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Editorial

Roger Hamill & Sandy Gordon

THIS ISSUE of the *International Coaching Psychology Review* (ICPR) begins with two articles by Louise Kovacs and Sarah Corrie, both of which explore the topic of coaching in an era of complexity and unpredictability. Their first study adopts a realist evaluation approach to test what makes coaching effective in promoting executives' ability to navigate such complexity. They describe the development and evaluation of a formulation-based framework for coaching, concluding that such an approach, still more familiar in clinical than coaching settings, can be highly effective in helping executive coachees find their way through an increasingly complex and volatile work context.

The second study by Kovacs and Corrie focuses on one specific outcome of their first study by highlighting the Purpose, Account, Intervene, Reflect (PAIR) framework developed by the authors. The PAIR framework is described in detail and an example of its application is given by way of illustration. The authors acknowledge that formulation-based coaching can be time consuming and therefore may not suit every situation. However, they conclude that the formulation approach in general, and the PAIR framework in particular, warrant further research to examine the effectiveness of such ways of coaching. They close with a brief summary of both articles and the potential contribution formulation-based approaches may make to extending coaching's effectiveness in the face of complexity.

In our third article, Mark Barry, Mike Murphy and Hugh O'Donavan describe an intervention and control group study involving 27 school-going adolescent males. These participants were randomly allocated into either a 16 session Cognitive Behavioural Coaching (CBC) group or a no-intervention control group. The aim of the study was to assess whether the CBC programme was effective in reducing depressive symptoms in this cohort. The results suggest that such interventions are indeed beneficial and the author recommends that further research be done with similar programmes in other populations and across longer timeframes.

Continuing the focus on educational settings, Jacqueline Lee provides our fourth article with her exploration of the benefits of coaching for teachers in urban secondary schools. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to examine data from postal questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, Lee found that coaching was widely considered to have beneficial effects at various levels, from individual daily teaching practice to the wider organisation, by promoting better schoolwide communication, collaboration and leadership capacity.

Our final substantive article in this issue is an article on Core Self Evaluations as predictors of coaching outcome variance written by David Tee, David Shearer and Gareth Roderique-Davies. The authors used multiple regression analysis to examine the correlational relationship between coachee's core self-evaluations and the attainment of coaching goals. On the basis of their results they make a number of recommendations for possible improvements in future research.

Next Professor Sarah Corrie, the SGCP's Research Officer (and former chair), provides an insightful review of *Being Supervised: A Guide for Supervisees*, by Erik de Haan and Willemine Regouin. As Professor Corrie points out, it is rare to find a book in which the focus is on helping the supervisee – rather than the supervisor – understand and utilise supervision better. She recommends

this brief text as a useful resource for promoting reflection at all stages in the supervision experience.

We finish, as usual, with our respective Chairs' letters. David Webster, the SGCP Chair, reminds us that as coaching psychologists we are uniquely placed to engage in wide ranging conversations across all aspects of applied psychology, and that our knowledge and skills have never been more needed than now at a time of such uncertainty and change both in the UK generally and in the British Psychological Society in particular. David also reminds us to keep our diaries free for the upcoming SGCP conference in Birmingham on 7th and 8th December 2017. The National Convener of IGCP, Vicki de Prazer, writes of ongoing efforts to promote Excellence in Coaching within the Australian coaching psychology community by supporting ever improving links between researchers and practitioners.

At the risk of being the boy who cried wolf, I (RH) can confirm that this really will be my last issue as UK Co-ordinating editor of the ICPR. I promise you that, unlike last year, I will not be 'unretiring' at the start of the next issue! Indeed, I am very pleased to announce that Professor Jonathan Passmore will be taking over the editorial role from here. Given his hugely significant contribution to coaching psychology research and practice over many years, I can think of no better person to hand the reins over to. I am very excited about Jonathan's plans for taking the ICPR forward and developing this wonderful publication yet further.

My time at the helm of the ICPR has taught me a number of things, but most clearly, it has taught me that producing a publication of this high quality requires a fantastic amount of effort from a wide range of individuals. I have mentioned before that, without the curiosity and drive of our various contributors, all of that effort would be for naught. So please let me say thank you again to every student, academic and practitioner who has taken the time to plan, conduct and write-up the innovative and inspiring research that has filled these pages over the past twelve years. I look forward to reading such studies in the ICPR for many years to come, and I would once again strongly encourage submissions from anyone thinking of current or future articles that could fit with the publication's remit of promoting excellence in coaching psychology research and practice.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my colleagues on the SGCP committee for their ongoing support in this role and I want to say how much I appreciate their hard work and commitment across a vast range of SGCP activity. Thank you also to Sandy Gordon, the Australian Co-ordinating Editor for his wise counsel during my two years in this role. Finally, and most importantly, I wish to record my warmest thanks (once again!) to our tireless administrator, Tracy White, who kindly agreed to stay on for the past year to help us with our editorial transition, but will also be stepping down after the publication of this issue. Tracy's knowledge, organisational skills and knack for encouragement have been very much appreciated over the years and we wish her all the very best in her future endeavours.

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Executive coaching in an era of complexity. Study 1. Does executive coaching work and if so how? A realist evaluation

Louise C. Kovacs & Sarah Corrie

Objectives: *Executive coaching is delivered within business environments that are highly complex and unpredictable. A current debate is whether novel approaches to coaching are needed to help leaders become skilled in navigating complexity. The objectives of this research were to: (i) develop a coaching framework for helping coaches work with complexity based on formulation; and (ii) support an emerging understanding of how executive coaching might exert its beneficial effects.*

Design: *The study employed a realist evaluation methodology where a total of 37 participants were recruited through purposive sampling. Three separate cohorts (two of which received coaching based on the framework that was developed), contributed to an iterative process of data collection and analysis. The design followed a conventional research cycle of hypothesis testing and refinement, using a four-stage research cycle adapted from Blamey and Mackenzie (2007).*

Method: *An in-depth review of the literature, interviews, focus group and a measure of leadership versatility (the Leadership Versatility Index; Kaiser & Overfield, 2010) were used to inform the development and refinement of a coaching framework for working with complexity.*

Results: *In all cases the purpose of the coaching was realised, positive changes in navigating complexity were observed and a range of gains were demonstrated. Key mechanisms that determined the impact of the coaching were identified.*

Conclusions: *A coaching framework that is based on formulation appears to offer a flexible, individualised approach to developing interventions that can be successfully used with leaders who are navigating complexity.*

Keywords: *executive coaching; complexity; realist evaluation; formulation; CMO configurations.*

EXECUTIVE COACHING is enacted within business environments that are highly complex and unpredictable. Today's executives face a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world (Barber, 1992) but do not necessarily regard themselves as well-equipped to deal with the levels of complexity that they encounter (IBM, 2010).

As coaching in organisations has become a mainstream form of leadership development (Grant et al., 2010) coaches[1] are increasingly required to support executives in developing their ability to manage situations for which there can be no simple solution. This requires the field to examine how it understands complexity and whether existing coaching models are fit for purpose for helping executives navigate the current business world (and if not, what alternatives are needed).

This first, of two, articles reports the findings of a study that sought to (i) develop a coaching framework for helping coaches work with complexity and (ii) aid understanding of how executive coaching exerts its beneficial effects. The study was grounded in the tradition of practitioner

[1] While a number of practitioners deliver coaching interventions, including those who self-identify as coaches, coaching psychologists and coaching practitioners, for the purposes of this article and for ease of reading the authors use the term 'coach' as a collective noun for all of the above.

research; using an iterative process of data collection and analysis, the choice of methodology reflected the intention to contribute to the creation of professional knowledge in which the results obtained were contextually relevant and had implications for coaching practice.

Towards an understanding of complexity in the current business environment

Complexity has been defined as the interaction of many highly interconnected heterogeneous variables that can rapidly change states, often in response to each other, creating outcomes that unfold over multiple timeframes (Kovacs, 2016). Although executive coaching is delivered within a rapidly evolving professional, business and economic climate, existing coaching models may not adequately match the complexity of the business world (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012; Lane & Down, 2010). Cavanagh and Lane (2012), for example, have argued that:

> *'Most of the models of leadership and change we use as practitioners are built on the assumption that our clients and the contexts in which they work, can be treated as if they are linear systems – governed by simple (or complicated) linear chains of cause and effect – and hence are only really useful in systems that are functioning in straight forward, predictable ways.'* (p.79)

Scholars working in the field of transdisciplinarity (e.g. Brown et al., 2010; Ramadier, 2004) have similarly challenged the notion that the problems of today can be understood through linear models of causation. Transdisciplinarity seeks to transcend traditional discipline-specific boundaries and synthesise different methodologies to generate new knowledge and creative, contextualised solutions for 'wicked problems' (Brown et al., 2010). Wicked, here, refers to those challenges that are difficult to define, that defy traditional problem-solving methods and that give rise to unintended consequences when solutions are implemented. Examples of these kinds of problems include climate change, poverty and terrorism. They also include the functioning of local and global markets – that is, the very domains which the executives seeking coaching need to navigate.

Systems theory, the complexity sciences and leadership

One approach that has influenced thinking about complexity in organisations is systems theory. Early applications, referred to as hard or first-order systems-thinking, were focused on efficiency and offered managers a way to optimise their organisations' performance (Jackson, 2003). According to first-order systems-thinking, the role of executives is to set the direction of the organisation, and increase stability and predictability so that the organisational aims can be realised (Jackson, 2003). This perspective is predicated on an assumption that systems can be objectively observed and modelled.

Scholars writing from the perspective of complexity theory (e.g. Uhl-Bien et al., 2007), have challenged the adequacy of first-order systems perspectives for understanding today's organisations. They favour conceptualising organisations as complex adaptive systems (CAS) which 'consist of aggregates of interacting sub-units, or agents, which together produce complex and adaptive behaviour' (Boal & Schulz, 2007. p.413). One implication of this perspective is that rather than attempting to envision and predict the future, leadership in a CAS requires an ability to cultivate the conditions that allow creative solutions to emerge from the interactions of the agents within the organisation (Marion & Uhl-bien, 2001).

A significant challenge for executives is making sense of the multiple systems in which they are immersed. Two models have been developed to identify and understand the dynamics of situations, perspectives, conflicts and changes that will influence

decision-making. The first is Stacey's (1996) matrix of (i) certainty of prediction and (ii) level of agreement about what action to take, which identifies a range of circumstances in which decisions are made. In simple systems where there is likely to be a high degree of predictability and certainty about what action to take, leadership can take the form of rational and linear cause-effect approaches. In contrast, chaotic systems are those where it is not possible to predict what might occur and no agreement, therefore, about what action needs to be taken. Chaotic systems – such as markets, economies and the weather – are deemed to be so unpredictable and unstable that they often appear to be random.

Between the two extremes lies the zone of complexity and CAS. These situations require a high degree of collaboration (Mumford et al., 2002), a consideration of diverse perspectives, utilising multiple forms of expertise and a team approach to problem-solving (Sargut & McGrath, 2011; Snowden & Boone, 2007). One of the desired outcomes of using these leadership approaches is to stimulate organisational creativity and innovation. This idea is supported by the findings from an IBM CEO survey (2010) which found that the ability to develop creative solutions was one of the key factors in the success of those organisations dealing well with complex situations.

The second model, and similar to Stacey's (1996) certainty/agreement matrix, is Snowden and Boone's (2007) Cynefin model which recognises four primary 'zones' in which executives may find themselves having to make decisions. The simple and complicated zones are part of an ordered domain which can be designed and directed. In an un-ordered domain exist complex and chaotic situations and events. In these contexts, cause and effect relationships are often impossible to determine and the best that executives can aim for is identifying relevant patterns (Kurtz & Snowden, 2003).

From the perspective of these two models one of the ways in which an executive can match the complexity of the business environment is to develop a broad range of leadership approaches that can be selectively utilised to meet the demands of diverse situations (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Many situations will contain elements from multiple zones, making versatility a vital leadership skill.

Stacey (2010) has presented an alternative view, rejecting the comparison between systems and human interactions and organisations on the basis that no account is taken of people's capacity to choose their own actions and responses. Stacey (2010) argues that executives are inherently involved in the interactions that form the ongoing process of an organisation's operation and so cannot stand apart to observe the situation and design future outcomes. He favours a view of organisations as complex responsive processes (CRPs). From a CRP perspective, the interactions between people are a temporal process, the outcome of which is simply further interaction. What is critical are the local interactions, the ongoing and everyday conversations, which are the vehicles through which actions and events in organisations occur. The executive's role is to widen and deepen conversation to create the possibility of new meaning and stimulate novel approaches.

Coaching models that address complexity

Coaching models that are informed by the complexity sciences are beginning to emerge. One approach has been offered by Cavanagh and Lane (2012). Drawing on Stacey's (1996) certainty/agreement matrix, Cavanagh and Lane identify a range of 'spaces' in which coaches may need to operate: the *simple, complex and chaotic*. Consistent with the models described above, each space has implications for the approaches a coach may take. In the simple space, evidence-based practice derived from empirical research can be applied; emergent models are needed for the complex space, and approaches that create structure and contain anxiety are needed in the chaotic space (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012).

Chapman (2010) proposes that executive coaching interventions should target

the development of motivation, cognitive complexity, knowledge, skills and wisdom while considering the organisational system in which the individual is situated. His Experiential Executive Coaching Model (2010), facilitated through the use of learning conversations (Harri-Augstein & Thomas, 1991), supports the coach in thinking holistically about the executive and their environment.

