

A MANIFESTO

THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE, EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF COACHING

The manifesto is designed to plant seeds I hope will blossom into innovative projects as a result of the conversations among this web community.

It is based on input from the participants at the 2006 ICF Research Symposium—particularly members of the Research 301 workshop—and it incorporates recommendations from a paper I presented with Diane Stober at the 2005 Australia Conference on Evidence Based Coaching (Drake & Stober, 2005¹). An original draft was circulated to members of the former Research & Development Committee of ICF in 2007; it has been updated to include my more recent work (Drake, 2008a², 2008b³, in-press⁴). The structure of the manifesto is based on two models (see Figures 1 and 2) I've developed as meta-frames for understanding the developmental path for coaching and coaches.

I used the five key elements in Figure 2 as the categories for the data from the Symposium participants. I also reframed the content from declarative statements to provocative questions to inspire a more generative dialogue and the uptake of these ideas into new practices. I've noted questions from my papers in *italics* to distinguish them from those drawn from the participants in order to preserve the integrity of the Symposium data. It is my hope that this document will be used in connecting people who are engaged in coaching around the world and who want to support one another in advancing our collective practice and profession.

It is written with some sense of urgency as the complexities around both coaching (what is it?) and the world (where is it going?) continue to grow. I fully recognize that the questions we've raised here are large, each a major project in its own right. The questions are designed to spark new thinking, new projects and new programs that will support coaching to rise to the challenges and opportunities it now faces. The manifesto is grounded in a hope that you will find a question that shifts your thinking, evokes your courage, and inspires you to boldly be/do something on behalf of the larger coaching and global community.

Blessings,



¹ Drake, D. B., & Stober, D. R. (2005). *The rise of the postprofessional: Lessons learned in thinking about coaching as an evidence-based practice*. Paper presented at the Australia Conference on Evidence-Based Coaching.

² Drake, D. B. (2008a). Evidence in action: A relational view of knowledge and mastery in coaching. In K. Gørtz & A. Prehn (Eds.), *Coaching in perspective*. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel Publishers.

³ Drake, D. B., & Brennan, D. (2008b). Grounds for hope: Critical conversations on the future of coaching. In K. Gørtz & A. Prehn (Eds.), *Coaching in perspective*. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Publishers.

⁴ Drake, D. B. (in press). Finding our way home: Coaching's search for identity in a new era. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*.

COACHING MASTERY: KNOWLEDGE, RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE

