

Facilitators' Manual

based on 2026 USask Coaching Course

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Date: April 9, 2026

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

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Learning Theories, Frameworks, and Practices

Experiential Learning: Kolb argued that we do *not* learn from our experiences. He posits that we learn when we reflect on and think about our experiences and then modify our practices to begin the learning cycle again. In this course there are many opportunities in Live Sessions and with online discussions to reflect on experiences new and old.

Transformational Learning: Mezirow proposed that learning by its nature involves seeing the world differently. In learning about human interactions this is even more pronounced, and to change and improve we need to see people and interpersonal connections differently. Our behaviours will then follow our new mental models and are then more likely to persist. We have designed several activities and readings to help people consider alternative ways of seeing their students/learners and understanding the learning situation.

The Zone of Proximal Development: (Vygotsky) gives us a framework for thinking about the broad trajectory of learning and makes us more attuned to the necessity of accounting for prior learning. The use of appropriate scaffolding in this course is most pronounced when we prepare for and do the role plays especially in the creation, debriefing, and revising the role play scripts. We do not overestimate the understanding and skill of our learners (nor underestimate) so that we stage their practice clearly within the Zone.

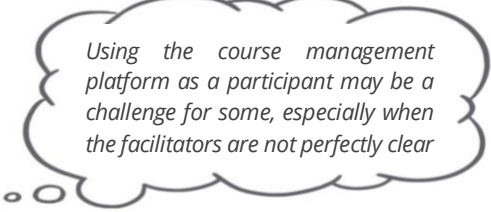
Co-operative Learning: Organized and popularized by Johnson and Johnson Cooperative Learning emphasizes the importance of learners working together in small groups to achieve shared learning goals. It posits that collaboration enables individuals to benefit from each other's strengths and perspectives, leading to deeper understanding and enhanced problem-solving skills. Furthermore, shared norms help individuals to change their behaviour.

Course Introduction and Preparation for Live Session 1

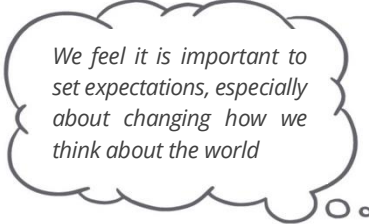
Welcome to the course, *Coaching Skills for Better Learning*.

Please read this and complete the actions at the bottom of this page **before** we meet in November.

We are in this together; you are not on your own. If you are not sure what to do, you can reach out to a fellow course participant or to either Sean or Marcel. Don't hesitate to fire off an email, no matter the type of question or time of day (just don't expect replies at any time of the day!).



Using the course management platform as a participant may be a challenge for some, especially when the facilitators are not perfectly clear



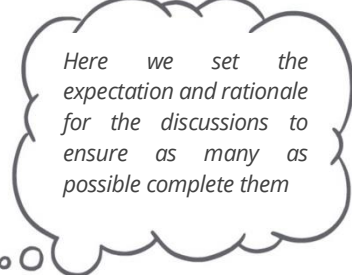
We feel it is important to set expectations, especially about changing how we think about the world

This course, and in fact the science of coaching, as you will learn, is based on:

- Changing behaviours (learning), and, more importantly (so the learning will be more useful, more versatile, and longer lasting)
- Changing how we think about the tasks we perform and the people we work with

Ways of thinking about teaching and learning, how they work together, are our mental models. No one has a complete mental model of anything but the more we learn, the better our mental models become (if we are learning the right stuff). Therefore, you will leave this course with a different mental model of coaching and specifically, feedback from a coaching stance. You will also become better at these tasks and find success even when faced with some challenging situations.

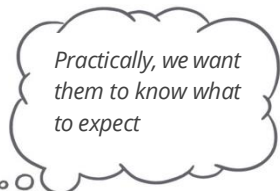
We hope you will find the readings/videos/exercises valuable. There are also discussions (like this one) that will accelerate learning. Please post comments/questions/concerns (and, OK, even complaints!) about the material. Read what others have written and ponder, even commenting on those comments and perhaps replying to comments others have made on your discussion points. We believe this activity is important for your long-term learning. We will therefore monitor the discussions and remind then nudge to support you in completing the discussions and other online activities.



Here we set the expectation and rationale for the discussions to ensure as many as possible complete them

The rhythm of the months will generally follow this pattern:

- Preparation for the up-coming live session
- The group live session
- Follow-up to the live session, usually including some additional reading and an online discussion
- Repeat



Practically, we want them to know what to expect

This first month is no exception. Here's what we have designed to be the first preparation:

First, come prepared to talk about coaching and coaches you have had or observed. What seem to be their key behaviours and qualities?

