



# Coached UPDATE

## APRIL 2023

Enhancing the quality of conversations in education communities

### TIME TO READ: 5MINS

#### BECOMING A CONVERSATION LEADER

##### Conversation is at the heart of learning and leading

Every interaction between members of a school community presents an opportunity to enhance learning, growth and progress. More broadly, it is becoming clear that the skill of facilitating positive conversations is an important professional practice for all educators, leaders and other staff in schools and that these conversations are best facilitated in a way that brings the key elements of coaching into play. It has been said that education is the natural home of coaching because coaching and education are both about helping people learn, grow and develop (Campbell & van Nieuwerburgh, 2018, p.3).

Traditional theories of leadership tend to focus on who or what the leader is, or does, and locate leadership within the individual. In contrast, conversational approaches focus on the relationship that takes place between a leader and followers (Walker & Aritz, 2014; Groysberg & Slind, 2012).

Conversations are the medium through which leadership is lived out in schools. Fundamentally, change will be enabled or inhibited by how we talk, and what we talk about. So, what do we need to consider

*"All leaders are leading language communities. Though every person, in any setting, has some opportunity to influence the nature of the existing language rules, leaders have exponentially greater access and opportunity to shape, alter or ratify."*

Kegan & Lahey, 2002, p.8

##### Shifting stance in conversations

The concept of a 'continuum' of learning conversations (Munro, 2020) has emerged as a helpful way of thinking about the contexts, roles and intent of the conversations that take place in educational settings. The 'conversation leader' adopts a range of intentional 'stances' along this continuum in order to best support the learning and progress of their conversation partner at any given time.

This may be by providing direction, advice or instruction, or not. In other words, it refers to the degree to which their voice and agenda feature in the conversation, intentionally or otherwise.

Dictionary definitions of the word 'stance' offer two meanings, both of which are appropriate in this context. The first, a way of standing or being placed, or our posture or pose. This could literally mean how one positions oneself during the conversation. In relation to the concept of shifting stance along a continuum from **less directive to more directive**, we need to interpret stance more figuratively as how one positions oneself in terms of our contribution to the conversation as it unfolds. This may be influenced by the second meaning of the word: stance as an intellectual or emotional attitude or way of thinking about something.

Stance in a learning conversation is a combination of how the conversation leader consciously 'shows-up' – their **way of being**; and what they do in the conversation – how they use coaching techniques to support the thinking and progress of their partner.

##### Being discerning: a key skill of an effective conversation leader

Adopting and shifting stance in any given conversational context requires the conversation leader to be **discerning**. Here, discerning means the ability to notice the context and adopt an appropriate stance. We need to be able to accurately discern what is needed from us, at the outset and as the conversation unfolds. Being discerning also helps the conversation leader to be clear on the **purpose or intent** of different conversations in different contexts. A discerning conversation leader demonstrates high levels of emotional intelligence, particularly self-awareness, and has finely tuned **noticing skills** that enable them to subtly shift their stance in the moment.

Some key questions that help the conversation leader discern the stance required are:

- What kind of conversation does this need to be? (e.g., more or less directive / more or less formal)
- What is my intent in this conversation?
- What does my conversation partner want or expect?
- What does my conversation partner [really] need from me?
- Is this an opportunity to amplify learning?
- What am I noticing as the conversation progresses? About myself? About my conversation partner?
- Do I need to shift stance?
- Does this need to become a different kind of conversation?

##### The benefits of becoming a more effective conversation leader

In short, this people-centred way of leading enhances **relational trust**, empowers others and enhances **wellbeing** through more **agency-enabling** conversations that support **progress**.

Anyone can be a conversation leader, regardless of their position. We can all learn to do this more effectively and in turn foster more trusting relationships that support progress-oriented dialogue resulting in positive impact on the success and wellbeing of students, staff, and their communities.

