

## How Learning Agility Can Augment your Coaching Practice

As a coach, there are many different models you can follow when working with an employee or leader, and the reasons for initiating a coaching engagement can vary greatly - from nurturing high-potential talent to working through a specific conflict or correcting a performance deficiency.

Sometimes coaching is based on feedback from the organization; other times, it is grounded in specific assessments, such as personality, workstyle and critical thinking assessments.

But no matter what tools they use, most coaches would agree their job is to help *someone* in *some way*. And, great coaches are always open to new ideas and approaches to do that.

In December 2017, E·A·S·I·Consult® launched a **“Coaching Focus” certification program** for the Burke Learning Agility™ Suite (Burke LAI™ and 360° Burke LAS™) of Assessments. The program was a huge success, and participants spoke highly of the value the Burke Learning Agility tools added to their coaching offerings.

One participant, a senior leader within a large municipality, noted:

*“For me, as a coach, the Burke Learning Agility tools give me ways to look at how my coachee approaches learning. The tools provide a clear framework for how the person can take action. To me, this is foundational! I always had ideas about agility in my head but, **prior to getting certified, I didn’t have the categories to describe** - or the research to support - those thoughts. Now, I have a common language from which to ask questions, **which forms the basis of coaching, as well as measure improvement.**”*

Another participant - Matt Kersey, Ph.D., ACC, President of Transition States Coaching and Training - **said, “What I appreciate** about this assessment is that it is based on observable behaviors which the coachee, once aware of, can influence and do more often.”

E·A·S·I·Consult coaches have had tremendous success incorporating both the Burke LAI (self-report inventory) and 360° Burke LAS (multi-rater survey) into their coaching practices.

My colleagues and I have seen with our clients that Burke Learning Agility tools have improved their coaching outcomes because they:

- *Focus on behaviors* - The great thing about the Burke Learning Agility tools is that they measure *specific, clearly defined and well-researched*. The coachee answers

questions telling how frequently he or she does something (e.g., asks peers for feedback).

This is great for two key reasons:

- **The person can't really argue with the results.** Essentially, this is what you said about how often you do this yourself. The Burke tools identify the coachee's "starting line" in terms of his or her learning agility but doesn't define or bind them in terms of "who they are." Thus, results feel less threatening. I often tell coachees, "I'm not trying to change who you are or the way in which you approach the world, I'm asking you to consider doing these specific behaviors more often because we know they equate with successful outcomes on the job."
- Raters can provide an objective third-party view of how often they see you doing the things you say you do. This may or may not align with how you see yourself but, either way, it provides an excellent platform for further discussion.
- *Offer clear frameworks for improvement* - The best news about learning agility as a measure of leader potential is that anyone can improve! While you may need a certain amount of *ability* or *skill* as a starting point, the real differentiation comes down to *motivation*. This is great news for highly motivated coachees who are willing to invest energy in leveraging the agile behaviors that come naturally to them and trying out new behaviors recommended to them during the coaching process.

These tools provide the best of both worlds. The academic in me can rest easy knowing they truly measure the construct of agility, they do so consistently and accurately, and agility measured this way predicts performance and other important outcomes.

And the practitioner in me can attest to the fact that my impact as a coach - in terms of my ability to help others help themselves - is strengthened with the addition of the Burke Learning Agility assessments in my toolbox... a rare win-win for my clients!

### About the Author

*Rebekah Cardenas, Ph.D., is vice president of business development and assessment solutions at E•A•S•I-Consult®. E•A•S•I-Consult works with Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and mid-sized corporations to provide customized Talent Management solutions. E•A•S•I-Consult specialties include individual assessment, online employment testing, survey research, competency modeling, leadership development, executive coaching, 360-degree feedback, online structured interviews, and EEO hiring compliance. The company is a leader in the field of providing accurate information*

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