Second, please post in the discussion forum (link below - click the "Reply" button) a 100–150-word intro for yourself. Be creative! If you want more direction, consider these topics:

- Basic daytime job
- Reason(s) for enrolling in the course, especially where and how you hope to use coaching skills
- Some non-work-related info like family connections, pastimes or hobbies, interesting places you have lived or visited, and unusual events or activities in which you have participated (like I have been parachuting when I was younger and more foolish)

We specifically do not include reading or other exercises. We do introduce discussions to help them get used to the mechanics before we ask for a substantive response. We consider this a practice run, a form of scaffolding, to work out the bugs before the real thing!



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Live Session 1

- Welcome/check-in* (most days).

A check in, as we practice it, is an informal “chat” about things familiar in everyday life to set a friendly group atmosphere and to prepare for the deeper discussions. They are fun and allow participants to talk about themselves and get to know each other. This is a warm-up to the content discussions.

- What is your relationship with cooking?

We offer our ideas for Check-in topics, but you of course can choose your own.

- Review your experience of the online introductions.

Each live session we allow time for participants to express any thoughts, connections, or insights, new or old. This is an easy topic and helps us warm up for future discussions. This helps to establish that the live session is a safe space to express oneself.

- Discussion about coaching (what it is and is not); good and not so good experiences of being coached; what to expect from this course and discussion around what makes for a successful feedback session, when you are receiving feedback and when you are giving feedback.

This introduces our current mental models of coaching, teaching, and mentoring. There are readings as follow-up to dig deeper but in the live session we begin the process. In the end, we tell people not to worry about which role they are exercising. All three roles have very similar purposes and the skills sets overlap. We resolve the issue of what's what by landing on this working guideline: use the skills as needed and don't worry about which role you are taking.

- Central purpose of teaching: initial discussion with online module as follow-up.

Again, this topic is introduced here just to start people thinking. There are online modules to learn more about the Central Purpose of Teaching and Feedback that will help inform their online discussion.

- Follow-up.

Here we explain what they need to accomplish to consolidate their learning from this session.

- Looking ahead to December's learning.

We remind them that there is some preparation for the next live session.

- “What is the one best thing you learned at this coaching session?”

- Chain of appreciation (most days).

A chain of appreciation, as we practice it, modified after I learned it while working in Augusta, GA from a wonderful colleague there at the time: one after another as in a chain, group participants briefly acknowledge one other group member for a contribution made during the live session or online discussion or The activity ends with the person who started it; everyone is acknowledged and acknowledges one other person as in a chain.

Session 1 Follow-Up (Coaching, Debriefing/ Feedback, and Central Purpose of Teaching)

What is coaching?

- We are sure you have ideas about what coaching is and more importantly what *good* coaching is.
- After reading the following [article](#), engage in the follow-up online discussion with your (new-ish) ideas about what coaching is and is not.

We began in the live session an exploration of coaching especially in comparison to teaching and mentoring, two other similar helping roles.

- Focus on reading (and critiquing) the introduction and the section "The foundations of coaching".

All the reading we recommend is directed. We direct the participants to the most relevant sections. This makes the reading and learning more focused and efficient. Busy learners appreciate this guidance.

- Read the other sections if interested and time permits.

Some learners will have the time and inclination to explore more material.

- The third section of the article has some serious limitations which I am more than happy to point out if asked. We will address this misconception during the course and have hinted at it already (even without being asked).

We believe and tell our learners that there seems to be no clear distinction among coaching, teaching, and mentoring. We therefore use language such as "coaching skills" or a "coaching approach" rather than this is "coaching".

We specifically tell our participants that our course will not make them a coach but will teach them coaching skills they can then use where appropriate.

- **OPTIONAL:** You could also have a quick look at this [article](#) and critique it if you want, adding to the online discussion (or just hold on till December's session).
- What are feedback and the Central Purpose of Teaching?
- Complete these two 15-minute online modules:
 - <https://spots.augusta.edu/coral/feedback/#/>
 - <https://spots.augusta.edu/coral/cpt/#/>

These two online modules help to orient people to their learners and provide one framework for feedback that aligns closely with the coaching approach we promote.

- How did your initial thoughts about the Central Purpose of Teaching (Coaching) and feedback (from our live session) match what the modules highlighted? Please add your thoughts to the online discussion and see what others said. You can even like other comments and reply to them. Articulating our new thoughts helps us to analyze and internalize them.