When we view organisations (like schools and other educational settings) as living, dynamic networks of people communicating with one another to pursue common goals, then it makes sense to focus on improving those conversations. As Judith Glaser has commented:

*"To get to the next level of greatness depends on the quality of our culture, which depends on the quality of our relationships, which depends on the quality of our conversations. Everything happens through conversations."* (Glaser, 2014, p.5).

If you are interested in going deeper and learning how to do this well in formal and informal conversational contexts, our new **Coaching in Leadership** course is designed to do just that! Find out more about the course [here](#).

This Short Read is an abridged and edited version of an article by John Campbell and Chris Munro written for the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) member journal – Australian Educational Leader (AEL) - Vol 44 Issue 4 2022 pp.28-32.

You can access the full version of this article [here](#).

For membership and subscription details please visit the ACEL website [here](#).

##### References

Campbell, J. & van Nieuwerburgh, C. (2018). The Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools: Creating conditions for effective learning. Corwin.

Glaser, J. (2014). Conversational intelligence - how great leaders build trust & get extraordinary results. Bibliomotion.

Groysberg, B., & Slind, M. (2012). Talk inc: How trusted leaders use conversation to power their organizations. Harvard Business Review Press.

Kegan, R. & Lahey, L. (2002). How the way we talk can change the way we work. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Munro, C. (2020). A Continuum of Professional Learning Conversations: Coaching, Mentoring and Everything in Between. CollectiVED [11] pp.37-42. Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University.

Walker, R., & Aritz, J. (2014). Leadership talk: A discourse approach to leader emergence. New York, New York: Business Expert Press.



### #COACHED2023

Last month, GCI held the **8th Coaching in Education Conference** online. The event was a great success, and saw educators from around the world come together to learn, connect and be inspired!

Hear from some of our conference attendees about their key takeouts from the event:

*"The great passion and knowledge of presenters as well as the ease in sharing this information. Coaching is the most exciting field I have ever been in, I feel even more energised now after attending the conference and would love to connect with more people within the field!"*

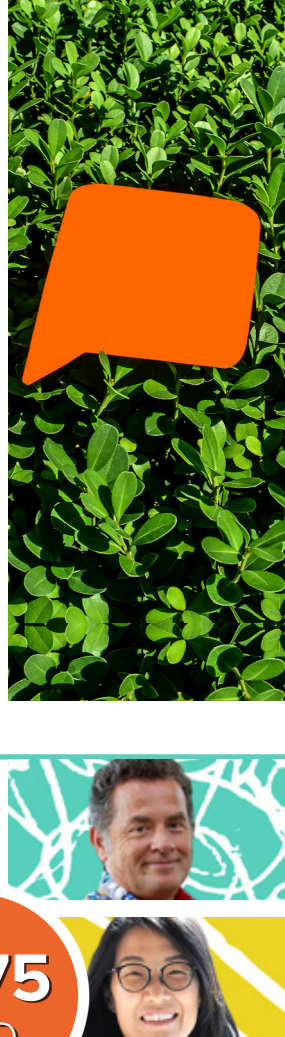
- Rinda Strydom, Occupational Therapy Team Leader and GCI Trained Coach, Goodstart Early Learning, WA

*"Sharing experiences with other colleagues. Getting to watch keynotes from the best in the business!"*

- Matt Hyden, Curriculum Leader, Elisabeth Murdoch College, VIC

*"Haesun Moon's session was exceptional! Gave me an ongoing frame in which to move my coaching conversations forward."*

- Tony Diaczok, Coach and Mentor, Holroyd High School, NSW



### CONFERENCE ON-DEMAND TICKET

Missed out on the live event, but would still like to see the sessions from the conference?

