

Beyond Feedback: Coaching Conversations in Student Tutorials



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Collaboration, co-creation and community: The transformative potential of EAP.

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“We swim in an ocean of feedback”

Stone & Heen (2014)

**“The key player in feedback is not the giver,
but the receiver”**

Stone & Heen (2014)

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel lines in orange, green, blue, purple, and brown, slanted upwards from left to right, framing the text.

Outline

Why Move Beyond Feedback?

What Are Coaching Conversations?

The GROW Coaching Framework

Theoretical Background

Key Coaching Skills

Case Study

Practical Implementation

Reflections

Traditional Feedback Tutorials



- Turn left *to improve academic language!*
- Recalculate *to check thesis statement!*
- Straight on *to add accurate citation!*
- You have arrived at your *grade!*

Feedback Tutorials using Coaching Conversations



- *What is your current position?*
- *Where do you want to go?*
- *How can you get to your destination?*
- *What alternative routes are there?*

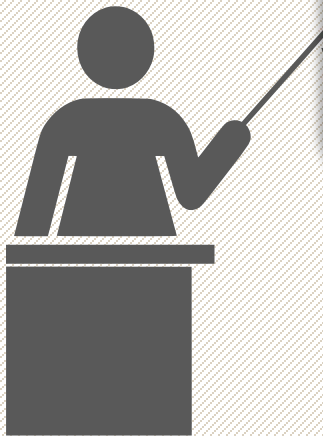
FROM

A hierarchical relationship

Passive student role

Instructor-led, correction-driven

Limited student agency and
autonomy



TOWARDS

A collaborative relationship

Active student engagement

Collaboration, autonomy and

self-efficacy

Reflective practice



What is a coaching conversation?

"Coaching is the art of facilitating another person's learning, development, well-being and performance. Coaching raises self-awareness and identifies choices. Through coaching people are able to find their own solutions, develop their own skills and change their own attitudes and behaviours. The whole aim of coaching is to close the gap between people's potential and their current state."

Whitmore, 2002

A coaching conversation aims to:

- help ss *think about their own thinking* and *internalise the feedback* they receive
- empower ss to *set personal goals*
- help them *develop strategies for improvement*

Six principles of a coaching conversation:

Jenny Rogers (2016)



The coachee is resourceful.



The coach's role is to develop this through questioning, challenge and support.



Coaching addresses the whole person: past, present and future.



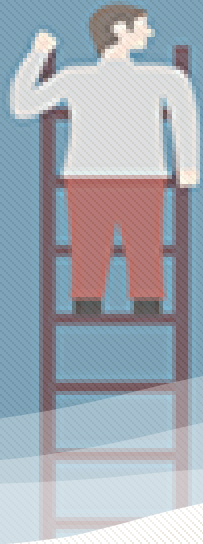
The coachee sets the agenda.



The coach and coachee are equals.



Coaching is about change and action.



Goal: what do you want to achieve?

Reality: where are you now?

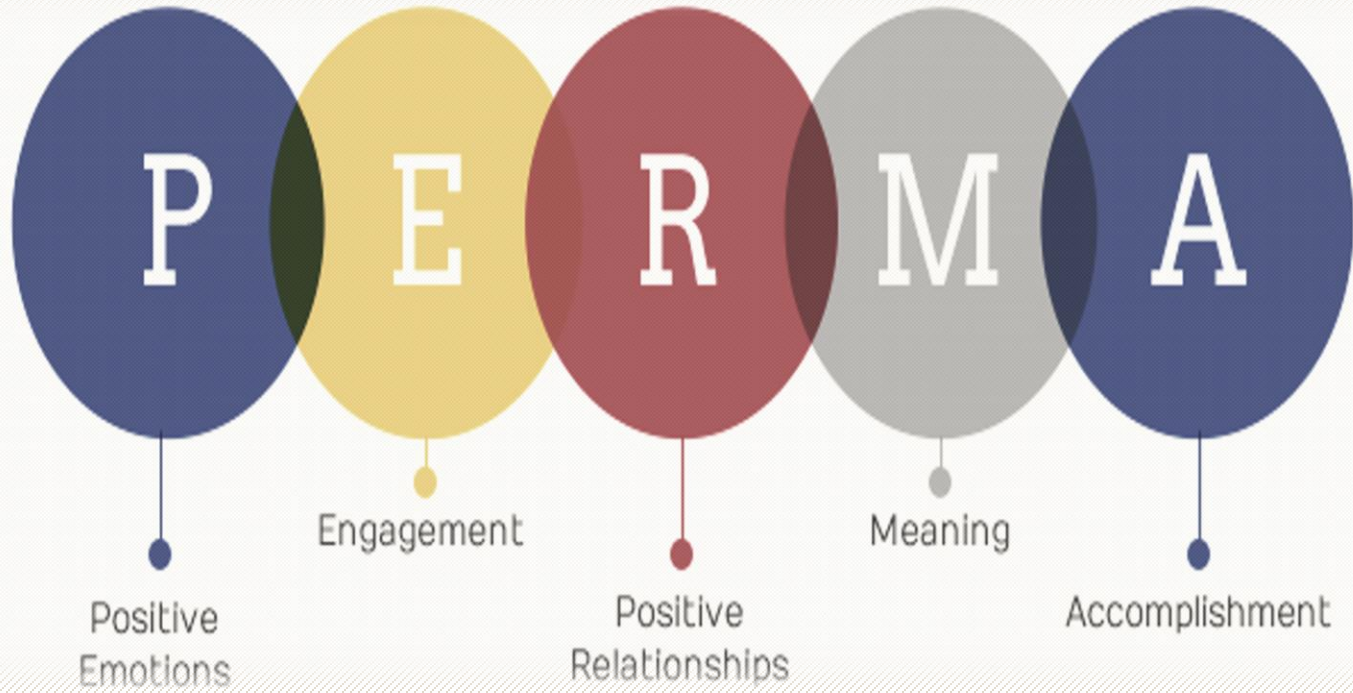
Options: what could you do?