Here we give some discussion starters for them to use in this online discussion.

The basic pattern of learning components each month is:

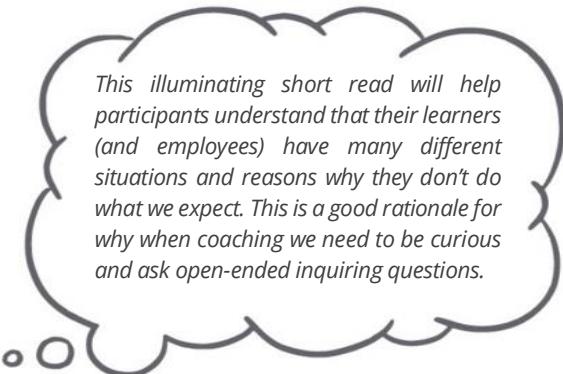
- a) Preparation*
- b) Live sessions*
- c) Follow-up*

Preparation for Live Session 2

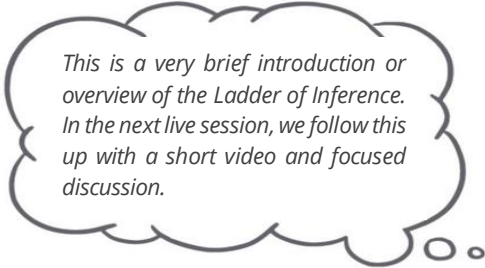
To prepare for December's session, please...

1. Read the 2-page handout (found in Files) "[Why Employees Don't Do What They Are Supposed to Do](#)".

While these are VERY brief snippets of what the book is about, they likely resonate. Zoom out a little and ask yourself how these 16 conditions might affect how you give feedback to (and coach) your learners?



This illuminating short read will help participants understand that their learners (and employees) have many different situations and reasons why they don't do what we expect. This is a good rationale for why when coaching we need to be curious and ask open-ended inquiring questions.

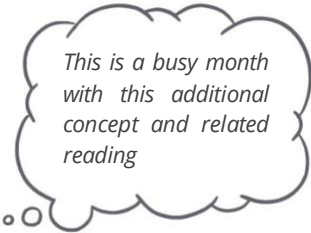


This is a very brief introduction or overview of the Ladder of Inference. In the next live session, we follow this up with a short video and focused discussion.

2. Read the short post from Kevin MD: <https://kevinmd.com/2023/01/the-dangerous-language-of-crazy-how-stigma-and-judgment-affect-patient-care.html> titled "The dangerous language of "crazy": How stigma and judgment affect patient care

". How does this post connect to the reading "Why Employees Don't Do What They Are Supposed To Do?"

3. What is Self Determination Theory of motivation and what has it to do with feedback and debriefing? We will try to answer that question beginning with this reading ([click here](#)) and a discussion during the December live session. Come with your ideas.



This is a busy month with this additional concept and related reading

Bring your thoughts, questions, and concerns to your small group Live session this month. An online discussion on these topics will be follow-up to the Live session (as is our pattern).

Live Session 2

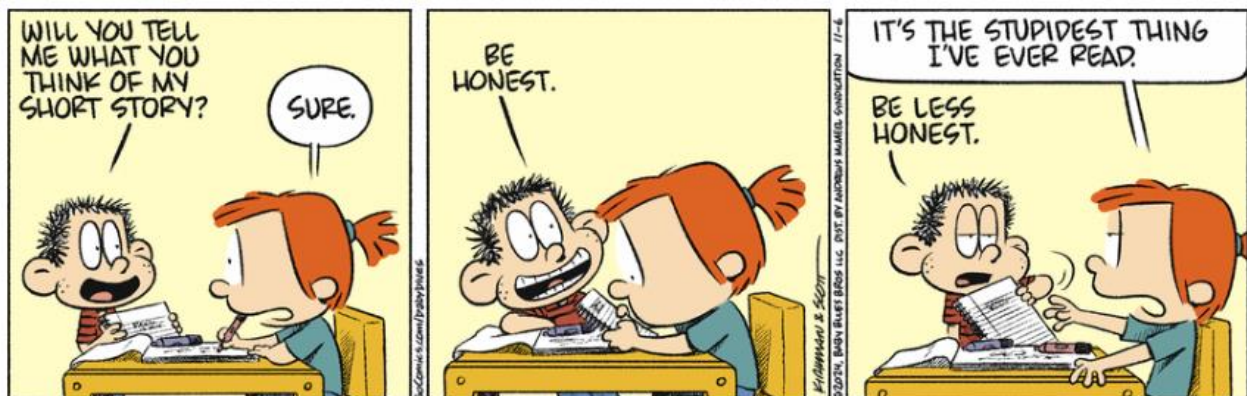
- Welcome/check-in: Thoughts on winter.
- Review previous module and follow up learning and discussion.
 - Coaching and teaching
 - Central Purpose of Teaching, SITBACK feedback
- Review prep for this Live session:
 - KevinMD.com/Why employees Don't ... - initial thoughts