An additional model that aims to facilitate working in the complex space is Kahn's (2014) 'coaching on the axis framework'. Kahn (2014) argues that the role of coaching in the business environment is to act as a narrative bridge between the organisational setting and the individual with the aim of improving the relationship between the two. The focus is on the interaction of the factors in what Kahn (2014) sees as two clients – the organisation and the individual executive.

In considering the implications of these models for coaching practice it is important to recognise that the research is still at an early stage and, as for much of the executive coaching literature, the evidence-base is limited. Chapman's (2010) model, for example, is based on case studies. Kahn's (2014) model is based on his extensive experience in working with executives but is yet to be empirically substantiated. Additionally, Stacey (2012) has challenged Cavanagh and Lane's (2012) application of the certainty/agreement matrix stating that it is impossible for executives or coaches to know in advance what a situation or coaching engagement will entail (and therefore, which 'space' it will need to occupy). Nonetheless, this literature provides a conceptual starting point for creative thinking about how to personalise a coaching intervention to a specific coaching assignment.

Formulation as a framework for working with complexity

One approach to coaching that offers a potential solution to how to engage with complexity, and which also accommodates the idiosyncrasies of the individual coaching assignment, is formulation. As yet, there is very little literature applying the concept to the field of coaching psychology (Corrie & Kovacs, 2017; Lane & Corrie, 2009) but the concept of formulation has a long history in applied psychology and is deemed critical for skilled psychological practice (Corrie & Lane, 2010).

Although definitions vary, in broad terms a formulation is an explanatory account of the factors that predispose, precipitate or maintain specific behaviours or situations, and those that may enable, support and catalyse change (Lane & Corrie, 2009; see study 2, for a more detailed review of the formulation literature).

Some coaching assignments may not require formulation if simple models are sufficient, as in the case of skills coaching or when aiming for what Lane and Corrie (2009) term 'horizontal change'. However, if what is required is a 'vertical change'; that is, a deeper, more radical change in perspective or behaviour, formulation may provide a useful way forward. Significantly in their coaching models, both Chapman and Kahn appear to embrace this approach. While Chapman (2010) refers to his model as a way of making sense of clients' circumstances and needs, Kahn (2014) refers explicitly to formulation and provides an example using both environmental and individual elements to conceptualise the challenge that needs to be addressed. Thus, formulation may provide a useful structure for coaches to work with the complexity of coaching assignments, and this study seeks to investigate this proposition.

Research purpose and aims

The main aim of the current study was to develop and investigate a coaching framework that applied a formulation approach to increasing a coach's effectiveness in helping executives navigate complexity. The research aimed to understand the outcomes of applying formulation to executive coaching, while also generating insights into what made the coaching effective for which clients and in what circumstances.

The study applied a process of developing and piloting a framework, evaluating the outcomes and refining the approach for a further cycle of investigation. As such, the research described was undertaken to provide a structure for developing and evaluating a framework, rather than attempting to evaluate or test a specific model of coaching.

Methodology and methods

Research paradigm

The methodology was underpinned by a critical realist paradigm. Although the literature on scientific paradigms can appear somewhat inaccessible, it is a necessary backdrop for understanding the approach taken to knowledge creation, and perhaps particularly so when investigating complexity where alternatives to traditional research methods may be necessary (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012). As critical realism may be less familiar to readers than other research paradigms, a brief description and rationale for its use is provided below.

Critical realism (see Bhaskar, 1998; Hacking, 1983) recognises that discourse plays a central role in shaping our experiences of human reality, but also proposes that entities can exist independently of our identification of them (Danermark et al., 2002). These entities include substantive underlying social structures that shape our thoughts and actions. While people have free will, can pursue goals, and have the capacity for change, social structures enable or impose limits on their actions (Danermark et al., 2002). The role of science from this perspective is to develop theories which aim to represent the world, including the underlying structures that are critical in shaping our thoughts and actions.

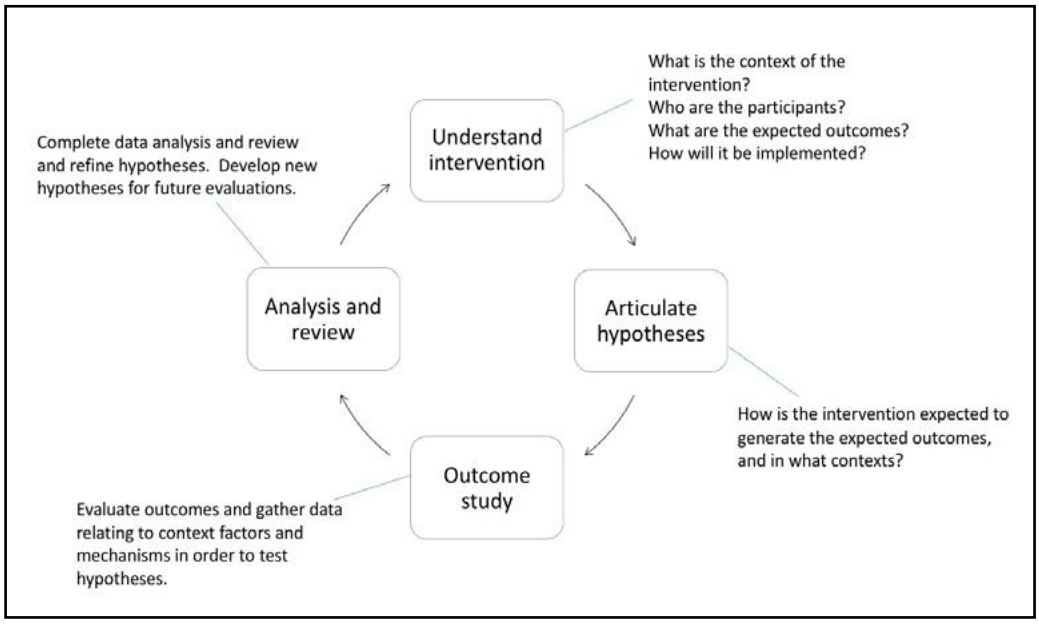
Adopting a critical realist paradigm is not without its challenges. There is still currently little research to draw from, particularly in the field of psychology (O'Mahoney, 2011), leaving unanswered questions about how to operationalise critical realist research (Yeung, 1997). Nonetheless, this paradigm may have an important contribution to make to the coaching field. First, it provides an alternative to the often-polarised debate between positivism and constructivism that has characterised much of psychology (O'Mahoney, 2011). Second, it enables researchers to go beyond questions about whether an intervention works, to develop an understanding of how clients experience the interventions they receive and how coaches can engineer desirable outcomes. Third, critical realism provides a vehicle through which it becomes possible to determine which tools, strategies and interventions are needed to achieve these outcomes, which external factors should be considered to maximise the chances of engineering a preferred outcome, and in what ways the different types of interventions may enable or constrain the self-interventions of our clients (Lane & Corrie, 2006).

Methodologies informed by a critical realist paradigm are beginning to emerge. For example, realist evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) privileges the testing and development of theory regarding what works for whom, and in which circumstances. Realist evaluation is garnering interest in applied psychology and health care, and although under-represented in coaching psychology, has recently been proposed as a potentially useful approach to research enquiry (Kovacs & Corrie, 2016). In the current study, realist evaluation provided a framework for an iterative approach to investigating the outcomes of the coaching intervention, as well as guiding understanding of what made the coaching effective, and any individual or social factors that acted as enablers or inhibitors of change.

Research design

Realist evaluation follows a conventional research cycle of hypotheses testing and refinement and for this study a four-stage research cycle adapted from Blamey and Mackenzie (2007) was applied (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Research Cycle (adapted from Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007)



Participants

Given the iterative nature of the study, participants were recruited at different phases of the study as follows:

- Cohort A: Recruited to provide an understanding of the context for the research and possible approaches for coaching.
- Cohort B: The first cohort who received coaching.
- Cohort C: The second cohort who received coaching.

Table 1 provides information regarding the participants in each cohort. Participants were volunteers who were recruited either through direct contact with the first author, or through HR departments. Cohort A (executives, HR executives and executive coaches) were a purposive sample who had senior leadership experience and were, therefore, well-placed to comment on the complexity of the business environment. Participants in cohort A were executives or HR professionals in multi-national or Australian corporations and comprised chief executive officers (CEO), direct reports to the CEO, and heads of department. The coaches had at least 10 years' experience in coaching senior level executives in a range of industries. Cohort B executives worked in multi-national or Australian organisations and were leading significant projects or functions within the organisation. Cohort C executives were either general managers, direct reports to general managers, or vice presidents in Singaporean or multi-national organisations. All participants identified many elements of their role and business that they found complex. They also reported that the environment in which they worked was becoming increasingly complex.

Procedure

1. Understanding the intervention. The aim of the first stage of the research was to develop an understanding of the context for the executive coaching interventions and to predict possible outcomes. Realist evaluation maintains that participants are valuable sources of knowledge and have an important role in developing initial hypotheses about how and why an intervention works (Chen & Rossi, 1989). In addition to a literature review, interviews with the executives and a focus group with the HR executives were conducted (cohort A).

Table 1: Participant characteristics
(A description of each cohort's contribution to the study is outlined in the Procedure section).

Cohort	Number of participants	Gender	Age range	Nationality	Location
A Execs	7	3 female 4 male	35–57	Australian	6 in Australia 1 in Kazakhstan
A HR Execs	14	12 female 2 male	29–48	Australian	Australia
A Coaches	4	3 female 1 male	36–48	3 Australian 1 British	Australia
B	5	1 female 4 male	33–63	4 Australian 1 Spanish	Australia
C	7	3 female 4 male	32–48	1 Irish 1 Malaysian 5 Singaporean	5 in Singapore 1 in Indonesia 1 in Mongolia

A semi-structured interview format provided a core framework of questions along with the flexibility to ask additional questions to ensure a shared understanding of the participants' perspectives (Gray, 2009). The HR executives' focus group was a facilitated discussion of the same core questions as follows:

(i) In what way do you see the business world as complex, ambiguous and uncertain?
(ii) In what way do you see your role as complex?
(iii) What capabilities do you think executives need to be able to deal with complexity effectively?

The interviews and discussion from the focus group were audio-recorded and transcribed for the purposes of developing data displays and coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The transcripts were repeatedly reviewed, and key phrases and examples were entered on to a spreadsheet for each participant. The number of times each theme was mentioned was counted to identify the top themes. A similar approach was used for analysing the literature.

The main themes for how executives understood the complexity of the business environment were consistent with the literature review; that is, participants cited the need to manage large numbers of interconnected, heterogeneous variables (such as over-lapping projects with multiple stakeholders), and the need to respond to these variables at a fast pace. The most common response to Question 2, 'In what way do you see your role as complex?' was 'people management'. Six of the seven executives identified this, as did the participants in the HR focus group. Other themes were an increased need to collaborate across functions; dealing with the unintended consequences of actions; not having all the information needed to make decisions, and needing to obtain outcomes with a variety of stakeholders who had different and potentially conflicting perspectives and priorities.

The principal capabilities that the executives believed were required are summarised in Table 2 (for further details, see Kovacs, 2016). These themes were used to identify the possible outcomes of a coaching intervention and to select the

Table 2: The key capabilities identified by the executives.

Ranking	Theme	Description
1	Leadership Versatility	Having a broad range of leadership behaviours and being able to apply them in the right contexts.
2	Team leadership	Creating a strong team with diverse and complementary skills and knowledge.
3	Perspective taking capacity	Take different perspectives on an issue, zooming in to the detail and then stepping back and taking a broader or more strategic view.
4	Effective interactions	Asking the right question, facilitating discussion, being prepared to listen to and be challenged by others' views.
5	Resilience	Personal resilience, determination, persistence and being able to keep others' motivation high.
6	Learning agility	Ability to quickly learn, take in new information and being curious.
7	Experimenter	Being comfortable with experimenting with new ideas and approaches.
8	Relationship building	Effective influencing skills, collaboration and building a network of productive relationships inside and outside the organisation.

measures for the next stage of the project as described below.

To select and develop the coaching approach used in the outcome study, the literature from the fields of executive coaching, coaching psychology, and applied psychology more broadly, was reviewed. Formulation was selected as an approach that was flexible enough to meet the needs of the diverse and complex environment in which executive coaching is conducted (see study 2).

2. Developing the programme theory. A programme theory (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) is a set of hypotheses organised around three core areas: (1) the context in which the intervention is expected to have impact; (2) the mechanisms (factors, variables) by which the intervention might produce any outcomes; and (3) an examination of any pattern of outcomes obtained from having introduced the intervention. These three core areas are defined as CMO configurations (Context + Mechanism = Outcome).

Programme theory contains hypotheses at different levels of abstraction (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). The initial high-level hypothesis was that:

> *In executive coaching cases, such as developing leadership capability to navigate complexity (context), a coaching framework using formulation that is applied by an experienced coach to design a programme to meet the individual's needs in their context (mechanism), will enable positive changes in an executive's capability and achievement of the purpose of the coaching (outcome).*

An additional eight hypotheses were developed to identify how the mechanisms of the coaching approach might generate outcomes. Table 3 outlines the initial programme theory.

3. Conducting the outcome study. To test the initial hypotheses the lead author, also an

Table 3: The initial programme theory.