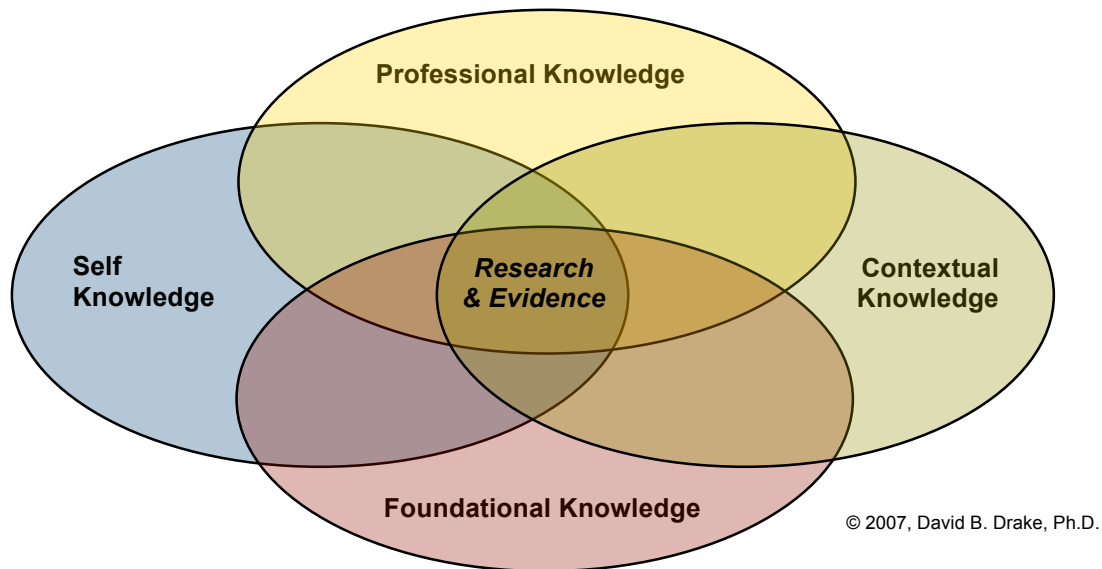
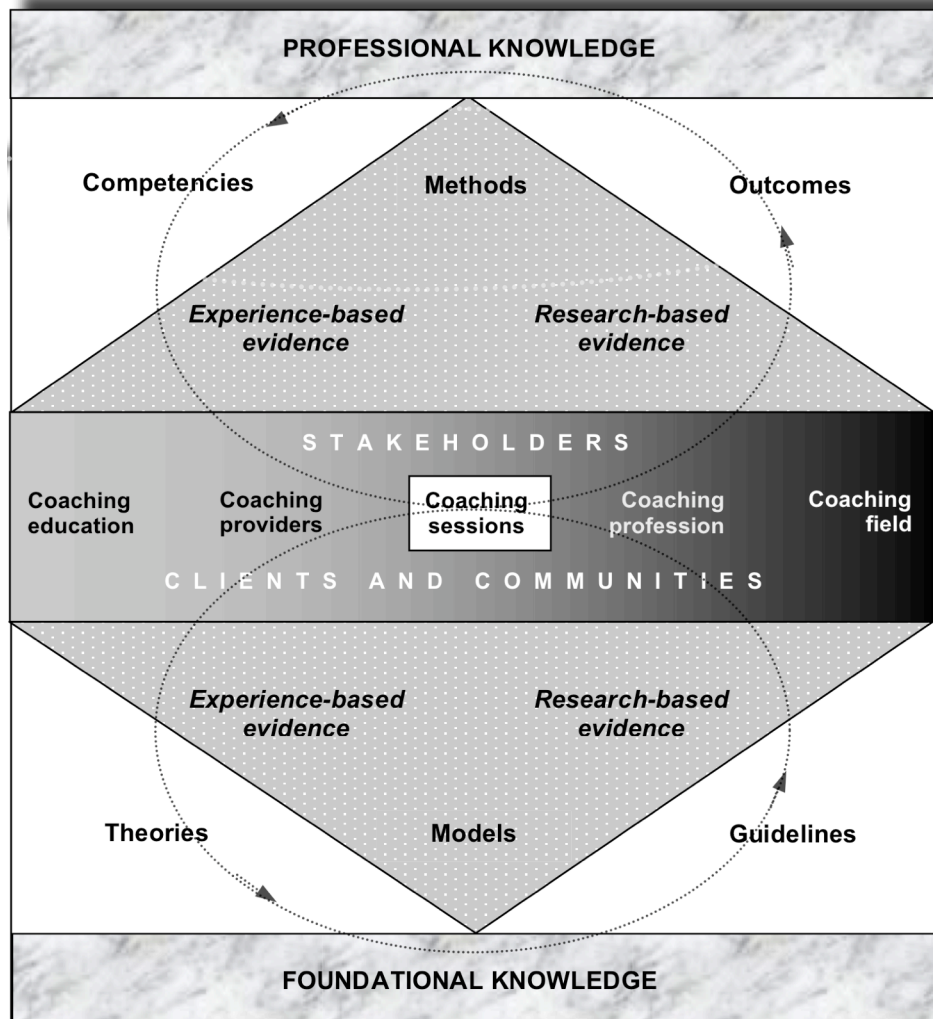


Figure 1: Four domains of knowledge for coaching mastery

1. **Foundational Knowledge:** Theories, models, and guidelines based on research and scholarship from the basic and applied sciences that inform choices in coaching.
2. **Professional Knowledge:** Competencies and methods based on research and scholarship by practitioners as they engage in coaching and reflect on outcomes.
3. **Self Knowledge:** Awareness, maturity and wisdom based on the personal development of practitioners and clients as they participate in coaching.
4. **Contextual Knowledge:** Subject matter expertise, organizational savvy and strategies based on a systemic understanding of the client's issues and objectives in coaching.
5. **Research & Evidence:** The task of research, after generating new knowledge or understanding, is to determine what this knowledge might mean. Coaches also need to practice both rigor and vigor in making explicit the evidential bases for their practices—including both evidence drawn from experience (clients and coaches) and evidence drawn from research (basic and applied).

INFORMED PRACTICE: THE FLOW OF KNOWLEDGE AND EVIDENCE



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Figure 2: A model for coaching as a postprofessional practice

THE RESEARCH AGENDA

1. What elemental questions about research do we need to address this year?

- a. How should we (re)define “research” as it relates to coaching given that the word must encompass a wide spectrum of needs and capacities in the coaching world?
- b. How do we know what we know in coaching research and theory development? How can we clarify the epistemological, ontological, and philosophical basis for coaching?
- c. How can we increase the appreciation and utilization of research?
- d. What research standards can we develop (using an external framework)? Examples: How do researchers avoid bias when self-sponsoring or using organizational sponsorship? *What are useful generalized outcome definitions and measures?*
- e. What are some preliminary answers to the “who, what, when, where and why” of coaching research?