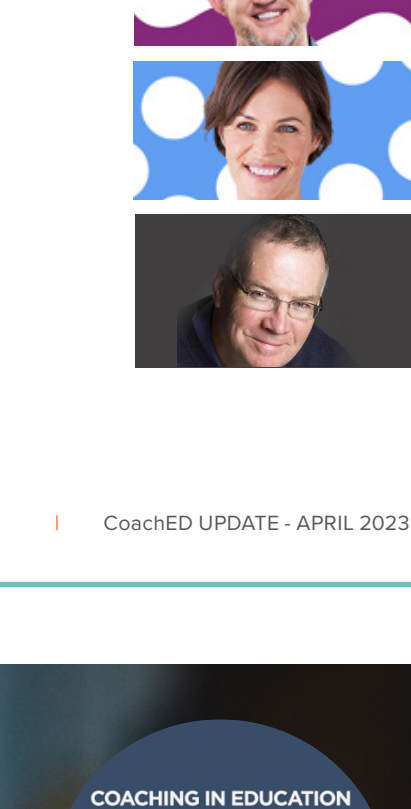
We are pleased to offer an **On-Demand Ticket** comprising access to recordings of ALL conference sessions!

The On-Demand Ticket includes more than **36 hours of content**, including recordings of:

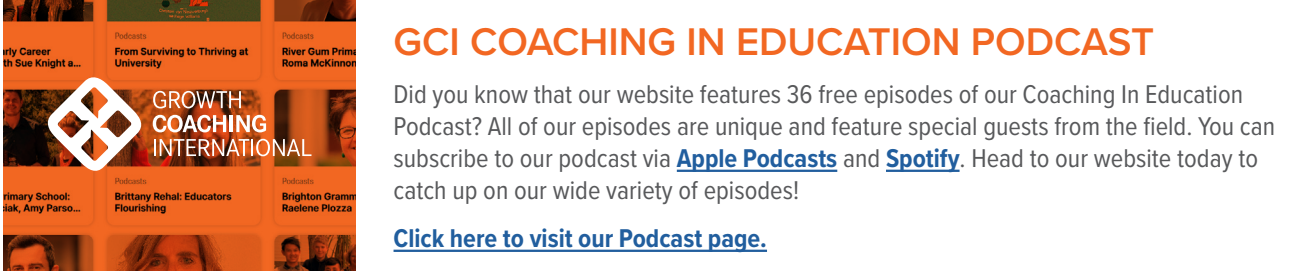
- 5 Keynote presentations, including inspiring sessions from **Haesun Moon** and **Michael Bungay Stanier**
- 15 workshops, led by **expert facilitators**
- 12 stories from fellow educators **making an impact** in their contexts
- 4 Research case studies, led by the team at **CollectiVED**

**SECURE YOUR TICKET NOW!**

Access to recordings will be available from the time of purchase until the Event Lobby closes on 10th September 2023. \*no live content included.



**\$175**  
AUD



### GCI COACHING IN EDUCATION PODCAST

Did you know that our website features 36 free episodes of our Coaching In Education Podcast? All of our episodes are unique and feature special guests from the field. You can subscribe to our podcast via [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#). Head to our website today to catch up on our wide variety of episodes!

[Click here to visit our Podcast page.](#)

### AEL ARTICLE: COACHING AS A WAY OF LEADING

As mentioned in our short read, the following is an article by John Campbell and Chris Munro written for the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) member journal – Australian Educational Leader (AEL) - Vol 44 Issue 4 2022 pp.28-32.

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### HOPE AND ITS IMPACT: TIPS ON THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW

Written by John Campbell

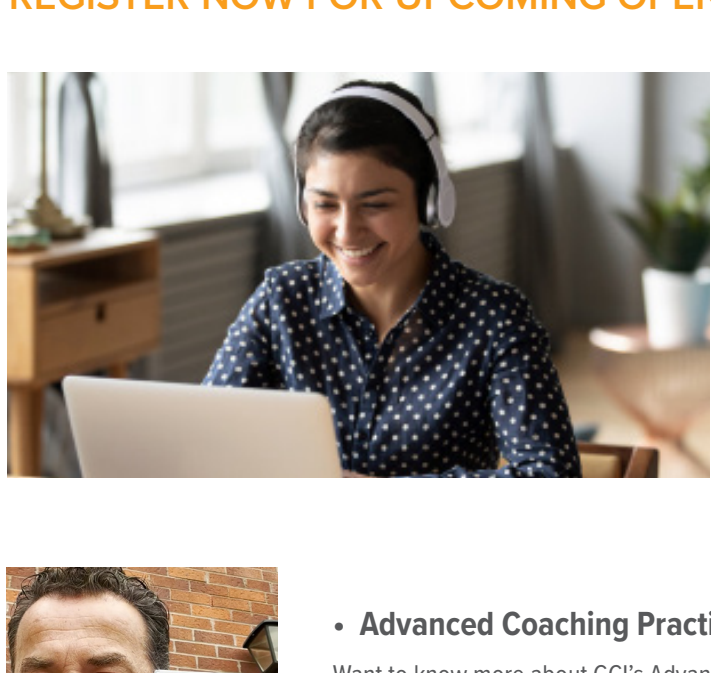
Hope is a lofty concept - a bit elusive and hard to measure. It is something nice to aspire to and enjoy but not something to think about all that much perhaps. There is too much to do in the present to hope about the future so we just get on with it.

Well it seems that there may be more to hope than just 'wishful thinking'...

[Read the full article here.](#)



### REGISTER NOW FOR UPCOMING OPEN-ENROLMENT COURSES:



#### • A Coaching Approach to Managing Challenging Conversations

This course develops skills and confidence to effectively lead the different types of difficult conversations such as managing under-performance, giving sensitive feedback and change management.

It is particularly suitable for those in leadership and managerial roles seeking to develop skills to effectively manage challenging workplace conversations.

[Click here to secure a place at an upcoming cohort in your area!](#)



#### • Advanced Coaching Practice with Prof. Christian van Nieuwerburgh

Want to know more about GCI's Advanced Coaching Practice program? Prof. Christian van Nieuwerburgh has made the following short [video](#) explaining the program.

This course is for experienced coaches who are interested in taking their practice to the next level. It is designed to support active reflection on your current coaching practice leading to new insight and awareness. The course, based on the book *Advanced Coaching Practice* co-authored by Professor Christian van Nieuwerburgh and David Love, will support you to address the question "how can I be of even better service to those around me?"

Our next cohort commences on 9th May 2023 - [click here](#) to register.

### NEW COURSE FOR CURRENT & ASPIRING LEADERS

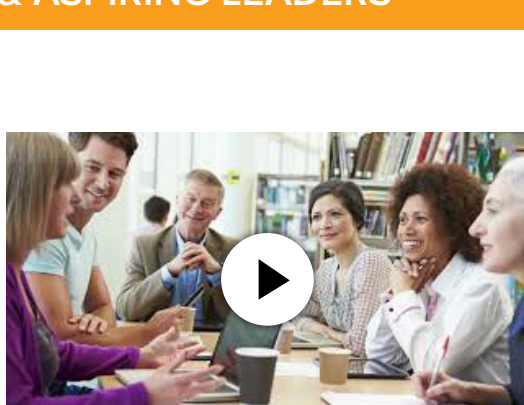
#### Coaching in Leadership: Energising Every Conversation

Coaching in Leadership is a new leadership development course that builds the confidence and skills to develop coaching as a way of leading.

Learn how to use a coaching approach to build engagement, make progress and strengthen relationships, in every conversation.

Designed specifically for current and aspiring leaders in educational settings, this new course offers an extended cohort learning experience in three phases over 3-4 months.