Context	Mechanisms	Pattern of outcomes
Executive coaching in organisations. Complex cases with many factors involved in increasing effectiveness. Executives dealing with complexity and its effects.	An agreed purpose for the coaching provides a focus and boundaries for the coaching assignment. Engagement with stakeholders provides understanding of the broader context, aligns purpose across stakeholders, engages stakeholders to support the client. Coach awareness of their perspectives and the choices that lead from these enables the coach to decide if their perspective is suited to the coaching purpose and the needs of the client. A formulation that considers multiple perspectives provides multiple possibilities for change enabling the coach to adapt to meet the needs of the client. A formulation that considers the client's perspective enables a coaching programme that meets the client's worldview. Hypotheses from the formulation provide a framework for the coach and client to explore and experiment with new perspectives and approaches. A coaching process consistent with purpose and perspectives provides a coherent framework for the client to explore opportunities for change, test hypotheses and implement interventions. Specific interventions in which the coach is skilled, and which are tailored to each client's case, create conditions for change.	Changes in client thinking and behaving. Increased capability to lead in the client's environment. Increased ability to navigate complexity. Coaching purpose realised.

experienced coach, conducted a six-month coaching programme applying the coaching framework and measuring the outcomes with 12 executives. Cohort B (N=5) received coaching during 2011/12 and cohort C (N=7) during 2012/13.

Participants received six or seven coaching sessions, each of which was of 90–120 minutes in duration. The length and number of sessions were typical of executive coaching engagements (Koortzen & Oosthuizen, 2010), and were of sufficient time and number to make full use of the coaching framework and to measure the outcomes. The coaching sessions were completed face-to-face or by telephone and Skype where required.

Audio-recordings were made of all the coaching sessions. After each session, the recordings were reviewed and notes made about the main topics of conversations. Also noted were any significant insights or shifts in thinking, and any elements of the interaction that seemed particularly effective or ineffective.

One of the key capabilities identified as important in navigating complexity was having a broad range of leadership behaviours and being able to apply them in the right

circumstances. This has been termed leadership versatility (Kaiser & Overfield, 2010). The outcomes of the coaching were evaluated using a pre- and post-coaching 360° survey, the Leadership Versatility Index (LVI; Kaiser & Overfield, 2010), which is designed to measure this capability.

Further outcome data were collected using pre- and post-intervention semi-structured interviews with the participants, and separately with their managers. Information relating to the mechanisms and context factors were collected using the interview data, recordings of the coaching sessions, and the lead author's notes and reflections on the sessions.

4. Conducting data analysis, revising hypotheses. The primary aim of the data analysis was to identify the coaching outcomes and to establish the primary mechanisms that had the tendency to produce those outcomes in specific situations. Explanatory effects matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were used to facilitate the data analysis. These matrices took the form of a spreadsheet that identified patterns of outcomes and linked them to the possible mechanisms and context factors. The first step involved establishing a matrix for each participant that displayed the outcomes identified by data source. This provided a framework for analysing the main themes, identifying differences between stakeholder groups and triangulating the outcome data from the different sources.

Second, the mechanisms that had the tendency to cause those outcomes in the specific context of each participant and their environment were identified. For each participant, an additional spreadsheet matrix was established with the following headings:

- Outcome.
- Mechanisms.
- Context – participant factors.
- Context – structure factors (e.g. organisation or social cultural norms that might act as enablers or barriers).

Analysis of the data sources involved reviewing the notes made while listening to the coaching sessions, and re-listening to any sections that contained significant interactions and possible mechanisms. The lead author's coaching session notes were also reviewed and factors that indicated a possible mechanism, or context factors, were identified and linked to outcomes in the matrix. The data for each participant were reviewed again, noting the context factors associated with each of the mechanisms and outcomes.

With the analysis complete for each participant, a further matrix was established to perform cross-case analyses which identified patterns in the appearance of the outcomes, mechanisms and context factors across all 12 cases. These patterns informed a set of hypotheses in the form of CMO configurations, which in turn could lead to a revised (and improved) programme theory.

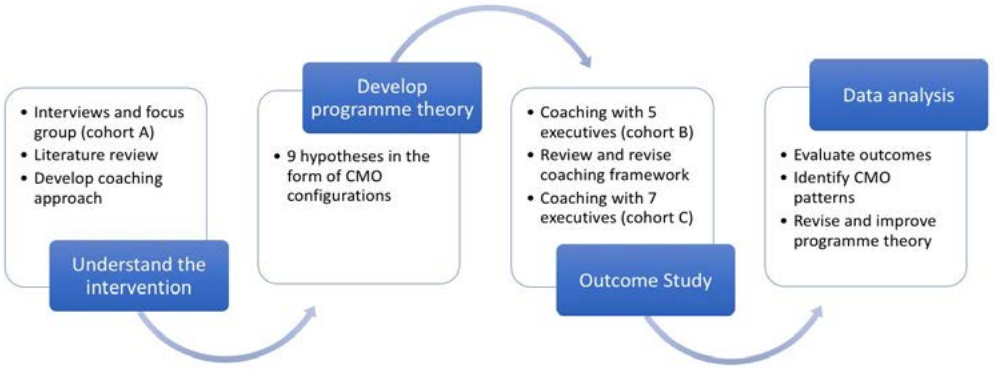
Figure 2 provides a visual illustration of the four stages of the research procedure.

Results

The results from the data analysis supported the initial hypotheses contained in the programme theory. For all participants, the coaching purpose was realised, with eight of the 12 executives attaining significant goals that indicated they had improved their capability to navigate the complexity of their situations. For example, six of the participants achieved a promotion and both the participants and their managers identified changes in thinking or behaviour made during the coaching as having contributed to the participants being offered these promotions. Two other participants managed complex projects to a successful outcome. All 12 participants identified specific behavioural changes they had made as a result of their coaching programmes.

Seven of the participants reported increased confidence in managing ambiguity such as needing to make decisions where the data are not clear. Another theme was that of increased self-awareness, which was identified in six cases. Examples included increased awareness of triggers for specific behaviours or increased awareness of mental models, beliefs and assumptions. Other outcomes included

Figure 2: The four stages of the research procedure.



increased confidence with more senior stakeholders, being more collaborative, managing a complex organisational change, handling difficult conversations such as performance management and redundancies, and setting clearer expectations for direct reports.

Overall versatility as measured by the LVI increased in seven of the 12 participants. Eight improved on the forceful-enabling dimension (how they lead) and seven improved on the strategic-operational dimension (what they lead). In five of the seven cases where overall versatility improved, there was also an increase in leadership effectiveness scores.

The data analysis also identified key mechanisms; that is, how the resources of the coaching influenced the client's reasoning and ultimately the outcomes obtained. Eleven mechanisms were identified in the data from cohort A and 11 in cohort B. Five of the mechanisms appeared in both cohorts giving a total of 17 identified mechanisms (see Table 4).

Context factors that influenced how a client made use of the coaching were also identified and linked to the mechanisms. For example, one of the mechanisms was coach credibility. In the cases where this was relevant, the clients performed highly technical roles, were considered experts in their field, and expressed scepticism about coaching. They also worked in company cultures (e.g. banking and pharmaceuticals) where technical expertise was highly valued. In contrast, where this mechanism did not appear, the clients were open and receptive to change and did not express doubts about the likely impact of the coaching. The CMO configurations are provided in Table 5.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to increase the effectiveness of coaching engagements that involved developing an executive and their ability to navigate complexity. Developing leadership capability is itself a complex endeavour and, therefore, a simple approach based on one perspective may not match the complexity of the task. Instead an approach was developed that considered multiple perspectives based on the application of formulation.

The findings suggest that formulation can support a flexible and adaptable coaching approach that meets the diverse, specific and local needs of individual clients. The use of realist evaluation provided some insight into the mechanisms and context factors relevant for the participants, each of whom identified a different combination of factors as influencing the effectiveness of the coaching they received. These findings suggest that while coaches should have knowledge of empirically-informed interventions, they also need a means of identifying which approaches are most suited to which clients and in which circumstances.

Table 4: Identified mechanisms emerging from the data analysis.

Mechanism	# times identified
Reflective space: Talking things through, considering different perspectives.	12
Probing questions.	1
Direct and supportive feedback: Either via the LVI, the manager or from the coach.	5
Perspective-taking shift: A shift in how the client made sense of their world, themselves or their relationships with others.	6
Providing input: The coach provides knowledge in the way of management theory or practice, sharing experience or psychological concepts.	6
Reassurance: Providing support and reassurance.	1
Contextualisation: Making theory relevant, relating it specifically to the client's situation, providing specific examples.	5
Positive relationship: Feeling heard, establishing trust and non-judgemental environment.	4
Coach credibility: Establish credibility through expertise and knowledge.	4
Specific solutions: Facilitating problem-solving.	4
Goal-focused: Setting clear goals.	3
Action and accountability: Holding client accountable for completing agreed actions.	2
Homework: Specific activities to complete between sessions.	1
Learning cycle: Review of actions and results.	1
Timing: Spacing of sessions.	5
Coach-led agenda: Conversation is led by coach based on formulation.	1
Client-led agenda: Client sets the topic of discussion	1

Nonetheless, caution must be exercised in interpreting the results of the study given its methodological limitations. First, the methods employed were largely subjective and relied extensively on the participants' ability to reflect on their experience. This introduced the potential for a variety of perceptual, interpretive and recall biases that have been well-documented in the literature (see Gambrill, 2012). The LVI provided a view of each participant's performance from the perspective of others in the organisation but there were no objective measures of the participants' performance.

Second, the results from the LVI 360° survey were inconsistent and in some cases, contradictory. Only seven of the participants scored an increase in overall versatility, three remained constant and two received lower scores post-coaching. However, for both participants who received a reduced score for leadership versatility, the rating for overall leadership effectiveness increased. These results highlight the challenges of measuring the effectiveness of coaching in complex environments where changes in team structure, personnel and myriad other personal and organizational factors, may influence ratings.

Third, cross-cultural factors were not directly considered. This would be an interesting focus for future research, especially investigating how CMO configurations might vary as a function of executive diversity and the expectations, practices and dilemmas posed by situating leadership in a specific culture, at a particular point in time.

Table 5: The CMO configurations.

Context Factors	Mechanism	Outcomes
Client open to coaching and motivated to address development needs. Skilled and confident coach.	A reflective space that opens up possibilities for change.	Changes in thinking and behaving. More effective leadership. Increased ability to navigate complexity. Builds confidence and increases leadership effectiveness. Learning that leads to increased leadership effectiveness.
Client open to having thinking challenged. Coach skilled in asking effective questions.	Use of probing questions.	
Client open to coaching and motivated to address development needs. Client open to feedback. Coach able and prepared to provide feedback.	Supportive and direct feedback creates greater self-awareness and creates motivation to change.	
Client's current perspective is restricting options. Coach able to see client's and other perspectives. Organisational and society structures that support new perspective.	A shift in perspective opens up possibilities for change.	
Client with raw materials in terms of knowledge, experience, training. Coach with relevant experience and knowledge. Organisation provides appropriate management tools and training. Supportive and involved manager.	Contextualise relevant theory to facilitate application.	
Client lacks specific knowledge or experience. Coach with relevant specific knowledge or training. Organisation lacks formal management processes or training.	Provides input in the form of theory, tools or techniques.	
Client open to coaching. Skilled and confident coach.	Positive relationship that enables open dialogue and creates an environment for learning and change.	
Sceptical, technical client. Culture that values technical expertise. Confident and experienced coach.	Establishing coach credibility creates an environment for learning and change.	
Client willing to share complex and challenging situations and open to exploring and experimenting. Coach who can facilitate exploration of possible solutions through dialogue. Environment that presents complex and challenging issues.	Discussion and facilitation of solution-finding for specific situations.	

Client feeling overwhelmed by complexity of situation and willing to share vulnerabilities. Coach able to create supportive relationship. Complex and challenging environment.	Providing reassurance and support.	
Client has specific operational issues or awareness of development needs. Coach willing and able to flex coaching to meet client's agenda.	A client-led agenda facilitates client learning.	
Client open to feedback, new ideas and learning. Coach able to give feedback and challenge thinking.	A coach-led agenda stimulates reflection and development.	

A final limitation was that the samples were small, limiting generalisability. However, as noted at the start of the article, this study was located within the discipline of practitioner research – a discipline that seeks to assist the refinement of practice through the privileging of locally situated priorities (Lester, 2004). Different modes of knowledge (see Scott et al., 2004) are known to favour different approaches to enquiry, and emphasise different forms of methodological precision. For example, unlike the disciplinary knowledge of mode 1 knowledge, where scientific description is seen as the superior form of knowledge, and mode 2 where the emphasis is on applied knowledge that transcends local and personal knowledge, mode 3 emphasises dispositional and transdisciplinary knowledge, starts from a premise that knowledge is non-linear and contextualised, and promotes knowledge developed by individuals through reflection on their practice.

The authors would identify this study as an example of mode 3 knowledge and the use of realist evaluation reflects this positioning. Realist evaluation, while holding promise for implementing research from a critical realist perspective, is not currently widely taught, is not yet well-understood in the academic community and can be complex to conduct. However, given the challenges of carrying out efficacy studies of executive coaching (mode 1), and effectiveness studies (mode 2), designing studies that generate different forms of knowledge have the potential to inform the evaluation and development of executive coaching in new and innovative ways – a position on which this study has sought to capitalise. In summary, this type of research has attempted to respond to the call for novel approaches to investigating complexity – a call that comes both scholars, such as Cavanagh and Lane (2012), as well as the complexity sciences and the transdisciplinarity movement.