Activation of prior learning in advance of the video on the Ladder of Inference.

- Ladder of Inference short video with discussion
 - Motivation: Self-determination Theory and positive psychology – connection to the Ladder and other thoughts
- Follow-up to December's meeting: take-aways from the day's session. "What is the one best thing you learned at this coaching session?"

This serves as a primer for the follow-up online discussion.

- Looking ahead to January's learning.
- Chain of appreciation.



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Session 2 Follow-Up

- Read [2007 article](#) on debriefing: focus on Figure 1, p. 363, p. 364 Table 1, and p. 369 Debriefing with Good Judgment.

All learners, not just busy faculty, appreciate guidance when reading. Some may read more than what we asked for out of personal interest.

- Read [2025 article](#) on excellent teaching (everything you need is in the abstract, the rest is optional).
- In this discussion (click "Reply" below to begin entering a post), share your insights. These questions below are to get you thinking. Use them if you like but you don't have to answer them as in an assignment. Use them to help you think of connections and then post your thoughts and ideas while reading and commenting on others.
 1. What surprised you about the Ladder and making accurate observations?
 2. How does the 2007 article on debriefing with good judgment connect to this?
 3. How might SDT, the ladder, and coaching feedback be related/connected?
 4. From the 2025 article on excellent teaching, how are the main recommendations found in the abstract connected to other concepts, principles, and practices you know about?
- **OPTIONAL** reading: [2022 CMEI](#) (short) article on the Ladder of Inference.

**No additional preparation for Session 3.*



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Live Session 3

- Welcome/check-in: 'Books'
- Review of December's learning and discussion (Ladder of inference and debriefing with good judgment).
- Practice *observing*:
 - Teaching TIPS episode.

Any video will work. We chose one that showed some practice teaching during our TIPS course for residents.

- Marcel and Sean recorded role play.

We recorded Sean "coaching" Marcel. Observing the coach meant that participants would pick up some of the coaching language we have modelled and recommended. This video also describes scripts we use with role plays, their use, and purpose.

- Debriefing structure and language based on Sean/Marcel role play.
 - Script use: prepare together a script to debrief Sean's coaching session.

This group exercise will help people with their own scripts by modeling one.

- Individual prep 3 min.

When working in a group (see Cooperative Learning) we find it best to allow for individual thinking and prep so that when people come together, they will have something to contribute.

- Group build of script.
- For additional practice writing a script, we use a clinical scenario and walk through it one line at a time.
- Follow-up:
 - More debriefing tips.
 - Prepare a script of a debriefing session based on a common scenario encountered at work (or a different situation as you wish).
 - Meet with your facilitator over the next 2-3 weeks to debrief your script.

After the Chain of Appreciation but before they leave the call, set up individual 45-minute coaching sessions to debrief their draft scripts.

- "What is the one best thing you learned at this coaching session?"
- Chain of appreciation.

Session 3 Follow-Up (Preparing Scripts for Role Plays)

- In our January session, we moved into structuring a feedback session using a coaching approach. We introduced the script as a way to bridge our understanding of debriefing through to a change in how we actually do it.
- Prepare a script of a debriefing session based on a common scenario encountered at work (or for a different situation as you wish).

As much as possible we want the role plays to prepare people for what they will face on the job, where they expect to use the coaching approach.

- Write this for your work context and not for the audience, whether me or your peers. The script is intended to help you with debriefing at work (and/ or elsewhere) so make it as normal as possible.
- Write 2-3 possible opening statements, some potential learner responses (you may want to review [Why Employees...](#) Take the script to at least 3 steps of inquiry and/or prompts by you.
- After giving a description of the situation, a script might look like this:

While in the previous live session we wrote a script together, we believe that a “model” will still be valuable for most people. Also, this is my quick attempt to write a beginner script just to give them the idea of the structure (with a key coaching phrase or two).

