructing a learning agenda that responds to the context of the student but is also aspirational.

3) Schools have an opportunity to raise expectations of parents and see the capabilities of their child in a different way.

Meaningful engagement

Most schools invite parents into the life of the school through volunteering, classroom, sport or excursion activities. Such involvement activities can enrich relationships between the parent and the school but do not necessarily positively impact student achievement. For this to happen there needs to be the intention that the activity is linked to student learning which is what differentiates parent engagement from parent involvement.

4) Schools can introduce parents into ways of engagement that suit their context, present a real value proposition and lead to defined outcomes so that parents can choose to engage in a way that is relevant for them and their child.

⁶ The Wiley Handbook of Family, School, and Community Relationships in Education 2018

⁷ Graham, Amy, AEL Vol 41, Term 3 2019 pp 52-55

⁸ Measuring Parent Engagement

Parent knowledge

Most parents are not experts in the curriculum, the way schools are run or even their child's behaviour in the classroom and so benefit from the educator's knowledge, but they do have specific knowledge about their child which when combined with teacher knowledge makes a powerful combination (Pushor 2015). Parents also have knowledge of the world outside of school which can be accessed to improve the relevance of the school offering. The school can provide opportunities for the parent voice to be heard and included especially in the areas of vocational and post-school planning.

5) It is by listening that both parties gain 'new knowledge' from the interaction which ultimately benefits the student.

Leveraged outcomes

Bringing all voices to the table and recognising the value of their contribution, leads to joint learning which contributes to the design and implementation of high-quality parent engagement instruments.

6) A community of practice is built when parents are invited to the table, inducted into new ways of learning and when the school is open to and integrates their insights about their child and the wider world.

Coaching Culture

The lintel of the *Partnership with Parents* framework is the coaching culture which holds it altogether. Van Nieuwerburgh and Passmore (2012) define a coaching culture for learning as one in which coaching...

'is used consistently by all partners across the school community, to help develop learning, understanding and personal responsibility in others from staff to parents and from students to governors and wider stakeholders'

They are unequivocal about including all partners across the entire school community as stakeholders in growing a coaching culture thereby building a community of practice.

In summary

1. Leveraging the knowledge of both educators and parents leads to greater insight into the best outcomes for the student.
2. Schools showing parents how to 'invest' and opening up opportunities for this to happen will leverage the school's ability to make a difference.
3. Educators have the opportunity to raise expectations of parents and see the capabilities of their child in a different way.
4. Schools can introduce parents into ways of engagement that suit their context, present a value proposition and lead to defined outcomes so that parents can choose to engage in a way that is relevant for them and their child.
5. When the voice of parents is heard, schools gain 'new knowledge' which ultimately benefits the student.
6. A community of practice is built when parents are invited to the table, inducted into new ways of learning and when the school is open to and integrates their insights about their child and the wider world.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS - FRAMEWORK



SECTION 4 – partnership in practice

This section of the paper focusses on the practical application of coaching and parent engagement principles so that over time communities of practice are built up.

In interviews with schools' staff, there were examples of places where the 'coaching approach' or coaching 'way of being' were having an impact on school/parent interactions even though parents had not been formally inducted into coaching principles or practices.

Constructive Conversations

Assistant Principal, Nathan Beckett stressed that because of their coaching training, staff were more willing to have **difficult conversations** with parents, his dream being that parents too would be inducted into how to have quality conversations. Even so, he noted that the quality of conversations with parents has already improved.

Modelling coaching

Mr Greg Elliott, principal at an all-girls school, spoke about how he modelled a coaching approach to parents in **interviews** with students and parents where he finds it helpful to employ the hope acceptance theory. This is particularly powerful since as Hattie⁹ has explained, the most positive influence parents can have on their child's educational experience is to share their hopes and aspirations and help their child shape their own hopes and aspirations.

Mr Elliott noted that he used coaching style questions in letters to students, and coaching questions are reflected in the report proforma with the aim to train teachers to use coaching questions in parent/teacher interviews.

Instructional Coaching

Mr Nixon has found parent nights with a focus on demonstrating the skills of coaching have been very successful. Framed as: how to have difficult conversations with your son or daughter, the evenings showcase the elements of a conversation using the Growth Coaching International model, including style of questioning and language. The evenings have an emphasis on demonstrating the skills of framing good questions for parents to help their children with anxiety particularly during HSC period as well as giving parents the tools to calibrate their expectations for their child and their child's expectations.

