

# Coaching Supervision, Training, and Development in the AI Era



## ABSTRACT

This article explores the emerging role of generative artificial intelligence (AI) as a cognitive partner in coaches' professional development. Far from being a tool reserved for experienced professionals, the conversational agent ReflectAI also finds strategic application in training and supervision contexts. The analysis delves into how AI can support the growth of students, coaches-in-training, and supervisors, not by replacing the educational relationship, but by enriching it with powerful and accessible reflective tools. A vision of a future in which the

coach evolves into the role of "AI manager" is presented: a professional capable of integrating and managing the use of AI, while maintaining the irreplaceable humanity of the training process and the coaching relationship at its core.

## INTRODUCTION

The goal of this series of articles is to disseminate and broaden the debate on the use of generative artificial intelligence as a cognitive





partner. Our reflections are aimed at improving, deepening, and enriching the quality of the coaching relationship and the coach's professionalism, offering theoretical, practical, and ethical insights for the informed and strategic use of AI.

This initiative was born from the analysis of several contributions that emerged:

- in the internal discussion between us researchers and professionals of Coaching Psychology;
- in the critical re-elaboration of scientific sources and professional testimonies;
- in dialogue with advanced language models such as ChatGPT;
- in the experimental use of ReflectAI, our AI agent for meta-reflection.

The SCP Italy Coaching & AI team's goal is to create a series of informative articles that contribute to the debate within the Italian and international network on AI in coaching (also in view of the upcoming ISCP Symposium) and support the dissemination of ReflectAI as a professional growth tool. The question guiding our research is no longer "Will AI replace us?", but "How can we use it to become more effective coaches?"

## REFLECTIVE PRACTICE: A PILLAR FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At the heart of every coach's development is reflective practice. Theorized by Donald Schön as "reflection *-on-action* ," this metacognitive

skill allows the professional to critically analyze their sessions, understand relational dynamics, evaluate the effectiveness of the techniques used, and ultimately learn from experience. It is a process that transforms action into awareness, and awareness into continuous improvement.

Traditionally, reflective practice relies on journals, peer discussions, and, above all, supervision. These methods, while fundamental, have structural limitations: supervision is episodic, while unstructured self-reflection can lack depth and objectivity. It is in this space that the potential of generative AI comes into play.

## REFLECTAI: A PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR METACOGNITION

To address this need, the ISCP Italy Research Hub has developed ReflectAI (also known as *Coaching Psychology Bot* ), an autonomous conversational chatbot based on generative AI (GPT-4) and accessible via Telegram.

How does it work? At the end of a session, the coach initiates a conversation with ReflectAI. The bot, trained on Coaching Psychology principles and a vast body of real-world reflections, asks targeted, open-ended questions to guide the coach in a structured analysis of the session. The interaction doesn't provide "correct answers," but rather encourages the coach to verbalize and explain their cognitive and emotional processes, fostering insights into:



- strengths and areas for improvement
- patterns in dialogue and relationship with the coachee
- effectiveness of the strategies and tools adopted
- key learnings to integrate into future practice.

Initial quantitative and qualitative analyses of the project have shown that interaction with ReflectAI encourages coaches to use more precise and detailed language, increasing the depth of reflection. Paradoxically, the non-judgmental nature of the "machine" creates a psychologically safe space where professionals feel free to explore doubts and uncertainties without fear.

## NEW HORIZONS FOR TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

While ReflectAI has proven to be a valuable ally for experienced coaches, its most revolutionary potential emerges in training contexts.

### Support for the development of coaches in training

For students and newcomers to coaching, developing strong reflective skills is both crucial and challenging. ReflectAI acts as a personal, always-available "coach" for reflective practice.

- Structure and guidance: provides a structured model for debriefing the first sessions, helping the student internalize a rigorous method of self-analysis.

- Formalizing thought: requires translating intuitions and feelings into clear and precise language, a fundamental skill for discussing your cases in supervision.
- Continuous learning: makes reflexivity a daily habit rather than a one-off task, accelerating the learning curve and professional development.

### Strengthening the supervision process

ReflectAI isn't intended to replace supervision, but rather to be a powerful accelerator. The model shifts toward "AI-augmented supervision," which consists of the following elements:

1. **preparation** : the coach (supervisee) uses ReflectAI after each session for an initial hot processing;
2. **sharing** : the anonymized transcript of the dialogue with ReflectAI is shared with the supervisor before the meeting;
3. **In-depth analysis** : the supervision session no longer begins with a subjective narrative, but with a rich, semi-structured artifact. This allows the supervisor to more deeply understand the coach's thought process and focus the dialogue on the more strategic, ethical, and relational aspects.

In this way, valuable supervision time is used more effectively, moving from a "data collection" phase to a second-level analysis, benefiting both the supervisee and the supervisor.

## THE COACH AS "AI" MANAGER: TOWARDS NEW SKILLS

The integration of tools like ReflectAI outlines the evolution of the coach's role. The professional of the future will not be able to simply master interpersonal skills, but will also need to develop solid technological and ethical literacy. Becoming an "AI Manager" means:

- knowing how to select, that is, knowing and choosing the AI tools best suited to your purposes (reflection, administration, marketing);
- *prompt engineering* skills to interact effectively with AI and obtain high-quality output;
- knowing how to critically evaluate, therefore not passively accepting the AI output, but using it as a stimulus, filtering it through one's own experience, intuition and ethical judgment;
- be able to ethically manage data privacy and confidentiality, communicating transparently with customers about the possible use of technological supports.

## LIMITS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

We are aware that we are in an exploratory phase. The current results, although encouraging, require scientific validation on larger samples, ideally through controlled studies comparing the effectiveness of ReflectAI with existing methods of traditional supervision.

Future developments of the project focus on two directions:

1. personalized reporting, i.e. integrating a function that generates automatic reports to monitor the evolution of the individual coach's reflective practice over time; and
2. Development of CPBot 2, a version of the bot dedicated to coachees, to support them in post-session reflection and in consolidating the learnings achieved during the coaching session.

## A HYBRID FUTURE FOR COACHING

Artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic prospect, but an operational reality that is redrawing the boundaries of professional practice. Tools like ReflectAI demonstrate that technology, when designed with pedagogical intention and a solid ethical foundation, does not threaten the human essence of coaching, but can actually enhance it.

Embracing this change means equipping the next generation of coaches with cognitive "superpowers," capable of accelerating their growth and increasing their effectiveness. The challenge is not technological, but cultural: that of training professionals who know how to orchestrate a virtuous synergy between human intelligence and artificial, to offer an increasingly in-depth, conscious coaching service and transformative.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. Basic Books.
  - Bachkirova, T., Jackson, P., Clutterbuck, D. (2021). *Coaching & Mentoring Supervision. Theory and Practice*. McGraw Hill
-