2. How can we best support people doing coaching research?

- a. How can we create better links among the stakeholders in coaching?
- b. How can we facilitate researchers’ access to participants for projects and organizations’ access to researchers for projects? How can we connect coaches, researchers and organizations for collaborative, multi-faceted projects?
- c. How can non-practitioners be engaged to do research that relates to coaching or that create links between their research and coaching? What would that take? How can third-party researchers be funded and guided to do coaching evaluation and research?
- d. What additional venues can be developed for people to generate and contribute to the body of knowledge in support of coaching and its development. How can we foster communities of practice for people doing coaching-related research?

3. What resources would be helpful for coaches in accessing, using and doing research?

- a. What repositories of information would be useful for academics and practitioners? How do we get regular updates on current research to coaches?
- b. What publications need to be developed in order to address the needs of all levels of the profession and its stakeholders as well as provide focused attention on key issues, applications and groups? What additional (refereed and non-refereed) journals for coaching research would best serve us? How can we get more coaching-related research published in refereed journals in other disciplines?
- c. What is possible using an open source metaphor for research (coachpedia concept)? How can social media/other technologies be utilized more fully to advance the cause?

THE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COACHES

1. How can coach training/education programs keep up with and integrate new research-based knowledge in a more complete and timely way?

- a. What are the implications for coaching of the distinctions between research, evaluation and reflective practice?
- b. How can coaching educators and trainers stay abreast of and grounded in current research?
- c. What new accreditation standards related to research schools should be considered? Should a research capacity/competency be a part of program (re-)accreditation?
- d. What should be the requirements for entry into coaching training/education programs? Should there be graduation and certification standards related to research?
- e. *How can the accreditation of coach training/education programs balance the need for some control of standards with the need to let the schools evolve as new knowledge about coaching and effective coach education is developed?*

2. What is essential to include in the next generation of coach training and education curricula, and how will research and ethical competencies be incorporated?

- a. How do we attain and validate a better understanding of competencies used in effective coaching? What knowledge and theory is essential? Should research competency be required to be a master coach and/or MCC?
- b. How do we foster collaboration between schools to advance the research agenda?
- c. How can a community and protocols be designed to do peer review and research on coach training programs? How can the models used as the bases for programs be validated and studied in terms of theoretical soundness and instrumental efficacy?
- d. How can research topics and skills be integrated into coach training? How can we educate more coaches on research basics, e.g., how to read and evaluate research and the benefit of engagement with research? *How can help coaches to become proficient as consumers, evaluators, and producers of research?*
- e. How can the ethics of coaching be addressed more fully in training coaches?

3. What is the developmental path for coaches in the four knowledge areas, and what are the implications of these trajectories for certifications, licensure and standards?

- a. What do we need to understand about the motivations for why people become coaches and why they leave coaching if they do? What is attrition rate and what does that mean?
- b. How much supervision should coaching students have and how should that be included in coach training?
- c. What advanced training opportunities would be essential to move coaches and coaching further along their paths?

THE PRACTICE OF COACHING

1. What do we need to better understand about the dynamics of client sessions?

- a. *How can we explicate the “black box” of coaching so researchers can study what occurs in coaching, coaches can more openly claim their theories-in-use, and coach educators can more fully understand mastery and how it is developed?*
- b. What are the links between the dynamics of the interactions and processes in coaching with its effectiveness? *What can be learned from related professions?*
- c. What would be useful to know about the differences in delivery modalities—frequency, duration, and modality, for example—in terms of process and outcomes?
- d. What are coaches’ motivations and expectations of coaching and clients? What are clients’ motivations and expectations of coaching and coaches? What are the implications if there is congruence—or not—between a coach and a client?

2. How can we better understand what great coaches do to achieve great results?

- a. Can we articulate an operational definition of coaching for research purposes? How can we better understand the intersections of coaching, therapy, and consulting?
- b. What are the personal and behavioral attributes of an effective coach? What are the critical factors in assessing the effectiveness of coaching, in groups and individuals, in terms of behavior, performance, maturity and other measures of change?
- c. What are the differences between a good versus a great coach (four stars versus five stars) and the effectiveness of a coach? How much is related to what they do versus who they are? Are there correlations between coach experience and outcomes?
- d. What are the best practices around matching coach and client? Are certain methods and techniques a better fit/match and more effective for certain ages and generations?
- e. How can we develop a better appreciation for and facility with holistic approaches, cultural sensitivity and different orientation to time (nonlinear) in coaching?