Conclusion

There are many challenges associated with evaluating the effectiveness of executive coaching. One of the difficulties lies is linking changes in an individual's behaviour and capability with increased organisational performance, particularly in the current business world where results unfold over multiple timeframes. This study has sought to contribute a perspective on why, how and in which circumstances, coaching can exert its beneficial effects. A further aim that was realised through this study was the development, implementation and evaluation of an approach to formulation that is specific and responsive to the executive coaching context. The development of the PAIR (Purpose-Account-Intervene-Reflect) Framework, its use in executive coaching assignments and recommendations for its use in practice, is the subject of the next article.

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Executive coaching in an era of complexity. Study 2. Applying formulation to coaching: A description of the PAIR Framework

Louise C. Kovacs & Sarah Corrie

The business world is increasingly uncertain, unpredictable, complex and global, and coaches need methods that enable them to conceptualise and work effectively with the challenges that their executive clients now face. Following the research reported in study 1, this article describes the PAIR Framework, a coaching-specific approach to formulation that was developed to enable coaches to work with complexity. The concept of formulation, whilst well-established in other disciplines within applied psychology, has yet to be given any substantive consideration within the coaching literature, which remains extremely sparse. The use of formulation is proposed as a comprehensive and effective method in the context of coaching assignments where executives are navigating complexity. This study describes the PAIR Framework and provides an illustration of its application. The implications of incorporating formulation into coaching practice are potentially highly significant and, therefore, further research is recommended to understand more about the coaching outcomes obtained when using formulation generally, and the PAIR Framework specifically.

Keywords: *executive coaching; complexity; formulation; PPP model; PAIR Framework.*

EXECUTIVE COACHES working in today's global economy are likely to find themselves having to manage multiple levels of complexity. Although it has been argued that the theoretical and philosophical foundations of existing coaching models are relevant to working with complexity (Whybrow et al., 2012), others have claimed that most approaches are insufficient and argue for emergent models which match reality of the contexts in which executives find themselves (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012; Lane & Down, 2010).

In study 1, the authors reported the results of an investigation which attempted to: (i) develop a coaching framework that could help coaches[1] work with complexity and (ii) aid understanding of how executive coaching exerts its beneficial effects. In this second article, the authors focus on a specific outcome of the first study that has particular significant implications for executive coaching practice – namely, the Purpose, Account, Intervene, Reflect (PAIR) Framework, an approach to formulation that has been developed to support coaches in working with executives who are navigating complexity. This article introduces and describes the PAIR Framework, considers the implications of underpinning coaching with the concept of formulation more widely, and offers guidelines for its use in practice.

Formulation and its role in professional practice

Developing executives in the current economic and business environment is arguably a more complex activity than ever before. Living and working in a global economy where uncertainty, change and ambiguity are ever-present gives rise to many challenges as

[1] While a number of practitioners deliver coaching interventions, including those who self-identify as coaches, coaching psychologists and coaching practitioners, for the purposes of this article and for ease of reading the authors use the term 'coach' as a collective noun for all of the above.

executives and those that coach them attempt to grapple with the range and diversity of factors involved. Although several models and frameworks have been developed to match the complexity of today's business environment (e.g. Cavanagh & Lane, 2012; Chapman, 2010; Kahn, 2014), this literature is still in its infancy and there remains an absence of empirically-substantiated interventions for working with complexity.

One approach that shows promise is that of formulation (Corrie & Kovacs, 2017; Lane & Corrie, 2009). In broad terms a formulation can be defined as '…an explanatory account of the issues with which a client is presenting (including predisposing, precipitating and maintaining factors) that can form the basis of a shared framework of understanding and which has implications for change' (Lane & Corrie, 2009; p.196). Formulation has not yet been widely applied to coaching and in consequence, the literature is extremely sparse. However, it has a long-standing history within applied psychology more broadly (Crellin, 1998) where, despite variations amongst disciplines, there is some degree of consensus about the many functions that formulation can serve (Corrie & Lane, 2010). These include:

- clarifying hypotheses and formulating appropriate questions;
- prioritising client issues;
- aiding selection of appropriate intervention strategies;
- predicting client reactions to interventions and possible obstacles to progress;
- facilitating systematic thinking about lack of progress;
- identifying missing information;
- identifying patterns in a client's actions and responses.

Formulation and coaching psychology

In coaching, the development of a formulation has been offered as an important vehicle through which coaches can understand their clients' circumstances and needs, and tailor their approach to increase the likelihood of an effective outcome (Corrie & Kovacs, 2017). However, Lane and Corrie (2009) have proposed that if formulation is to be considered 'fit for purpose' for coaching it is necessary to develop a model or framework that facilitates the incorporation of a variety of stakeholder views, takes into account more than individual and internal factors, and should be relevant to all contexts regardless of the goals of coaching and the theoretical approach used.

The Purpose, Perspectives and Process (PPP) model (Corrie & Lane, 2010; Lane & Corrie, 2009), derived from original work by Lane (1974, 1978), is one initial attempt to provide a systematic but flexible approach to formulation and the interventions to which this gives rise. In this model, Purpose is concerned with: (i) understanding the issues or the question that needs to be explored; (ii) developing a clear understanding of key stakeholders' expectations; (iii) ensuring clarity concerning the role each stakeholder will play in the coaching engagement; and (iv) considering the wider context in which the coaching will take place.

The next consideration is the perspectives that different stakeholders (and in particular the coach and client) bring to the engagement. For the coach, this will include the theoretical perspectives underpinning their coaching practice, their professional knowledge, and their beliefs about how that knowledge should be applied. Clients will have their own perspectives and the formulation should also allow for the consideration and integration of their beliefs and knowledge.

Having defined the purpose and perspectives informing a formulation, the coach can proceed to designing a process that is consistent with the aims of the coaching assignment. The process provides a high-level structure for how a practitioner plans to work with the case, informing decisions about the type of data to be collected as well as the specific interventions, tools and techniques that might be used. Detailing the process also provides an opportunity for defining how effectiveness will be monitored and measured.

While drawing on the existing literature and research, further studies on how the

PPP model relates to the field of coaching psychology would be a useful addition to the literature. Given this background, and further to the results reported in study 1, the approach described here was underpinned by the following definition of formulation, developed to reflect the fact that coaching is typically solution and future-focused:

> *Coaching formulation is an individualised explanatory account of the dynamic interacting factors that predispose, precipitate or maintain specific behaviours or situations, and those that may enable, support and catalyse change. The formulation acts as a shared framework for understanding the current situation and identifying multiple pathways to sustainable positive change.* (Adapted from Kovacs, 2016; p.67)

The PAIR Framework

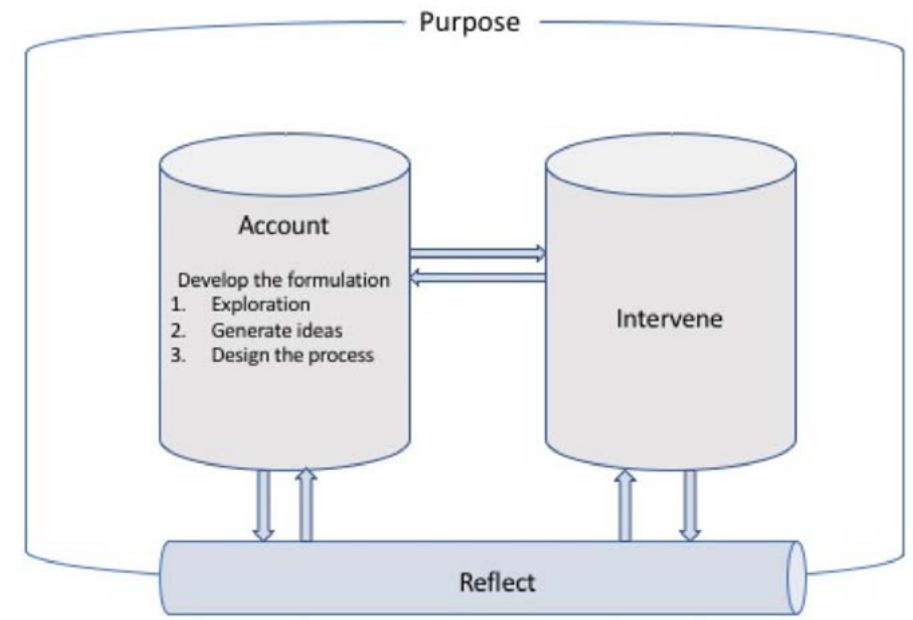
The development of the PAIR Framework is described in study 1. In brief, taking the PPP model as a starting point, the lead author coached an initial cohort of five executives. After completing the coaching with this first cohort, the core activities involved in implementing a formulation-driven approach were identified. Four themes emerged from this analysis: (1) Identifying or reviewing the purpose of the coaching; (2) activities involved in developing the formulation; (3) coaching interactions and specific interventions; and (4) reflective practices. These four themes formed the elements of the PAIR Framework, which was subsequently employed in coaching a second cohort of seven executives. After evaluating the results from all 12 coaching case studies, additional refinements were made to the PAIR Framework, the current version of which is described below.

The PAIR Framework organises the primary activities into four core elements as illustrated in Figure 1.

Purpose

In a complex coaching environment, the starting point for an assignment and for developing a formulation is to establish the

Figure 1: The PAIR Framework.



purpose of the coaching. The purpose, as understood within the PAIR Framework, clarifies broad aims rather than specific goals. Specific goals organised around behavioural changes appropriate to the client's circumstances may be subsequently agreed once the purpose of the work has been negotiated.

Agreeing its primary purpose sets the coaching assignment within agreed boundaries that provide enough scope to explore the complexity of the client's situation while ensuring that the work remains sufficiently focused on, and organised around the intended aims (Corrie & Kovacs, 2017). Throughout the coaching, the purpose provides a frame of reference when deciding which avenues to explore, which approaches to apply and whether the coach's services are well suited to the client.

Identifying the aims and objectives are the main activities at this stage, along with an exploration with the client and organisational stakeholders of what will ideally be different at the end of coaching. Gaining other stakeholders' perspectives on the desired outcomes provides the opportunity to clarify expectations, align stakeholders around the agreed purpose, and confirm the role that the stakeholders will play (if any) in supporting the coaching. While much of this activity takes place early in the engagement, the purpose is revisited throughout the coaching engagement, revised if necessary, and used as a means of evaluating if the coaching is meeting the needs of the client and the expectations of the key stakeholders.

To illustrate how the PAIR Framework can be applied in practice, an example is used throughout the following sections[2]. Table 1 illustrates the coaching purpose as defined for an executive coaching client, identified here as 'CC'.

Table 1: The Coaching Purpose for CC.

To improve the client's ability to be effective in a complex role, which involves taking a broader perspective on her position as a leader in the organisation, managing relationships more effectively, and collaborating with peers to deliver organisational outcomes.

Account

The Account element of the PAIR Framework represents the key activities involved in developing the formulation. In some respects this is the most labour-intensive aspect of the approach, drawing on a potentially wide range of data and the coach's ability to synthesise these data into a coherent understanding that can form the basis for an action plan. How a coach decides what information to gather, what factors to consider and the approach to apply will, to a large extent, be guided by the set of Perspectives that they bring to the work.

In this study, the lead author applied a critical realist and systems perspective to the formulation approach (see study 1 for a description). This perspective provided a framework that facilitated the organisation and synthesis of the multiple interacting factors that may be involved in a complex coaching assignment at individual, organisational or societal levels. An example of the types of factors considered is displayed in Table 2.

In developing the coaching account the activities identified in this study can be categorised into the three key elements: (i) exploration; (ii) generating ideas; and (iii) designing the process, as outlined below:

Exploration

The development of the formulation commences as soon as the coach begins interacting with the client and their organisation. Information is gathered through conversations with the client and other stakeholders, and through

[2] This case study is reproduced with kind permission of the client concerned. However, certain features have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Table 2: Factors identified as relevant for CC's coaching.

Social and Interpersonal factors	Individual Factors
Client interactions/behaviours ■ Very impatient with those who don't see things her way, or are 'not being rational'. ■ Will not 'kowtow' to people based purely on status. ■ If progress on her objectives is threatened she can be very aggressive and dismissive of others' concerns. ■ Will avoid those she doesn't like. **System factors/responses** ■ High expectations of her capability and ability to deliver from senior leaders. ■ People retaliate by undermining her (client alleges that emails to the senior leaders get deleted by executive assistants, documents go missing). ■ Client alleges that people in the organisation collude to block her advance, because she has not paid them sufficient respect. ■ Boss recognises her talent and is aware of some of the pressure she is under and how people 'bully' her but does not get involved. He does not appear to like conflict, seems to sit on the fence. ■ Many of the people she clashes with also work for him. ■ One peer trying to 'muscle in' on her role and gain more power while she is on maternity leave. Her boss aware but not necessarily prepared to act. ■ Patriarchal leadership culture. ■ Informal power networks built on relationships and tenure. Executive assistants wield a lot of informal power. ■ Company norms of managing the task as priority – people are not led, but the delivery of results is. ■ Social structures of the organisation organised around status, tenure, closeness to the senior leaders. There are many 'cliques'.	**Physical** ■ Six months' pregnant at start of coaching. Going on maternity leave two weeks before due date. Physically tired. **Core values and beliefs** ■ Loyalty to CEO, providing for her family (main breadwinner), respect for hierarchy, values competence and 'getting the job done' over the relationships. Meritocracy is important. ■ Fear of failure and not delivering on her commitments. ■ Must be competent to be respected. People should not be given jobs just because of their relationships. **Thought patterns** ■ 'If it's not hard, it's not worth doing.' ■ 'I must not fail – failure is really painful to me, and should be avoided.' ■ 'I must "protect" my team, we must deliver our outcomes.' ■ Decisions should be made logically and rationally. ■ 'I am rational and logical, other people make emotional decisions.' ■ Narrow definition of what achieving results looks like – a specific task focus vs. a broader, longer-term definition. **Other factors** ■ Low psychological flexibility – her belief system seems 'stuck' and there is limited motivation to change, as expressed personal ambition is low. Her priority is providing for her family not necessarily taking on a bigger role. She does it because the bosses ask her to.

observation and experience of interacting with the organisation's processes and people. An additional source of information may be psychometric instruments, such as the 360° survey used in this research (see study 1).