**Register Now!**



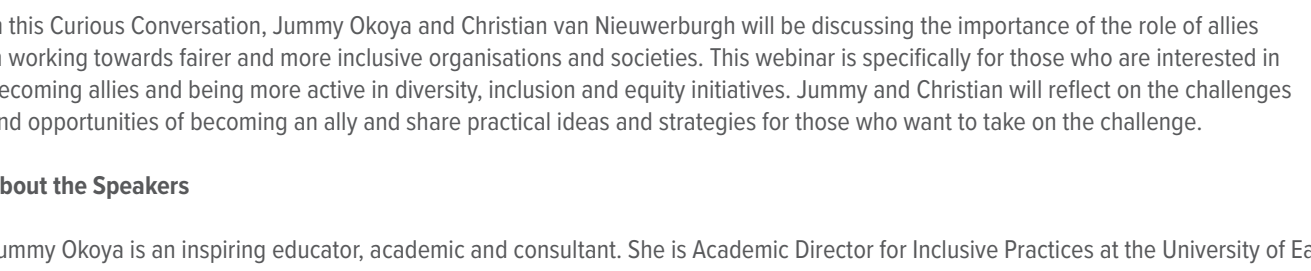
Visit the above video to view our **Coaching in Leadership - Course Overview**

Online:	In-person:
<b>A Coaching Approach to Mentoring</b> <span>FEATURED</span> Commencing 15 August 2023 1 day online workshop - 3 x 2hr sessions	<b>The Impact Cycle Program 2-day</b> Brisbane - Commencing 26 April 2023 Canberra - Commencing 14 June 2023 Geelong - Commencing 14 June 2023 Brisbane - Commencing 24 July 2023
<b>Introduction to Leadership Coaching</b> Commencing 3 May 2023 - AEST 2 x 1 day online workshops	<b>Managing Challenging Conversations</b> <span>FEATURED</span> Sydney - Commencing 22 May 2023 Melbourne - Commencing 25 July 2023 Brisbane - Commencing 28 July 2023
<b>Reflective Practice for Coaches and Leaders</b> Cohort 1 - Commencing 10 May 2023 Please see website for details *This course has pre-requisite requirements	<b>Introduction to Leadership Coaching 2-day</b> Darwin - Commencing 4 May 2023 Brisbane - Commencing 15 May 2023 Melbourne - Commencing 24 May 2023 Newcastle - Commencing 24 May 2023 Sydney - Commencing 24 May 2023 Warrnambool - Commencing 31 May 2023 Hobart - Commencing 15 June 2023 Canberra - Commencing 22 June 2023 <span>FEATURED</span>
<b>Advanced Coaching Practice</b> <span>FEATURED</span> Commencing 9 May 2023 - AEST 3 x 2hr fortnightly online workshops	<b>Coaching and Supervision</b> Scheduled to suit you

[Click here for NZ courses](#)

\*Please ensure you meet eligibility requirements of the course prior to registering.

Be sure to **click on the dates** to visit the registration pages!



### Allyship: Taking a Stand for Fairer and More Equal Societies

Wednesday 24th May 2023 at 8:30am BST / 5:30pm AEST

In this Curious Conversation, Jummy Okoya and Christian van Nieuwerburgh will be discussing the importance of the role of allies in working towards fairer and more inclusive organisations and societies. This webinar is specifically for those who are interested in becoming allies and being more active in diversity, inclusion and equity initiatives. Jummy and Christian will reflect on the challenges and opportunities of becoming an ally and share practical ideas and strategies for those who want to take on the challenge.

**About the Speakers**

Jummy Okoya is an inspiring educator, academic and consultant. She is Academic Director for Inclusive Practices at the University of East London in the UK. Jummy is a Senior Lecturer at the University where she specialises in diversity and inclusion and employee wellbeing and coaching at the Royal Docks School of Business and Law. She chairs the Women's Network which focuses on promoting gender parity and addressing issues affecting women in higher education. Jummy works with several leading UK Business schools in shaping their EDI strategy (Cambridge Judge Business School, Oxford Said Business school, UCL, Imperial College Business School).

Christian van Nieuwerburgh is a coach, academic and thought leader in the field of coaching in education. He is Global Director at Growth Coaching International, Professor of Coaching and Positive Psychology at the Centre for Positive Health Sciences at RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences in Dublin, Ireland and Principal Fellow at the Centre for Wellbeing Science of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne. Christian has written about intercultural sensitivity in coaching and has a deep interest in equity, diversity and inclusion.

[Register here.](#)