Way forward: what will you do?

The GROW Coaching Framework
(Whitmore, 2009)

Why does this matter?

The GROW model helps structure tutorials, ensuring students leave with clear goals and actions they have identified themselves.



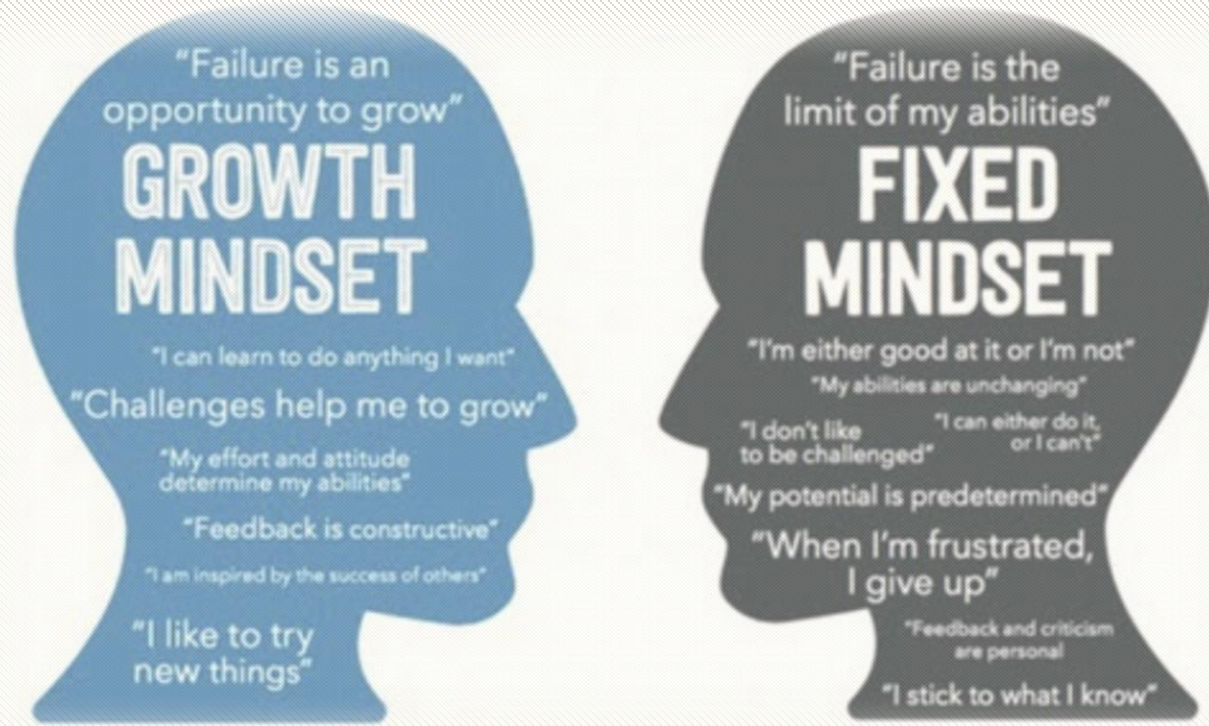
Positive Psychology – PERMA Model
(Seligman, 2011)

How do we integrate positive psychology in a tutorial?