Generate ideas

As the information is gathered and synthesised, hunches, hypotheses and mini-theories begin to develop. Articulating these emerging theories helps make the process of idea generation explicit and, therefore, amenable to sharing with the client. Hypotheses may be tested through sharing ideas during coaching conversations, asking additional questions, using diagnostics, implementing specific interventions and techniques, or sharing the formulation. While information-gathering and hypothesis generation are a particular focus of initial coaching conversations, these activities may continue throughout the coaching engagement as a richer picture is developed (see Table 3).

Design the process

The process is an outline of how the coach and client will work together. In practice, while there may be an overarching plan, the process will need to be modified as the coaching progresses.

When designing a process, critical questions include:

- Based on the account of the factors involved, where are the most effective results likely to be gained?
- What approaches are most appropriate in this context and for this client?
- How much of the formulation will be shared with the client? How involved will the client want, or need, to be in designing the coaching process?
- What barriers to success can be anticipated and what strategies can be used to help the client overcome them?
- What measures or feedback mechanisms will assist in monitoring progress?
- Does the client have needs that may require services beyond the scope of the coaching offer (e.g. therapeutic or medical services)?

Intervene

The intervention should be a logical extension of the formulation. Specific activities may be implemented as a result of decisions taken when developing the formulation and designing the coaching process. As interventions are implemented, hypotheses tested, and the coaching progresses,

Table 3: Hypotheses that Informed CC's coaching.

The primary driver for the behaviour the company sees as problematic is a fear of failure, which, in the client's current context, may be failure to deliver a project to her high standards. If someone is perceived as being an obstacle to her ability to deliver, she responds by becoming hyper-rational and escalating her assertiveness to the point of aggression.
The client does not recognise any value in the culture of relationships and tenure, and that others in the organisation have status concerns. She sees these as emotional reasons and will try and use rationality to overcome them.
The client adopts a narrow definition of success – delivering a specific outcome not necessarily taking the broader perspective on the organisation's priorities or a longer-term view of her own success.
She is under considerable stress by trying to deliver outcomes before maternity leave, dealing with attempts to de-rail her, and lack of direct support from her manager, which reduces her ability to self-regulate.
She is respected and supported by the CEO. This affords her some protection but also evokes resentment in others who are then even more sensitive to her behaviour, believing that because she is protected by the CEO she is allowed to be aloof and abrasive.

the formulation is updated to reflect the outcomes of these activities. If the coaching is progressing as expected, this affords an opportunity to capture the learning gained. In seeking to generalise from one coaching intervention to another the coach can attempt to identify the most important contributors to progress and the interventions that seemed to have gained the most effective results, as well as eliciting the client's feedback on what has been most helpful. (See study 1 for a summary of the mechanisms of coaching effectiveness identified by the clients in this research.)

If the coaching is not obtaining the expected outcomes, reviewing and refining the formulation can be helpful. Questions to consider in this instance include:

- Are there any factors which represent obstacles that I now need to address, or that I should now consider?
- Is there another perspective or approach that it would be useful to consider at this stage?
- Are the right measures of progress in place and how else might we measure the outcomes?

Developing and reviewing the formulation with the client is also an intervention; a co-constructed understanding of the factors involved in a client's situation enables the client to collaborate on developing the solution. This increases the likelihood of the client 'owning' the work that follows.

Reflect

In developing and evaluating the PAIR Framework, reflection emerged as the foundation for the other elements. There is not a separate reflection stage, although reflection may be a specific separate activity. Instead reflection is both embedded within and supports the activities involved in applying a formulation approach.

Reviewing and updating the formulation between sessions, as well as evaluating progress towards the agreed coaching purpose, serves to deepen the coach's thinking about the client. New insights and hypotheses generated through these activities lead to refinement of the interventions or coaching process and testing of new ideas with the client (Kovacs & Corrie, 2017). In this way the formulation enables reflective practice, that is 'a deliberate pause to assume an open perspective, to allow for higher-level thinking processes' (York-Barr et al., 2001, p.6).

Reviewing the formulation is also an opportunity to consider the coach-client relationship and dynamics, which can be a source of insight. It is also a point at which to consider if supervision is required. The formulation is a support for the coach to present a client to a supervisor or supervision group, enabling the joint review of the coach's thinking and subsequent revision if needed.

Discussion

Many current coaching models or frameworks do not match the complexity of the current executive coaching context (Cavanagh & Lane 2012; Lane & Down, 2010). The development of the PAIR Framework was underpinned by a belief that an approach which assists coaches in embracing the artisanal nature of more complex coaching assignments is necessary to address effectively the issues with which executives are grappling.

As noted previously, formulation is yet to feature widely in coaching and coaching psychology, with very limited research currently available. Indeed, and to the best of the authors' knowledge, this framework, based on original research by Kovacs (2016), is one of the first to apply formulation as an approach to helping coaches navigate complexity. It is important, therefore, to consider what a greater use of formulation might contribute to the field of coaching, as well as any challenges to which such a development might give rise.

Although considered to be a core skill, the impact of formulation on outcome remains unclear – at least in the therapeutic disciplines within applied psychology. While formulation is considered to lie at the

heart of evidence-based practice (Bieling & Kuyken, 2003), the empirical evidence to support the efficacy of a formulation-driven approach is somewhat sparse and equivocal (Persons, 1998). Moreover, while some clients report finding formulation helpful, others do not (Chadwick, Williams & Mackenzie, 2003; Evans & Parry, 1996).

There are a number of potential challenges to applying formulation in executive coaching. First, there is the issue of acceptability to the client. Many executives are highly action-oriented and are looking for swift solutions to the predicaments they face. In contrast, developing a formulation takes time and effort. This may give rise to a concern that coaching is not progressing sufficiently quickly, possibly resulting in premature termination of the coaching contract by the client.

Second, there is the question of the relative importance of accuracy and functional value (Tarrier, 2006). Given the number of factors involved in each individual coaching assignment, it is difficult to determine whether a formulation is 'correct' in any definitive sense. However, there is evidence – at least within the clinical field – that the reliability of formulations can be improved through training and systematic approaches to formulation (Bieling & Kuyken, 2003). Additionally, Butler (1998) argued that formulations do not need to be 100 per cent accurate to be helpful. Rather, their purpose is to generate a rich supply of questions and ideas that can inform the direction of the work and which can be tested for their implications for the client's circumstances and needs. If these hypotheses and the results obtained make sense to the client, it could be argued that they have validity (Persons, 1989).

Third, it could be argued that a formulation is not required in all cases. Where a coaching assignment is organised around a simple and specific task (such as the need to improve skills in negotiation or delegation), it may not be necessary to invest the time and effort in devising a detailed formulation. Nonetheless, based on Stacey's (2012) argument that it is not possible to predict whether a client's situation (or indeed the coaching assignment itself) is simple or complex, it may be useful to begin each coaching assignment with the assumption that a formulation may will be needed – even if it is a simple one.

A final potential obstacle is whether the introduction of formulation proves to be acceptable to coaches themselves. Formulation may be rejected by some as the imposition of the coach's worldview rather than a collaboratively developed framework of understanding. Additionally, developing a formulation is labour intensive, can be a complex task and will require capabilities (such as decision-making, hypothesis generation and testing, and synthesising at times contradictory findings from multiple sources of data) that are de-emphasised by many coach education programmes relative to the teaching of specific models, methods and techniques. The introduction of formulation as a foundational skill will, therefore, require modification to the ways in which coaches are trained and the curriculum and methods of assessment that are used, with a greater emphasis on acquiring skills in reflective practice (Kovacs & Corrie, 2017).

Nonetheless, there are several potential benefits associated with introducing formulation into coaching practice that makes this a fruitful area for further research. First, it provides the coach with a systematic approach to developing interventions that are tailored to the unique needs of the individual client. This may be particularly beneficial for coaches who wish to extend their practice beyond applying specific models in order to create bespoke methods and approaches for coaching contexts where the evidence remains sparse. Empirically-supported approaches are emerging but practice is still currently ahead of the research to support it (Fillery-Travis & Corrie, in press).

Building formulation into the training and development of coaches might also enable the more systematic development of competences that exert an indirect meta-effect on coaching outcomes. For

example, formulation can be conceptualised as a meta-competency that fosters reflective practice, helps the coach make more explicit their own thinking, facilitates rigorous decision-making, and informs a more robust approach to selecting interventions. The exercising of these kinds of competencies has the potential to improve outcomes, and may also serve to strengthen the working alliance through increasing the client's confidence in the coach, as has been reported in the case of psychological therapy (Kendjelic & Eells, 2007). Finally, the use of formulation can support ethical practice through helping the coach be clearer about the client's needs, their own professional offering, and the limits of that offering (that might necessitate a referral to another professional). So if formulation has the potential to offer some significant benefits to the field of coaching, how might the interested practitioner go about applying the PAIR Framework in their own practice?

Using the PAIR framework in practice: Some recommendations

As noted above, many executive coaching clients are action-oriented. For this reason, it is important for clients to understand the nature of the formulation process and how it can contribute to the work of coaching. Articulating its purpose can engender confidence that the coach is adopting a thoughtful and thorough approach and that the work is underpinned by a sense of direction, with any agreed outcomes having been collaboratively agreed at the outset. Additionally, the formulation may need to be developed in conjunction with offering tools that provide some 'quick wins' for the client, in order to provide a sense of balance between exploration and change.

A second recommendation is ensuring that the PAIR Framework is used in a collaborative way. Clients will have a greater sense of ownership of any formulation when they are closely involved in its development, in co-constructing a narrative that resonates with their perspectives on the world, and in developing and testing hypotheses that have the potential to yield results that are personally and professionally meaningful to them.

Third, it is important to view the PAIR Framework as offering an account rather than a diagnosis. Where the coach is sharing an initial formulation it is important that it is offered as one of a number of several potential accounts which can be examined for its usefulness, rather than as a definitive account that 'sums up' the client or their circumstances.

Finally, it is important to recognise that formulations vary significantly in the amount of information that they contain. It will be important, therefore, for the coach to consider how much data (and what type) will be needed to address the client's and any other stakeholders' primary areas of concern. At times, concepts, theories and interventions drawn from a single discipline may be sufficient. On other occasions, concepts, theories and interventions drawn from several disciplines may be required. The focus on this article, and the research from which the PAIR Framework emerged (see study 1), has been how coaches can work with complexity with the assumption that multiple sources of information, drawn from different discipline, are likely to be required. However, the PAIR Framework can be usefully applied in any setting in which coaching interventions are delivered including more straight-forward coaching assignments.

Executive coaching in an era of complexity: Conclusions from studies 1 and 2

The PAIR Framework is not a linear model that enables the coach to progress through a series of specific and discrete stages. Rather, it is a vehicle for articulating the primary spaces that a coach moves between when applying formulation, as well as the activities that might be conducted within each space. Ultimately, further research is needed to investigate the impact of different formulation approaches and to understand if, when and how using formulations increase coaching effectiveness. Given the relatively under-developed state of the knowledge-base

of coaching for complexity, this research was positioned as an exploratory study that aimed to develop an understanding of what might be effective in complex coaching engagements and thus, provide a springboard for subsequent studies.

This research, reported across two articles, suggests that formulation has the potential to support the work of executive coaching, may have a substantive impact on coaching outcomes, and is a potentially valuable skill for coaches to acquire. Each of the articles has reported on a specific element of the research. The first study described the development of a coaching framework – the PAIR Framework – for navigating complexity, and reported the coaching outcomes obtained when that framework was applied. This second study examined, in greater detail, the PAIR Framework as a specific approach to formulation and which has been developed specifically for helping coaches work with complexity.

Across both articles, we have sought to consider meta-theoretical issues that impact how complexity can be investigated (through selecting a paradigm that could provide a novel perspective on researching complexity), and identify a methodology that could address the challenge from within the field to look beyond linear approaches to enquiry. In particular, the study sought to heed the methodological reservations of scholars including Cavanagh and Lane (2012) who have observed that:

> *'…most of the methods we employ as researchers (including our statistical approaches) require us to assume the objects of our research behave in ways that are stable, predictable and linear – and that they live in a stable, predictable, linear world.'* (p.79)

A final consideration was to what extent, and how, it might be possible to apply the findings obtained, and to consider their implications for professional practice. We believe that the implications of underpinning coaching practice with formulation are potentially significant and positive. As Wheatley (1999) has argued, linear thinking hampers creativity and seeing the wholeness of any situation is a new skill needed for dealing with complexity. Through the choices we have made in conducting this enquiry, we hope that together, these two articles might offer something new to those scholars and practitioners who find themselves navigating this space.