There is an infinite number of ways that a coaching approach can leverage parent engagement strategies to lift the quality of the parent engagement experience to positively impact student achievement and wellbeing.

So, I leave you with this challenge. Are you ready to shift your coaching approach and skills over to your interactions with parents?

⁹ <https://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/>

If the answer is yes, then it is important to understand that it will require a concerted effort on the part of all staff. In most cases this will be a foreign concept to parents, not what they are expecting and not the way that they are used to communicating with their school.

Therefore, there will be a need for ongoing communication to parents about the approach, the processes, the success indicators, the language, the goals, the aspirations, the reality, the purpose, the suspicions, (for the haters who think it is just a pop phase).

Because when parents feel like outsiders it can lead to

- Sniping in the carpark
- Social media disasters
- Dysfunctional relationships between schools' staff and the community
- Legal cases – like the Queensland principal who because of her inviolability managed to alienate a whole segment of parents causing so much angst for her own family, the other families, people's lives, and businesses were ruined¹⁰
- More disturbingly disenfranchised students

It is recognised that implementing a coaching approach across the school builds professional learning communities and it is hoped that extending similar induction and inculturation to parents of a coaching approach will eventually lead to the formation of communities of practice.

¹⁰ https://www.smh.com.au/national/the-new-school-bullies-aren-t-children-they-re-parents-20190416-p51ej1.html?fbclid=IwAR28UCCP6lI8QVq_dGR47kGZyGoS98c54f4NmCAf18PIO4LRYd78EcMB9Ys

EXAMPLES OF LEVERAGED PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Asset	Progress Scale		One thing to move toward goal
	Current	Goal	
P&C Meetings	1	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate a strategic planning meeting with the P&C executive using GROWTH model.
Parent/Teacher interviews	2	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model coaching questions for parents with students around their educational goals and reality.
Staff induction on handling difficult parents			
Newsletter communication			
Curriculum support			
Strategic planning			
School improvement			
Positive Parenting			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gratitude exercises for parents about their child Parent evening on how to use coaching style questions to help your child with their study, subject choices, anxiety
Difficult Conversations			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model coaching approach Curious listening, listening for meaning
Satisfaction surveys			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frame questions in a way that is solution-focused
Complaints			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> publish solution-focused complaints policy with induction for parents

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CASE STUDY ONE – SAN CLEMENTE HIGH SCHOOL MAYFIELD, NSW

INTERVIEWED:	Mr Nathan Beckett, Assistant Principal, Wellbeing
GROWTH COACHING AT SCHOOL SINCE:	
NUMBER OF STAFF TRAINED:	All staff upskilled
MAJOR DEPLOYMENT OF METHOD:	

When speaking with Mr Nathan Beckett, AP, Wellbeing a few themes emerged:

- It has been beneficial to have the whole staff inducted into GCI to lead to quality conversations
- It has impacted the way that staff interacts with parents but there are still impediments in that parents do not tend to be solution-focussed
- Inducting P&Fs into coaching model would be a good start and might attract more parents
- There could be an opportunity for parent evenings to learn how to have quality conversations with their children
- This could lead to more positive connections with parents, teachers and students.

Mr Beckett said that they trained the leaders and then the rest of the staff. He confirmed that it is most effective to train all staff so that they are equipped to engage in quality coaching conversations with even a basic level of skill.

It is used for professional development, as part of accreditation to build staff members' professional skills. This helps them to be clearer about their goals, and while it can be challenging it is easier in the long run.

When it comes to difficult conversations with parents, staff members are now more willing to have difficult conversations. But because parents aren't versed in the language or skills of coaching conversations that should take 10 minutes can take up to 40 minutes. It would definitely be "a good outcome" for parents to be on the same page, Mr Beckett said it would be his "dream for parents to know how to have quality conversations". Still, the quality of conversations with parents has definitely improved due to the enhanced skills of staff and team towards solution.

As a parent, Mr Beckett has observed P&F meetings that have "bad quality" conversations and "the market is there" to induct them into a coaching approach. He felt that to "engage with P&Fs would be a good start" but questioned how that could happen. When P&F meetings are boring or confronting, demonstrating a coaching approach, or using coaching skills could attract more parents to come along to learn new skills. This could potentially build positive connections for teachers and parents as well.