- Start with a positive
- Involve the student in the activity
- Be empathetic and friendly
- Mention the bigger goal
- End with praise for progress

Why does this matter?

Feedback focus is not only on student's performance but also on well being and mindset. It fosters intrinsic motivation, meaningful engagement, overall positive student experience.



Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset (Dweck, 2006)

How do we cultivate a growth mindset in a tutorial?

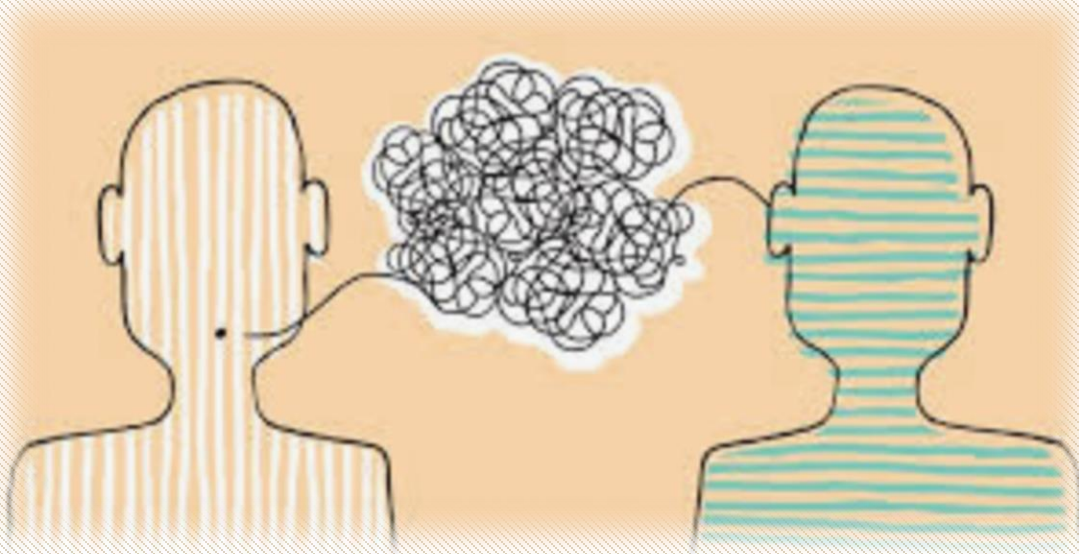
- Praise effort/process, not innate ability
- Normalise mistakes as learning opportunities
- Use the word “yet”
- Encourage strategies

Why does this matter?

Students with a growth mindset tend to be more resilient, view challenges as development opportunities and navigate feedback effectively.

Key Coaching Skills

Attentive Listening



“The quality of your attention determines the quality of other people’s thinking.”

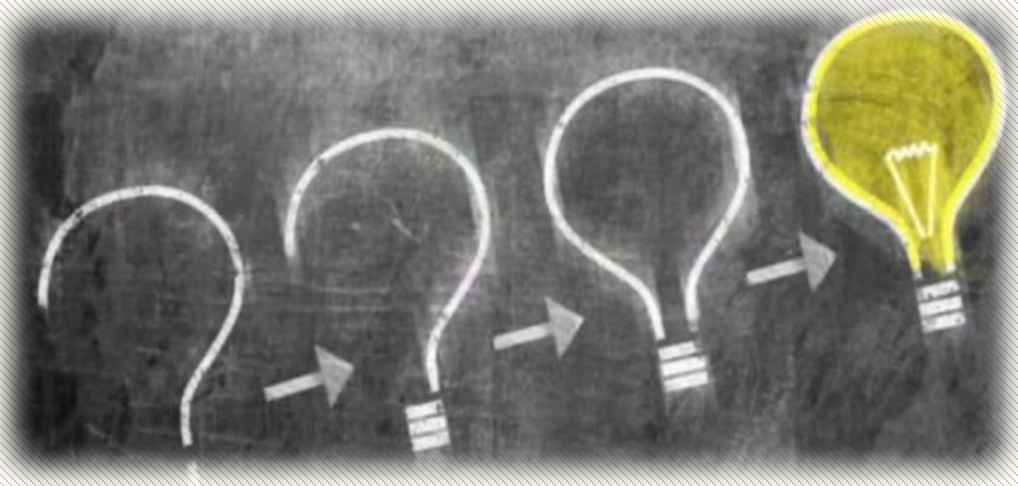
(Nancy Kline)

How do we practice attentive listening in a tutorial?