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Assessing the effectiveness of a cognitive behavioural group coaching intervention in reducing symptoms of depression among adolescent males in a school setting

Mark Barry, Mike Murphy & Hugh O'Donovan

Objectives: *The research sought to assess the effectiveness of a cognitive behavioural group coaching intervention in impacting positively on depressive symptoms among an all-male, adolescent, school-going population.*

Design: *An experimental design was employed. Twenty-seven participants were recruited from Transition Year students in one secondary school in Cork, Republic of Ireland. They were randomly assigned to either receive the intervention or act as a control group. The intervention programme was delivered in four sessions across four weeks.*

Method: *Depressive symptoms were measured (using CES-DC) prior to random allocation (T1) and then at the end of the final session (T2).*

Results: *A two-way mixed ANOVA found a significant interaction with a large effect size between intervention group and time of assessment (F[1, 21]=5.63, p=.027), with the intervention group showing a reduction in depressive scores while the control group saw an increase. When change in levels of depressive caseness in both groups was considered, differences were not significant (c2[2]=3.73, p=.13), but trended in the expected direction with a medium effect size.*

Conclusion: *The results indicate that the implementation of such interventions more widely may prove beneficial, and that further research is merited.*

Keywords: *adolescence; school; depression; coaching; all-male.*

DEPRESSION is one of the most widely-reported forms of psychological distress; so widespread that the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2008) has identified unipolar depressive disorders as the third leading cause of burden of disease throughout the world. Figures for 2004 suggested that unipolar depressive disorders were responsible for 65.5 million disability-adjusted life years, 4.3 per cent of the overall total. This saw depression rate behind only lower respiratory infections (6.2 per cent) and diarrhoeal diseases (4.8 per cent) in the rankings. The same publication projected that by 2030, depression will become the single leading cause of burden of disease, accounting for 6.2 per cent of the overall total.

A period of life which can see depression emerge as a problem is adolescence; a time characterised by wide-ranging changes, with physical and cognitive development taking place against the backdrop of additional changes in the social environment of individual adolescents (e.g. Blakemore, 2008). The upheaval associated with this period can leave adolescents more vulnerable to a range of mental disorders, such as depression (e.g. Costello et al., 2003). Many studies have found depression and mental illness to be common issues in adolescence (e.g. Kessler et al., 2003; Lynch et al., 2006; Thapar et al., 2012). Findings such as these suggest that while the majority of individuals may react positively to the changes that characterise adolescence, there is a sizable

minority who develop mental health issues during this time.

While the fact that adolescence is a period of vulnerability justifies research attention in its own right, it is also important to note that mental health issues which begin during this period can persist into adulthood. Jones (2013) highlighted that as many as half of the mental health disorders reported by adults can be traced back to this period. Keenan-Miller et al. (2007) found that even when controlling for the effects of concurrent depression at age 20, early adolescent depression continued to be associated with poorer health, poorer self-perceived general health, more health care interaction, and increased work impairment. It was concluded that experiencing depression in early adolescence brings adverse consequences for health and associated costs during early adulthood. Furthermore, evidence in the existing literature suggests that while adolescents can recover from a specific episode, they do not necessarily grow out of their mood disorder. Instead, major depression tends to be a recurring condition, and individuals who experience depression in youth are more likely to do so again in adulthood than counterparts who do not (Park & Goodyer, 2000).

Depression in adolescence is associated with a range of negative outcomes. Depression is an important predisposing factor for suicide among adolescents (Harrington, 2001), with this age group having relatively high rates of suicide in Ireland (NOSP, 2013). It is also associated with poorer academic outcomes; Kessler (2012) found that early onset depression was a predictor for a number of subsequent difficulties, including 60 per cent increased risk of failing to complete second level education relative to other youths in high income countries. Glied and Pine (2002) examined the consequences and correlates of adolescent depression in a nationally representative classroom-based sample of adolescent males and females aged 10–18 years in the US, and found that depression correlated with a significant increase in the number of school days missed, while depressed adolescent females were almost twice as likely to be a grade behind non-depressed counterparts. Quiroga et al. (2013), in a Canadian study, showed that adolescents with higher levels of depressive symptoms were more likely to leave school prior to earning their completion diploma.

Considering the impact of depression in economic terms, we can see that it has a considerable cost financially as well as socially and personally. Greenberg et al. (2003) reported that the economic cost associated with depression in the US had increased from $43.7 billion in 1990 to $83.1 billion in 2000. Stewart et al. (2003) reported that workers with depression experience far more health-related lost productive time than non-depressed counterparts. In Europe, Gustavsson et al. (2011) found that for 27 EU nations, along with Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, the total cost attributable to mood disorders was €113 billion.

Arising from this, an argument can be made that it makes financial as well as social sense to place a major emphasis on seeking to prevent mood disorders such as depression rather than make treatment the primary focus (i.e. waiting for teenagers to come to the attention of health services when experiencing mental health problems). The case can be made that we can relieve the burden on health services in the future if we invest in actively seeking to prevent the onset of depression in young people now. A key knock-on effect of this strategy could be to reduce the prevalence of depression and therefore the financial cost associated with its treatment, with the cost issue particularly pertinent given the wide body of work highlighting the tendency for relapses and the life-long struggle that can ensue following an initial MDE (e.g. Park & Goodyer, 2000).

Against this backdrop, the current study attempted to assess the extent to which a school-based cognitive intervention programme would prove effective in reducing depressive symptoms among a school-based

adolescent population in Ireland. The approach adopted was intended to use cognitive behavioural techniques in order to cultivate strengths – cognitive behavioural coaching (CBC).

Palmer and Gyllensten (2008) point out that CBC is adapted from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). CBT is a form of psychotherapy widely used in depression, and targets distorted cognitions and maladaptive behaviours. There is strong research evidence which indicates that CBT is effective in treating depression. For example, Hofmann et al. (2012), in a review of meta-analyses, found that CBT was effective in treating depression; a meta-analysis by Arnberg and Öst (2014) found CBT to be effective in treating depression in children aged 6–8, while Chu and Harrison (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of studies of participants aged 6 to 18 years and found CBT to be effective in treating depression. The UK National Institute for Care and Health Excellence (NICE, 2015) recommends offering psychotherapeutic support, explicitly including CBT, to adolescents with depression.

With CBT, the primary focus is on treatment, whereas in CBC the main emphasis is on improving performance. Arising from this, Neenan and Palmer (2001) state that the primary difference between the two approaches is that CBC is used with non-clinical groups (i.e. while the techniques are similar, CBC and CBT tend to target different populations).

CBC is a relatively new approach, and so evidence of its efficacy is relatively limited compared to that for CBT, but a body of literature is developing which suggests that it may be useful in preventing mental health problems and enhancing individual performance, among both adults and adolescents in non-clinical settings.

Wang (2013) conducted an exploratory participatory case study in a secondary school in south-west England, with a view towards developing a systems model of coaching for learning. The researcher worked with one classroom, which saw 30 students participate in three prototypes of enquiry-based learning, facilitated by teachers who were specifically trained for the purposes of the research. Wang's results took the form of thematic and observational analyses, in which it was noted that students demonstrated increases in independence, learning relationships, confidence, and learning agency.

Passmore and Brown (2009) reported on a multi-school longitudinal coaching study in England. Over three years, 1,987 students received coaching (mean age: 15 years), with sessions lasting approximately 60 minutes and occurring every four to eight weeks, while the main focus in each session was on study skills, work topics, problems, and personal goals. Annual results were compared year-on-year for the duration of the project (2004 to 2007), with the overall trend in terms of examination performance shown to be upward, not only within the participating schools, but when compared to neighbouring schools that were not involved. The authors concluded that the results showed coaching can be an effective intervention for improving examination performance, and that this implies it also serves to build hope and resilience in adolescents.

Green et al. (2007) examined the effectiveness of an evidence-based (cognitive behavioural, solution-focused) life coaching programme in a female high school population. They found that coaching was associated with significant increases in levels of cognitive hardiness and hope, and significant decreases in reported levels of depression. Short et al. (2010) examined the impact of a peer coaching intervention on the wellbeing of a group of psychology undergraduate students. They reported that levels of psychological distress were high at both points when data was sourced, but that the increase in distress among active condition participants was far lower than that seen in the control group. Madden et al. (2011) examined the impact of an evidence-based strengths coaching programme on the levels of engagement and hope exhibited by male primary school students. They concluded that such

programmes may be considered as suitable options for mental health prevention and promotion initiatives which can also deliver desired outcomes on individual wellbeing.

In Ireland, O'Donovan (2009, 2010) has developed CRAIC (Control, Responsibility, Awareness, Impetus, and Confidence), a coaching framework within which a CBC approach has been adopted; in particular, this is a coaching model influenced by the idea that we do not see the world as it is, but rather that we construct our own realities through the prism of our schemas. The approach is related to CBT, but is distinct in that it is not intended as a treatment modality for a pre-existing condition, but rather as a universally applicable means to build confidence and resilience.

This research paper reports on the conduct of a multi-week in-school intervention programme informed by the CRAIC model. The four 40-minute sessions were designed as active learning interventions, using games and challenges to both raise awareness of how thinking can influence behaviours and emotions, and to highlight that we can reframe our thinking styles. Attention was given to common cognitive distortions such as catastrophising, mind-reading and discounting the positive. Each session was designed to transmit one clear message: understanding that how you think is linked to how you feel; respecting individual differences; recognising our own talents and those of others; and not believing everything you think.

It was hypothesised that there would be an interaction between experimental group and time, such that the CBC intervention group would have better outcomes on depressive symptoms.

Method

Participants

Twenty-seven Transition Year pupils of an Irish secondary school, all male and all aged 15–16, were recruited for participation in this study. Thirteen of the participants were randomly assigned to the weekly CBC group, and 14 participants were allocated to the control group. As four participants did not attend for the post-intervention data gathering (three from the intervention group and one from the control group), the final analyses are based on data from 23 participants.

Materials

The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC; Weissman, Orvaschel & Padian, 1980) was employed to assess level of depressive symptoms. This is a 20-item measure, derived from the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977), with the main changes being to rephrase items to make them more suitable for adolescents. The CES-DC uses a four-point Likert answering scheme, where 0=Not at all and 3=A lot. Participants respond to 20 statements asking how much they felt or acted a certain way over the previous seven days, e.g., 'I was bothered by things that don't usually bother me'. Scores range from 0 to 60, with higher scores taken to indicate higher presence of symptoms consistent with depression. Weissman et al. recommend that scores of 15 or higher would be considered to be suggestive of depression.

Faulstich et al. (1986) reported a coefficient alpha of .84. and a two-week test-retest reliability of r=.51 ($p<.005$), Cronbach's alpha values in this study were .78 at T1 and .73 at T2.

Procedure

Recruitment of participants took place in the school, and 27 pupils assented to participate, while their parents/guardians provided consent. Participants were randomly split into two groups – intervention (13) and no-intervention control (14). Following completion of the T1 survey, participants were informed of their group allocation. During the course of the study, when the CBC group were having their weekly session the control group continued with their scheduled school-work for that time. At T2, data were gathered from 10 members of the intervention group and from 13 of the control group.

Ethics

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Psychological Society of Ireland. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the School of Applied Psychology, UCC.

Results

The results are presented in the form of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were conducted on all variables and also in terms of demographics. The inferential statistics were conducted using parametric techniques in SPSS version 20. A mixed ANOVA was conducted, with a view towards detecting whether or not there were differences in reported levels of depressive symptoms between active condition and control group participants at T1 and T2. Post-hoc tests were then conducted to locate where the difference between the two groups was to be found. This meant running independent samples and paired samples t-tests, looking at reported scores on depressive symptoms at T1 and T2 for both active and control participants. Furthermore, the CES-DC data were categorised as depressed or non-depressed through the application the recommended cutoff (Weissman et al., 1980), and changes in depression caseness over time in the two experimental groups were also assessed.

Descriptive Statistics

For the CBC group, at T1 CES-DC scores ranged from 0 to 22, with 60 the maximum possible score. The mean score was 11.85 (SD=6.82, Median=12). At T2, CES-DC scores ranged from 3 to 18. The mean score was 11.30 (SD=6.66, Median=10.50).

For the control group, at T1 CES-DC scores ranged from 0 to 18. The mean score was 10.29 (SD=5.17, Median=10). At T2, CES-DC scores ranged from 2 to 26. The mean score was 13.23 (SD=7.84, Median=14).

Demographics

The participant group whose data was included in the final analysis was exclusively made up of males (N=23). As the target population were Transition Year students in an Irish secondary school, the age range of participants was extremely narrow. All participants were aged from 15 to 16, with a mean age of 15.74 (SD=.45, Median=16). With regard to race/ethnicity, 20 participants described themselves as 'white or white Irish', two indicated they were of 'any other white background', and one ticked the box for 'other, including mixed ethnic background'.

