

Coultas, C. W., & Salas, E. (2015). Identity construction in coaching: Schemas, information processing, and goal commitment. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 67(4), 298.

In our own coaching practices, or in our coaching relationships with others, there is a persistent quest to strike up the right chemistry between coach and coachee. A significant body of academic work has promoted the importance of coaching relationships being coachee-centric - that is, coaching should work on the principle that it is the coachee's development that should ultimately guide the coaching process and experience. However, there still remains a need for coaches to present and conduct themselves as competent professionals with the required skillset and expertise to assist and develop the coachee in a way that they could not achieve on their own.

An individual's coaching structure schema (CSS) represents the manner in which they process, collect interpret and apply information as a coachee within a coaching relationship. A coachee with a coach-centric CSS is likely to be more passive and receptive during coaching, and will allow the coach to set the direction of the coaching process. In contrast, a coachee with a coachee-centric CSS is more prone to take the lead; and will often establish their own prerogative to influence the relationship - sometimes at the expense of the coach's useful contributions.

Eduardo Salas, an organizational psychologist at Rice University, and Chris Coultas of organizational development institution Leadership Worth following, hypothesized that a CSS balanced between coach and coachee-centrism might be beneficial for particular coaching outcomes; namely goal-setting and commitment. In a recent laboratory study published in the American Psychological Association's *Consulting Psychology Journal*, Salas and Coultas examined the effects of two forms of identity construction behaviors (claiming and granting) on the part of coaches, and the effects these behaviors would have open the desired outcomes. Claiming behaviors are any behaviors which establish the coach's role as a coach: ranging from the way they dress and comport themselves, the emphasis they place upon their own credentials, their professional demeanor and so forth. They are the coach's ways of actively inserting themselves into the coaching relationship, and ensuring that their presence and participation are recognized by the coachee.

Granting behaviors are those by which the coach acts to bring the coachee themselves into the coaching process. These may take the form of simply explaining the necessity of the coachee's participation, through to more active measures to encourage participation on the part of the coachee, and serve to prompt action and engagement from the coachee; ensuring that they recognize the importance of their own role in the coaching relationship. In drawing together their hypotheses, the authors proposed that coaches should be able to leverage a balanced CSS: prompting a coachee to acknowledge the importance of their own role within the coaching process, while at the same time recognizing that the coach's role is relevant and potentially helpful.