- Build trust and rapport – connect by giving the student your full attention
- Listen for emotions, values, unspoken meanings
- Minimise interruptions; allow pauses, wait time
- Use eye contact, nodding, leaning forward; verbal affirmations (‘uh-huh’, ‘go on’, ‘I see’)
- Paraphrase or summarise, use their words back to them

Key Coaching Skills

Asking Powerful Questions



“Telling or asking closed questions saves people from having to think; asking open questions causes them to think for themselves.”

John Whitmore

What kind of powerful questions can we ask in a tutorial?

- Ask, don't tell! Guide ss to insights
- Open-ended questions to encourage explanation and reflection
- Get students to think about their thinking process (metacognition)
- Ask clarifying questions
- Ask option-generating/imaginative questions before giving advice/suggestions
- Ask scaling questions (e.g.: on a scale of 1-10, how confident are you about your essay?)
- Ask 'goal' questions (what would success look like for you?)

Key Coaching Skills

Clarifying Action & Student-Driven Goals



In coaching, the coachee (student) should design their own accountability items, decide and commit to their action steps, with the coach facilitating the process.

Adapted from Rogers, 2016

How can we 'land the plane', agree on what happens next with the feedback?

- Co-create an action plan; review and see the Way forward (the W in GROW)
- Encourage students to articulate their own goals
- Make goals SMART; intentions into clear plans
- Write it down
- Follow up – explore and adjust

Case Study

Context: 10-week pre-sessional EAP programme, mid-course, 2nd one-to-one writing Feedback Tutorial; the student has already received written feedback comments and grade on the draft.

Student Profile:

PG int'l student (L1 Chinese); IELTS score 6.0; motivated but quiet; first draft with issues common in EAP writing: unclear structure, descriptive writing, lack of criticality; came to the tutorial expecting direct instructions to 'correct' their draft - typical student attitude in feedback tutorials.

Tutor's Approach: experimentation with coaching conversation practices aiming to put the focus on the ss' self-evaluation and reflection on their decision making; uptake of previous feedback provided in the traditional way was low; the tutorial was observed by a BALEAP observer.

Indicative Powerful Questions asked:

- How did you feel when you saw your grade and feedback?
- Which part of your essay do you feel most proud of?
- After reading your feedback, is there anything you still find challenging/aren't sure about?
- One criterion is critical analysis – how do you think your draft meets that?
- What do you want the reader to understand here?
- From 1-10 where do you place yourself right now (after the overall experience you've had of the writing process) with 10 being your goal? What would it take to reach your goal?
- How can I support you in reaching your goal?
- What is one strategy you have developed during this course that you think will be useful in future assignments?
- Any other questions?

Observer's Feedback:

- The student was thinking deeply, reflecting on his own decisions and identified some issues himself (*"I guess I didn't explain why I included this example"*).
- The discussion was linked to course criteria; the student showed better understanding of assessment expectations.
- The session was tailored to the s's own context and the feedback felt relevant to him, not generic.
- The student did 70% of the talking; he asked questions, too (*"Should I add a counter-argument here to show..."*); by the end, he articulated his revision plan confidently.



Outcomes:

- The student responded to the feedback and revised the work significantly.
- Both teacher and observer noted **substantial improvement** in the revised work that was submitted.
- Quantitatively, in the summative attempt the student's grade improved.
- Qualitatively, the student expressed **satisfaction**: in a follow-up survey he wrote he felt *"more confident and motivated because I solved problems together with the teacher"* and *"this tutorial was different; now I have a stronger heart for my future academic career."*

Practical Strategies for your Teacher Toolkit

- **Start Small:** add one or two coaching questions into your next tutorial and see if it works.
- **Use a Framework as a Guide** at first and think of effective questions that will get ss out of their comfort zone and talking.
- **Summarise, rephrase** the ss' points and **pause** more; allow over 50% of the time for ss speaking and avoid asking "why?"
- **Reflect and adapt** : jot a note about what went well and what felt awkward; each student is different, so adapt your coaching practice to their individual needs
- **Seek Feedback:** ask your students or a peer observer and fine-tune your skills.

Reflections

Beyond “fixing” to Empowering!

Coaching conversations can transform tutorials into a collaborative learning experience.

Teacher’s Role Reframed!

We shift from being a source of answers to facilitators of ss’ active thinking and deeper learning.

Enriched Feedback Culture!

In the long run, this can foster a culture where feedback is not something “given and received” passively but rather a dialogue for change and growth.

“Beyond Feedback” captures that we are embracing a more holistic, student-centred approach; it doesn’t mean we stop giving expert guidance; rather, we deliver that guidance through a coaching lens that enriches the ss’ learning process. I feel that tutorials become more engaging for students and more rewarding for us seeing the students light up with an idea or hearing them say *“I know what I need to do next!”*

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Thank you!

Any feedback?



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