Me: River (false name), earlier this morning we met with the Denver family. Let's debrief the encounter. Is there anything in particular you want to talk about?

River: I did try something new. What did you think?

Me: I noticed that you Is that what you mean?

River: Yes.

Me: Could you tell me what you were hoping might happen by making that change?

River: Sure. I because I thought it might work out better. I was not happy with the approach we had been taught.

Me: Oh, interesting. I'm not sure I understand. What do you see as the connection between what you did and the outcome you were hoping for?

River: ...

Me: ...

- To better prepare for script writing from a coaching perspective, [read this short snip](#) from The Coaching Habit. To expand your coaching repertoire, this [optional reading](#) will give you some additional ideas. Consider reviewing SIT BACK (the feedback approach): <https://spots.augusta.edu/coral/feedback/#/>.
- Please send your draft script a day or two ahead of your meeting with your facilitator who will debrief your script with you.

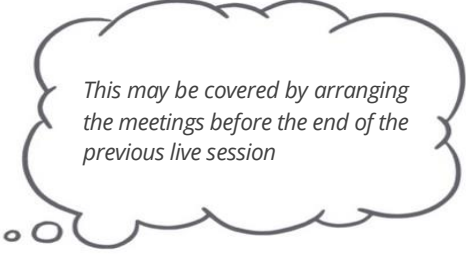


“Did you notice anything else about the man who tripped you – other than he was short and beginning to go bald?”

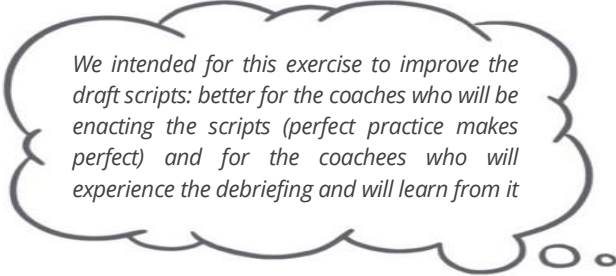
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Preparation for Live Session 4

Send your facilitator the draft script you prepared and arrange a 30-minute Zoom debriefing (if this already has not been done).



This may be covered by arranging the meetings before the end of the previous live session



We intended for this exercise to improve the draft scripts: better for the coaches who will be enacting the scripts (perfect practice makes perfect) and for the coachees who will experience the debriefing and will learn from it

This will help you improve your script and those you will prepare in the near future. Your facilitator will also model a debriefing session with a coaching approach that should help you place your script within the broader context of an entire debriefing.

Live Session 4

- Welcome/check- in: Art and You!
- Plan for this live session: Practice with scripts.
 - “What was the best thing you learned from the script writing exercise?”.

Asking learners to identify the “best” thing they learned is often better than asking about something they learned. With the former inquiry, learners must consider a few things they learned and evaluate why one might be better than the others. The former question generates a great deal more thinking!

- Script based role play practice by participant(s), again and again, builds proficiency!
 - Debrief with the coach first (How did it go? What surprised you? What did you find challenging? Etc.).
 - Coachee comments: what did it feel like to be the coachee? What did you learn from the experience?
 - Observer (if uneven numbers within groups): What were the positive coaching behaviours that you observed?

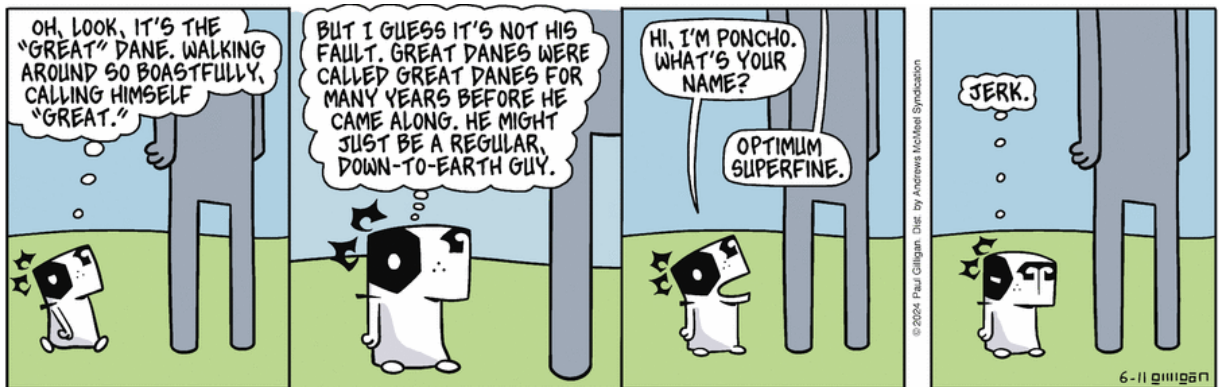
- Preceptor and abdominal exam video (You Tube): observe student, then preceptor.

