

## State of Mind: Consciousness

*The function of consciousness is to represent information about what is happening outside and inside the organism in such a way that it can be evaluated and acted upon by the body. – M. Csikszentmihali*

Consciousness is a prerequisite to self-control and self-direction. Webster defines consciousness as “the knowledge of what is happening around oneself and the totality of one’s thoughts, feelings, and impressions.” To be conscious is to be aware of events both external and internal to oneself.

People who enjoy a state of consciousness metacogitate. They monitor their own values, thoughts, and behaviors as they progress toward their own goals. They can articulate well-defined value systems; and they generate and apply internal criteria for decisions they make. They practice mental rehearsal and edit mental pictures as they seek to improve strategies.

Consciousness means that we are aware that certain events are occurring and we are able to direct their course. While everything we feel, smell, hear, or remember is potentially a candidate for entering our consciousness, the nervous system has definite limits on how much information it can process at any given time, and the experiences that actually are processed and remembered are much fewer than those left out.

Teachers’ ability to monitor and adjust in the classroom is based on their conscious capacities to read classroom cues and their own intentions and repertoire of strategies. Consciousness is the state of mind that explains what research on teacher’s behaviors called “with-it-ness” – a teacher’s ability to be aware and respond to a variety of cues happening in the classroom while keeping students and themselves on task.

Center for Cognitive Coaching

*Cognitive Coaching. R. Garmston and A. Costa. Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc. 1994*

# A Framework for Deepening Questioning in a Coaching Situation

## Consciousness

### Characteristics

- Being aware of self, others and setting
- Knowing about one's thinking
- Seeking data about self, others and setting
- Being aware of one's own and others' styles and preferences
- Monitoring one's own decisions and the resulting effects

### Language: Consciousness of Own Thinking & Learning

How do I engage my coachee to become increasingly aware of his or her thinking and behavior? To gain access to and recall data for his or her thinking?

- |              |             |            |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| • Anticipate | • Match     | • Scan     |
| • Search     | • Define    | • Observe  |
| • Seek       | • Designate | • Select   |
| • Outline    | • Sequence  | • Identify |
| • Recite     | • List      | • Retrieve |

### Questions

- What do you think went well? (retrieve)
- What's becoming clearer?
- Anticipate the result if you taught the lesson differently?
- How did you know to do that?
- How does this compare to what you thought would happen?
- How might your assumptions influence your thinking?
- Define what you mean by rigor.

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