3. How can coaches become better scholarly and reflective practitioners?

- a. What skills and experiences do coaches need in order to assess their coaching from a research stance and vet their practices? How can we encourage coaches to *regularly engage in reflective practice and systematic inquiry to gather and integrate both experience- and research-based evidence in their work*?
- b. How can research and evidence be more visible in describing coaching and coaches?
- c. *If coaches are to adopt evidence as a basis for decision-making, how can they discover and understand better answers to questions such as: What works? Why does it work? How well does it work? How do we know it works? What would work better?*
- d. *How do coaches really use these various types of evidence right now? What would they actually do differently with more and better evidence? What evidence would they need to be more effective and wise in their practice?*

THE LEADERSHIP FOR THE PROFESSION

1. What kind of leadership do we need to further the coaching research agenda?

- a. How will we define a clear purpose and vision for the coaching profession? How will we define the “research agenda” for coaching and unify around those messages? How will we navigate the realities of the marketplace in building a research base?
- b. *How will we become increasingly astute and influential about the politics of evidence? How will we work with stakeholders in defining the future of coaching in ways that promote our vision for a research-based practice?*
- c. How will we reach out and develop emerging leaders, not just those with longevity, and foster transdisciplinary and diverse thought leadership?
- d. How will we increase our capacity to track and respond to salient trends and their impact on coaching?

2. Where is coaching developmentally as a profession; what does it need most right now?

- a. *What are the implications of coaching as a postprofessional practice as part of articulating a new vision for what it means to be a profession?*
- b. How can we make clearer distinctions about *levels of coaching, types of coaching, and contexts for coaching* to support specific research and a coherent profession? What are the common links between all of the entities that are called coaching? *What large-scale research projects need to be conducted to map the coaching terrain?*
- c. What patterns and adaptations can we see in the evolving nature and direction of coaching?
- d. How can we increasingly bring coaching to the broader world to mitigate the risk of it being/being seen as a luxury for the “haves.” *What and whom does coaching serve?*

3. How should the growing scope of “coaching” and spectrum of “coaches” be addressed and informed by coaching-related research to ensure clarity, quality and integrity?

- a. *Who can be classified as a “coach”? Who decides who is inside and outside the profession? How does the profession accommodate a widening spectrum of coaches and coaching? One option is to borrow from the distinctions within psychology.*
- b. What are the differences between internal, external and blended coaching interventions in organizations? What are the implications of the differences between coaching as a profession and home-based and between a profession and competency?
- c. Is all coaching life coaching since every executive is a whole person? How do we study if the distinctions between whole life/executive coaching are truly useful?
- d. Are ICF-credentialed coaches and/or coaches from ICF-certified schools better than comparable others?

THE GROWTH OF THE FIELD

1. How should the field of coaching evolve relative to the disciplines from which it draws?

- a. What are the essential elements to create a common body of theoretical and research knowledge as the basis for a field of coaching and how can we integrate them? How can we use it moving forward? What does it mean that coaching has been characterized by organic growth and shotgun development?
- b. How can we build more bridges to tie coaching to historic and respected disciplines? *How can past and current research and theories from related fields, (adult education, leadership development, psychology, communication) be made available to the evolving field and practice of coaching?*
- c. How can we develop a philosophy of coaching when there are multiple pathways, standards, definitions and understandings relative to the foundations of coaching? How can we use that as an asset more than a liability? How can we position coaching as a powerful synthesis of disparate fields, taking advantage of all knowledge and tools, instead of being labeled as “simply” an outgrowth of psychology or other fields?

2. What research and development will be most important to support the next stages in the development of coaching as a field?

- a. *What is the consensus about the desired relationship to evidence and the EBP framework?*
- b. *How can we foster a hybrid approach that integrates rigorous analytical research and vigorous reflective practice to develop a field of study that supports the evolution of coaching and the place of research- and experience-based evidence? How do we make a place for to both practice-based evidence and evidence-based practice?*
- c. Are we measuring the impact of a new paradigm with research tools of old paradigms? *What cross-sectional bodies do we need to address these questions outside the proprietary scope of individual programs and of the professional associations?*

3. How would the world be a better place if the field of coaching were wildly successful in achieving these aims?