You may want to turn this into an exercise in observing and staying low on the ladder of inference. We have led a gentle critique of the preceptor's debriefing and that seemed to be valuable.

- Follow-up for Session 5: Write at least one more script and/or a scenario from which to base a role play. Also come prepared to talk about examples of using a coaching approach at work, of trying to apply coaching practices in real situations. Session 5 will consist mostly of more practice using scripts or scenarios (more improv).

Some participants may feel comfortable doing some "improv" and departing from a fixed script. Removing the script (at least partially) reduces the scaffolding and moves people to more independent practice.

- "What is the one best thing you learned at this coaching session?"
- Chain of appreciation.



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Session 4 Follow-Up (Role-Play Experience) and Preparation for Session 5

- Reflecting on the previous live session especially the role plays, what were your two best takeaways?

A variation on "What's the one best thing you learned."

- Comment in the group discussion. Check out what others took away. This reflection and sharing will substantially contribute to your learning!
- This insight will be important as you prepare for our next session*. Please prepare at least one more coaching script...

Session 5 will include more role play practice.

- AND be prepared to share at our next live session an experience of using a coaching approach with learners, junior colleagues, or others.

We know some have been trying or will try out their new skills. This encourages everyone to apply these skills in real work settings. The exchange among participants will be validating and encouraging.

- Such an interaction may be short (two or three exchanges) or longer. Give your growing coaching skills a test and at our March meeting, tell us about it!
- *There is no requirement to have your new scripts reviewed by your facilitator as we did last month. However, if you would like a debriefing session for your script(s) or some suggestions as track changes, please contact us.
- Read Psychological Safety Is Not the Same as Comfort found at <https://www.ideou.com/blogs/inspiration/building-risk-taking-teams-safe-danger> about half way down the web page. Post your thoughts and comments in the Follow-up group Discussion.

This expands their understanding of psychological safety especially when balancing that against the need for learners to meet specific objectives.

Live Session 5

- Welcome/check-in: Travel/vacation.
- Review discussion comments on and insights from role plays.
- Practice with scripts, and off script using a scenario (if people are willing).

This is the direction we are headed, more improv. Some may find this a comfortable progression, and some may want to lean more on the scripted role play practice. There is room to accommodate individual progressions.

- Introduce the six top evidence-based learning strategies.

Find an overview here:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56acc1138a65e2a286012c54/t/57d03e669de4bbd3567d57a6/1473265254536/All-Color-Posters.pdf>

and the details on each one here: <https://www.learningscientists.org/posters>

We include these for three reasons:

1. *They can see how we designed some of these into this coaching course;*
2. *Together with their new coaching skills, these will help them better understand and support their learners; and*
3. *We could not help ourselves as they are very cool!*

- Post-course learning opportunities and follow-up.
- “What is the one best thing you learned at this coaching session?”
- Chain of appreciation.

Session 5 Follow-Up

Post about your experience(s) at coaching practice: scripts and/or scenarios with learners.

Preparation for Live Session 6

- Check out the Six Learning Strategies. Do a deeper dive on two (or more) of them. Be prepared to report back to the group. Overview of all six:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56acc1138a65e2a286012c54/t/57d03e669de4bbd3567d57a6/1473265254536/All-Color-Posters.pdf>

- Detailed posters of each of the strategies: <https://www.learningscientists.org/posters>
 - Where did/do you experience them in your learning?
 - How are these integrated into the programs and learning experiences of the learners you teach/coach?
 - Which of these can be integrated more easily into the coaching debrief?

Prepare a new one or modify an existing script/and or scenario to use for practice in Session 6. Include as little or as much detail depending on how comfortable you are with improv!

Final Live Session 6

- Welcome/check-in: Physical activity/exercise.
- Review of reading and prep on six top evidence-based learning strategies.
- Practice (yes, more practice) using role plays – try off-roading!
- Course warp-up with lessons learned (formal evaluation to arrive in your inbox).
- Post-course learning opportunities and follow-up.
- “What is the one best thing you learned at this coaching course?”
- Chain of appreciation!