Inferential statistics

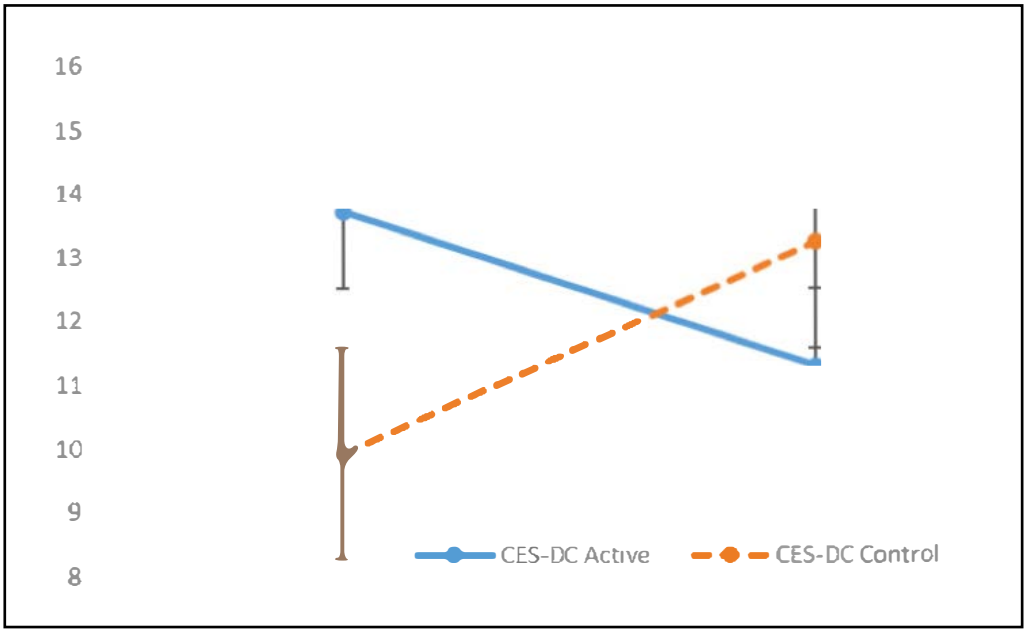
In the first instance, a mixed ANOVA was run with a view towards assessing the impact of the CBC intervention programme and finding out if there were differences between depressive symptoms scores reported by active and control group participants at T1 and T2. A significant interaction between depressive symptoms scores and assignment to active or control group was found – Wilks Lambda=.79, $F(1, 21)=5.63$, $p=.027$, partial $\eta^2=.21$.

There was a partial η^2 value of .21, which, under the guidelines proposed by Cohen (1988), constitutes a large effect size.

The next step was to use post-hoc analyses to seek to explain what accounted for the differences in scores, and to do so independent samples t-tests and paired samples t-tests were conducted.

In the first instance, two independent samples t-tests were conducted, with a view towards comparing the active and control groups at T1 and T2. These revealed no statistical differences between active and control group participants for depressive symptoms ($p=.51$ and $p=.50$ at T1 and T2 respectively, both with small effect sizes – η^2 =.02 in both cases). Two paired-samples t-tests, for the CBC group and the control group respectively, were conducted to assess change in depressive scores in both groups between T1 and T2. We did not identify a statistically significant change in depressive symptoms in either group over time, but did find that both groups tended to significant change, with the intervention group seeing

Figure 1: Depressive symptoms and interaction effect between T1 and T2, with error bars representing 95% CI.



depression scores fall (t[9]=2.11, p=.064) and the control group seeing scores increase (t[12]=1.73, p=.11). Effect sizes were large for both groups (η^2 =.33 and .20 respectively). In light of the relatively small sample, these results appear promising.

In order to assess differences between the experimental groups in changes to depressed/non-depressed status of participants, each participant was categorised as having become depressed between T1 & T2, having remained as at T1, or as having ceased being depressed between T1 & T2. A 2 × 3 chi-squared test was then run to see whether there were significant differences between the intervention and control groups. In descriptive terms, only one of the members of the intervention group changed status, no longer meeting the cutoff point for depression; among the control group, one member also ceased to meet the depression cutoff point, but four members moved from non-depressed to depressed status. Applying exact significance values, no significant difference emerged (c2[2]=3.73, p=.13), but a medium effect size (Cramer's V=.4) was identified. Considering the small sample size, and the fact that several of the cells contained less than five cases, results of this test must be interpreted cautiously. They do appear, however, to indicate a trend in the same direction as what was found using total CES-DC scores.

Discussion

The aim of this research was to assess the efficacy of a short CBC intervention in reducing depressive symptoms among an adolescent male Irish population in the school setting.

The mixed ANOVA, with depressive scores as dependent variable, revealed a significant interaction experimental group and time. Paired-samples t-tests showed that both groups saw changes which approached significance, and with large effect sizes, such that the CBC group means depressive score fell while that of the control group rose.

That this intervention was found to have been beneficial in terms of symptoms of depression is consistent with previous findings. As referred to previously, Green, Grant, and Rynsaardt (2007) found that

cognitive-behavioural coaching was associated with significant decreases in reported levels of depression, while Madden et al. (2011) concluded that evidence-based strengths coaching programmes could prove effective for mental health prevention and promoting individual wellbeing.

While these findings are encouraging as it relates to the potential for cognitive group coaching interventions to address symptoms of depression amongst Irish adolescents within a school setting, it is also important to be cautious. The sample size for this study was small, and therefore it is likely that random assignment did not lead to entirely equivalent experimental groups; therefore there may have been confounding from uncontrolled variables. Having said that, the results are consistent with expectation on the basis of research work, and indicate that brief interventions of this nature may well have a role to play in tackling the experience of depression among adolescent males in Ireland.

Another potential limitation is that the intervention was quite short, both in terms of the number of sessions and their duration. Active participants received four intervention sessions, with each one taking place across a single class period of 40 minutes. In real terms, the first five minutes of each session was lost, as participants would come to the assigned room from different parts of the school building after their previous class and it was also common to have to send one class member to find others who were slow in presenting at the correct room. However, while it would be beneficial to run a longer programme and for each session to go on for more time, this limitation also serves to highlight the potential benefits given that encouraging results were found in the current study.

It is also worth noting that the control group was passive. These participants merely continued with their normal daily activities during the times when active group participants were taking part in the intervention sessions. In addition, the final sample cannot be assumed to be representative of the population of students in the school – it is possible that some individuals within the group who did not return the consent forms might have been the very ones who may have stood to benefit most or may be most at risk from the hazards which are associated with relatively low levels of wellbeing. By the same token, those who did take part may have been a self-selecting sample of sorts, and this in turn could skew the results.

In addition to the results, strengths and limitations of the study, there are other considerations which also merit discussion. One important point is the crucial distinction between CBT and CBC – that rather than use cognitive behavioural techniques to address pre-existing problems in the context of personal lived experiences, this programme was offered to the participating school as a universal intervention which used games and exercises to build strengths in coping with potentially challenging life situation. Universal interventions remove any potential stigma which can attach to individuals singled out within a school population as being at risk and therefore formally selected to participate, and they also provide potential benefits to people who may not have experienced depressive or other problems previously, thus offering possibilities for prevention of teenage psychological problems. There are also important ethical considerations. In any such intervention the question of limits of confidentiality must be crystal clear, and all students and their parents/guardians must be aware of the obligations of the facilitators of such groups. The issue of peer esteem can also emerge – should a group member choose to raise personal issues or experiences in such a forum, this may provide ammunition for bullying or abuse, and so it is important that all students understand they have the opportunity to raise such issues privately, but that it would not be appropriate to do so in the sessions. Finally, the experience of distress, or revelation of suicidal or other self-harming ideation, by a group member must be anticipated

as a possibility, and appropriate responses and supports must be in place.

In conclusion, the results of this study are promising, and suggest that further research on the use of such short CBC interventions be conducted; such future research could include work with all-female and mixed-sex samples, and could also include a follow-up to assess the extent to which effects are maintained over time. Future research could also benefit from providing an active element for control groups.

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'We can't do it just to make them feel good!': An exploration into the benefits of coaching in secondary schools

Jacqueline Lee

Objectives: *Research has indicated that traditional forms of continuing professional development (CPD), such as external training courses, can have limited impact on developing teacher's skills. One response has been that coaching has been used increasingly in schools since 2000 in a variety of ways. However, there is a lack of research into the impact of coaching in schools. This study explored the impact of specialist coaching and (peer) co-coaching as perceived by coachees and CPD co-ordinators. The impact of coaching at three different levels was considered: benefits at the individual personal/emotional level; changes to individuals' daily practice; and benefits at the schoolwide/organizational level.*

Design: *A postal questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used.*

Methods: *CPD co-ordinators in 10 urban mainstream secondary schools completed the questionnaire and identified coachees for interview. Semi-structured interviews with six of these CPD co-ordinators and seven coachees, were then conducted. The interviews were analysed through Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis to explore patterns in what the interviewees perceived the benefits of coaching to be.*

Results: *Peer coaching impacted on all three levels proposed in the study. The impact of specialist coaching was found to vary depending on the role of the coachee (e.g. newly qualified teachers and middle leaders benefited differently).*

Conclusions: *The current study has indicated that coaching is perceived by CPD co-ordinators and coachees to have a positive impact on teachers' daily practice and at the organisational level, alongside the benefits it offers to individuals at an emotional level.*

Keywords: *coaching; coaching in education; coaching benefits; evidence of impact of coaching; teacher coaching; secondary school CPD; interpretive phenomenological analysis; middle leader coaching; peer coaching; specialist coaching.*

AT THE TURN of the 21st century research indicated the limited effectiveness of traditional external training courses in raising teacher performance and effecting sustainable change in classrooms (Rhodes & Houghton-Hill, 2000; Swafford, 1998). Alternative forms of continuing professional development (CPD) were therefore sought for staff.

Literature and initiatives such as The National Strategy (DfES, 2003) and National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching (CUREE, 2005) emerged which promoted coaching as effective CPD for staff and demonstrated how coaching could be used imaginatively in schools (e.g. Tolhurst, 2006). However, it was also noted at the time that there was 'virtually no research in this country [the UK] to provide [evidence of] what effect coaching was having' (Lofthouse et al., 2010, p.7). The need for research into the effectiveness of coaching is widely recognised in the emerging field of coaching psychology (Linley, 2006; Short et al., 2010) and within the field of coaching in education there is an even greater paucity of literature (Allan, 2007).

The benefits of coaching in education

An exploration of the literature relevant to this study indicated that much of the purported claims for the impact of coaching in education are based on conjecture. For exam-

ple, that because coaching meets the criteria of effective adult learning it will *by default* be effective CPD (Biswas-Diener & Dean, 2007). Furthermore, because coaching 'enhances happiness, wellbeing and engagement [then the coachee] is *more likely* to achieve peak performance' (author's emphasis) (Crabb, 2011, p.27). Within UK education there is research indicating these emotional benefits result from coaching. For example, coaching is evaluated positively by teachers and they value the opportunity to think deeply about teaching (Cordingly et al., 2005; Leat & Lofthouse, 2006; Roberts & Henderson, 2005). This evidence base indicates there is a positive emotional outcome from coaching, however, more than this is needed to counter scepticism about the impact of coaching in schools.

A further personal benefit indicated in the literature for teachers is how coaching enhances their learning. For example, it is proposed that coaching helps the teacher analyse their practice critically and prompts reflection (Lofthouse et al., 2010). Harris and Muiys (2005) point out that the type of learning generally engaged in when one reflects alone is single-loop learning in which the person is constrained by their usual frameworks and thinking patterns. They note that when others are involved double-loop learning can take place which 'encourages a move from routine [and] encourages risk taking' (p.60). Evidence that coaching helps teachers develop these skills is seen in many case studies noted by Burley and Pomphrey (2011). They describe how coaching can be used as a dynamic collaborative process for effective professional development utilising double-loop learning.

The benefits for teachers related to emotional wellbeing and increased reflection are clearly positive but what is needed, for the claims regarding the impact of coaching to move beyond a hypothetical status, is evidence of change in teacher's actual behaviour in the classroom and the organisation. Two UK studies provide some evidence of such changes. Zwart et al. (2007), found peer coaching in a secondary school resulted in increased professional experimentation in teachers' daily classes. Similarly, Allan (2007) in a small study of the benefits of coaching for three secondary school teachers found changes in teachers' professional daily practice. Coaching was also found to have an impact at the whole-school level by Zwart et al. (2007/9) in that it impacted on support and conversations with colleagues. Lofthouse et al. (2010) also found evidence of this level of change from their research (into co-coaching in the UK). They found that there were 'signs [that coaching] spills over into teachers talking to colleagues more about teaching' (p.8).

As can be seen above the literature review indicated a range of possible levels at which benefits from coaching might be seen. Three levels were adopted for this research to enable an exploration into specific changes that school leaders might see from coaching. This would then enable the evidence base for coaching in educational settings to move beyond the hypothetical link regarding wellbeing. The three levels were: (i) the individual personal/ emotional level, to encompass the 'feel-good factor' and increased wellbeing noted by many authors; (ii) the coachees' daily practice level, such as changes to their teaching in the classroom or their leadership skills; and (iii) the organisational level within the school through, for example, increased acceptance of change and more professional discussions with colleagues.

The research question that this study sought to answer

For schools where the use of coaching is reported what are the continuing professional development (CPD) co-ordinators', and coachees' perceptions of the benefits of coaching, at the three levels of: individual personal/ emotional, individuals' daily practice, school-wide?

Definition of coaching used in this study

There are many differences in how the term coaching is used. The definition adopted for this study was drawn from the literature on non-directive coaching (Downey, 2003). Therefore coaching activities in this current study are defined as those that:

Table 1: Types of coaching activities (adapted from 'Leading Coaching In Schools' – Creasy & Paterson, 2005).