Other opportunities to employ a coaching approach are:

- Parent/teacher interviews
- P&F meetings to build common goals
- Evening sessions – newsletters

CASE STUDY TWO – CAROLINE CHISHOLM COLLEGE, GLENMORE NSW

INTERVIEWED: 30 th April 2019	Mr Greg Elliott, Principal
GROWTH COACHING AT SCHOOL SINCE:	
STAFF TRAINED:	All staff completed Introduction to Coaching 32 accredited coaches
MAJOR DEPLOYMENT OF METHOD:	Main methods of employing coaching are 'goal buddies' among teaching staff, and in learning interventions with students.

In my interview with Greg Elliott the following themes emerged:

- The strategy has been to use coaching language on students in front of their parents to demonstrate the technique
- The use of “geurilla coaching” to engage parents more meaningfully at the point of need
- Promoting a strengths-based approach to parents for their student (VIA survey)
- Aligning reports to coaching principles and encouraging parents to use GCI style questions

One way the school has used coaching with parents is in the language in interviews and meetings. They will coach students in front of their parents in interviews about complex learning needs, attendance, social issues. This encourages parents and students to imagine different futures, with reality check-in being modelled. Coaching kids about their reality gives parents insight. Staff members use a hope centred approach.

The school holds parent forums once a month. One such example was a mental health first aid course which used a strengths-based format to engage with parents and students. The format for the evening included a presentation by staff, followed by table talking with stimulus of hypothetical cards for hypothetical situations to provoke conversation. These sessions are designed to acknowledge and honour parent expertise while assisting them to expand their thinking and skills.

Coaching questions are used in letters to students and reflected in the report proforma. The school is encouraging parents to have the conversation with their daughters using GCI style questions. Mr Elliott indicated the desire to shift parent/teacher interviews in the future to a coaching style as well. The ideal would be to train teachers to use coaching questions in parent/teacher interviews and to give parents the tools to have learning conversations in the home.

In discussion about a ‘preferred future’ we spoke about the prospect of a parent forum to introduce coaching philosophy and techniques to parents – how to talk to your kids, what a framework for that would look like along the lines of ‘coaching for learning’ and how to attract parents along to such an event.

Follow-Up

Mr Elliott included a comprehensive set of questions based on the GROWTH model in a letter sent home to parents with the Term 3 2019 reports.

CASE STUDY THREE – BARKER COLLEGE, SYDNEY NSW

INTERVIEWED:	Mr Len Nixon, Teacher Coach
GROWTH COACHING AT SCHOOL SINCE:	
STAFF TRAINED:	
MAJOR DEPLOYMENT OF METHOD:	

In my interview with Len Nixon the following themes emerged:

- A coaching culture at their school is embedded on a scale of 1 to 10 around 5.5 to 6
- Introducing coaching skills to parents in evening forums has been very effective
- That schools are communities which are strengthened at all levels by having quality conversations

The school ran a parent night on how to have difficult conversations with your son or daughter with a focus on the elements of a conversation using their model of GCI. There was an emphasis on skills for parents to help their children with anxiety during trials to HSC period. The seminar was attended by 120 parents and included role-play scenarios which were very positive because of the style of questioning and language used. Some parents have unrealistic expectations about their child and this process assists them to be more realistic while it is understood it is still not for every parent.

Mr Nixon spoke about how embedded the coaching culture is giving it a 5.5 to 6 on a scale of 1 to 10. He stressed the importance of focussing on the 'winnables' on the staff (usually the younger ones) to embed a coaching culture. This plays a huge role in how it brings into conversation the notions of fairness and equality and learning to expound strengths. This then impacts relationship with more cynical teachers tending to capture the shoulder group.

Mr Nixon spoke about the video series by Dr Jim Knight featured on the Instructional Coaching website and the importance of having a set of habits that includes empathy, listening, being in the moment, honesty and trust as featured in the videos and when these are in place it builds trust in all relationships, with staff and with parents.

<https://www.instructionalcoaching.com/videos/>

He also observed it would be useful for the P&C to facilitate a coaching style of goal setting meeting drawing on the culture of the school to impact interactions. Could be useful for goal setting, strategic planning, also to get better parenting, and better relationships with their kids.

Mr Nixon indicated there is still a need to do more of it and referred to the Canary theory Thomas Kuhn of a complete paradigm shift, a conceptual change.

His final comments focussed on the need for people to be prepared to invest the time in having the relationship, by *just checking in, on a scale where are we, how are you doing?* He said that Schools are communities and are strengthened through their conversations.