Type of coaching	Coaching activity	Example (added by author)
Specialist Coaching	Where a coach has specialist knowledge of an area	Lead practitioner coaching teachers to develop teaching practices in the classroom
Co (peer) Coaching	Working in a structured way with a colleague on an issue	Teachers across faculties observe and coach each other on an aspect of teaching (e.g. questioning skills)
Team Coaching	Where a team of staff works with an external coach with additional expertise in the area under development	Educational psychologist coaching a senior leadership team (e.g. to develop a vision for the school)
Expert Coaching	Coaching for staff to help them develop coaching skills themselves	External coach working with middle leaders to develop their use of coaching in performance management

- Involve a series of structured conversations.
- Are learner-led regarding the questions addressed and answers found.

Types of coaching activities

In education, writers have used specific terminology to denote the different types of coaching activities that exist. The most extensive and current list of coaching activities found during the literature review was the NCSL publication by Creasy and Patterson (2005). In their paper seven types of coaching activities are defined, of which four were focused on in this study (see Table 1).

Method

Participants

Twenty-five CPD co-ordinators within local, urban, mainstream secondary schools were sent postal questionnaires. These schools were selected as they were urban, mainstream, had been maintained by their Local Authority for some time and the researcher could travel to each easily. This was therefore a convenience sample. Ten of the 25 questionnaires were returned and in all of these the respondents noted at least one coaching activity was taking place in the school. It is possible that where no coaching was taking place the questionnaire was not returned resulting in a volunteer bias (Heiman, 2002) whereby only those interested in coaching replied. Seven CPD co-ordinators who indicated they would take part in a semi-structured interview were contacted and six responded. To recruit coachees the interviewed CPD co-ordinators were asked to recommend two coachees from the school. Seven coachees were recruited and interviewed.

Data collection

Phase I of the research design was a postal questionnaire, designed by the researcher, sent to the CPD co-ordinators. A questionnaire was used as it could gather a small amount of quantitative and qualitative data in a standardised form which could be compared across the schools (Robson, 2011). Quantitative data on the coaching activities that had taken place in the school in the previous academic year was gathered, and qualitative data regarding the CPD co-ordinators' perceived benefits of each coaching activity, was collected. The chart to gather this data was based on Creasy and Paterson's (2005) list of coaching activities which the CPD co-ordinators were sent. The CPD co-ordinator was asked to state up

two benefits for each coaching activity they noted. These two questions can be seen in Table 2. A reliability co-efficient is not available as it was not a published questionnaire.

In-depth qualitative data about the benefits of coaching was gathered from those occupying two different roles within the school: CPD co-ordinators and coachees. Their views were collected through a semi-structured interview designed by the researcher. Literature on social research (Robson, 2011) indicated that an interview was an appropriate data collection instrument because the data required was the CPD co-ordinators' perceptions of processes within their social unit (i.e. their school) and their understanding of particular phenomena (i.e. the coaching activities that had taken place). In the interview the CPD co-ordinator was asked to expand on the impact of each coaching activity they had noted in the questionnaire through describing the changes they perceived in the coachee or school. The coachees were asked to describe the coaching and how it had impacted upon them.

The interviews were conducted in the participant's school by the author. The participant's permission to tape the interview was sought. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents each school was allocated a sample number. Once all the interviews had been transcribed each participant who had requested one was sent a copy to check that it reflected an accurate representation of their views.

Data analysis

Quantitative data gathered through the questionnaire was analysed to explore the range of coaching activities which had taken place

Table 2: Sample of the two questions from questionnaire gathering information about coaching activities and benefits.

Part 2 Coaching in your School

Please list all the coaching activities that have taken place in your school since last September in the chart below. Please fill in details for each activity.

Coaching activity	Who is/ was the coach?	Who is/ was being coached?	How many hours are/ were allocated and for how long?	How is/ was the coaching initiated?	What is/ was the aim of the coaching?
Example	4 heads of year	3 teachers	1 hr/ week for 2 terms	At teachers request	To improved behaviour management
Your activity A					

Please record what, in your professional opinion, have been the two main benefits of each of the coaching activities you have listed above. Benefits may range from individual to schoolwide outcomes.

Coaching activity	In my opinion the first benefit was...	In my opinion a further benefit was...
Example	Teachers became more reflective about their behaviour management	Staff felt supported
Example described in A		

in the schools in the previous academic year and the number of activities in each category (see Figure 1 below). As Figure 2 shows, the most frequently occurring activities across the sample were specialist coaching, 20 of the 32 coaching activities (62.5 per cent) in the schools were specialist coaching, and co-coaching, eight of the activities (25 per cent) were co-coaching. Team and expert coaching were being used a little by the schools in the sample. There were two examples of each (2 × 6 per cent). These two types of coaching were therefore not considered further.

Further analysis was undertaken to explore which roles (i.e. different job holders) in the schools were being supported through the coaching activities (see Figure 3 below).

Qualitative data from the questionnaire was coded to explore the reported benefits of coaching at three different levels, those being:

- Individual personal/emotional level – impact was for, or within, the coachee.
- Individual daily practice level – impact was on the coachee's daily actions
- School-wide level – impact was across different people.

This data was used to check congruence with the richer data from the interviews.

The data from the semi-structured interviews was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) following the process described by Smith and Osborn (2008). To illustrate the different levels during the interview a prompt sheet was used: IP for the individual/personal level; IDP for the level of individual daily practice; and SW for the schoolwide level. Comments from all the interviewees were collated under emerging themes and each cluster of comments given a relevant title. The interviewee's comments relating to benefits were grouped to explore the theme, and level, of benefits the CPD co-ordinators and coachees perceived had resulted from the coaching activities.

Results

The level and theme of impact that the CPD co-ordinators and coachees perceived coaching to have in the school is illustrated below through quotes. Where appropriate questions from the interviewer are shown in italics. Data from the questionnaires was found to be congruent with data from the interviews.

Perceived benefits at the individual personal/emotional level

CPD co-ordinators

Within the individual personal/emotional level the main benefit theme all the CPD co-ordinators noted was emotional benefits. This included comments about increased job satisfaction, motivation, reassurance, confidence or feeling valued and supported.

> *Unpicking what you are doing in the classroom and either validating it or giving you some way of moving forward with something. A confidence… a kind of reassurance.* (Co-ordinator B)

> *The impact on the daily practice allows it [coaching] to have an impact here [points to IP] as if you are feeling you are doing a better job you've got more satisfaction.* (Co-ordinator E)

One CPD co-ordinator noted that she felt that the coachee having ownership over the process was a benefit.

> *That was me making a judgement that they 'owned' the process, I feel lots happens to you in induction, and this [coaching] is an opportunity where they can say 'I need to talk about this'.* (Co-ordinator B)

Coachees

The main benefit that all coachees perceived coaching offered at the individual personal level was emotional support.

> *Oh that one! [points to IP] … the coach helping me think how would I actually do it, so there was increased reflection, motivation, job satisfaction.* (Coachee B)

A summary of these findings can be seen in Table 3.

Perceived benefits at the individual daily practice level

CPD co-ordinators

At this level all of the CPD co-ordinators mentioned benefits in relation to teaching and learning. They stated benefits in terms of actual changes in teaching practices such as improved pace of lessons or better differentiated questioning. They also noted how it had improved teachers' practice (e.g. moving from 'good' to 'outstanding') and pupil attainment.

> *We were in a situation where we had to improve our teaching and learning dramatically and … it worked!* (Co-ordinator F)

Two CPD co-ordinators also talked of the impact of increased risk taking and of teach-

Figure 1: Range of coaching activities used in schools in the sample during the previous year.

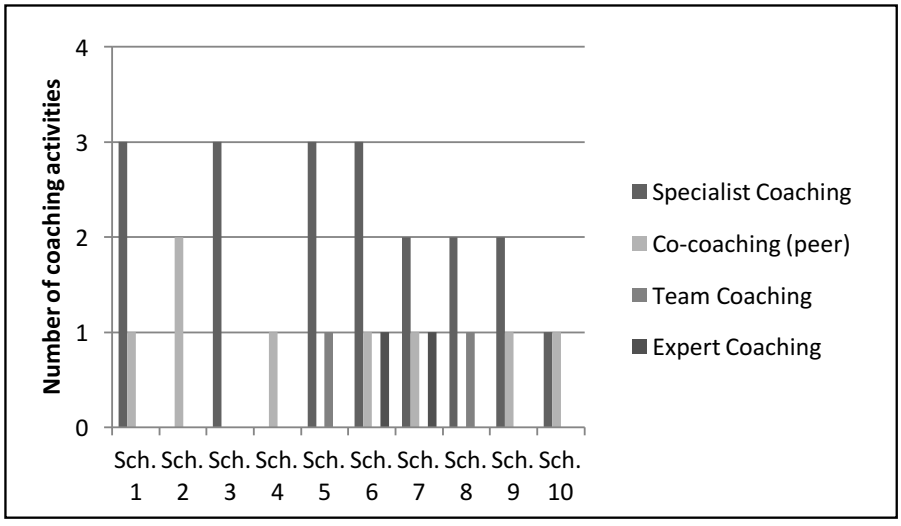


Figure 2: Type of coaching activities in schools in the sample.

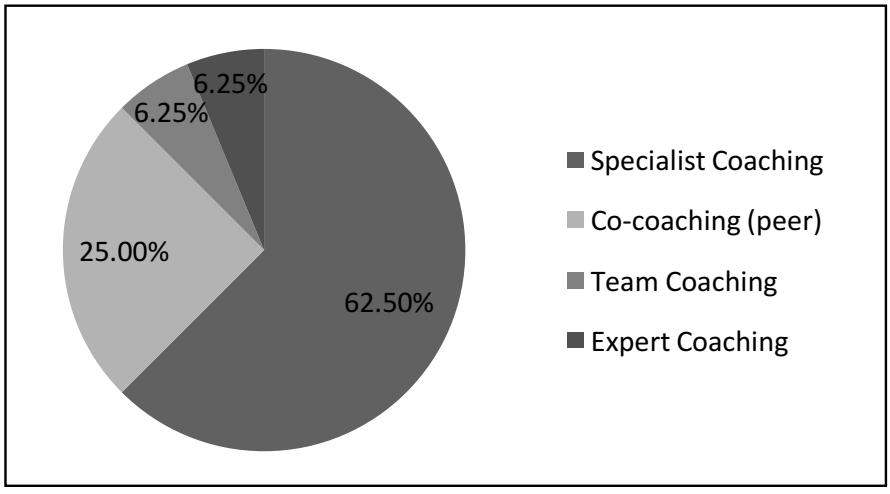
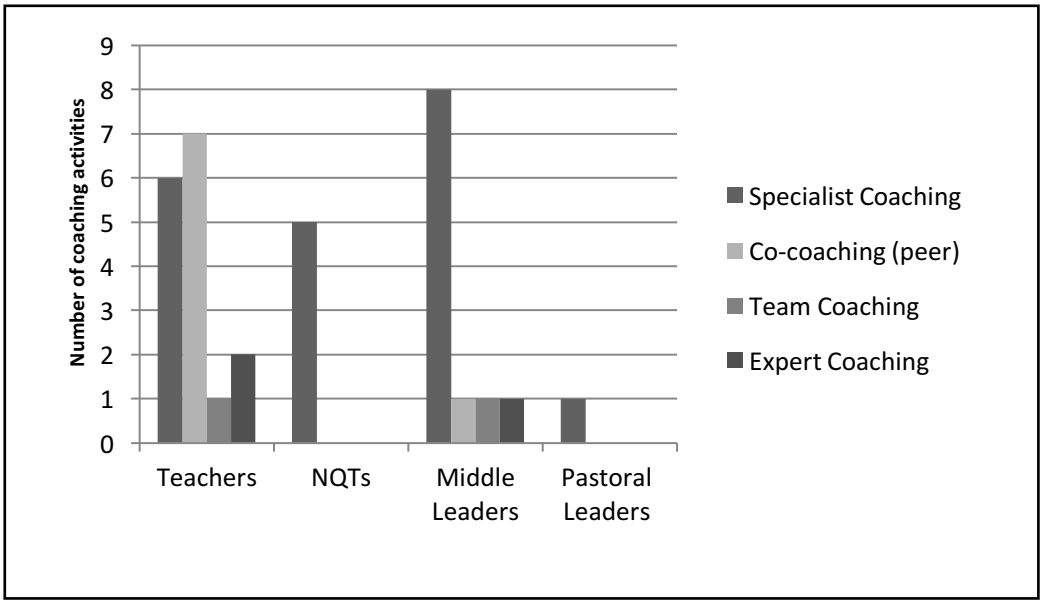


Figure 3: The type of coaching each role in school was receiving.



ers trying new ideas which improved their teaching and learning in the classroom.

> *The conversations you have heard have made you think they are trying new strategies?*
>
> *Yes, I have seen it in observations too, they have increased confidence in trying different approaches. I have seen them in meetings [talking about] what they have tried that has worked and how they have adapted it.* (Co-ordinator C)

Four of the CPD co-ordinators specified benefits at this level related to increased sharing of practice between teachers.

> *Cross-pollination of ideas and strategies within the classroom.*
>
> *And you have known that is happening? Seen it?*
>
> *Yes, through teachers talking to each other and saying 'Oh I tried that thing you said'… in the staff room.* (Co-ordinator E)

Another main benefit three CPD co-ordinators perceived at this level related to coaching for middle leaders, in that they were able to lead better since they had either more time to reflect on their leadership skills, or they felt empowered and more confident to lead and challenge.

> *You could argue that the coaching with the middle leader, empowering him to understand what it is to be a leader, that in itself has enabled him to create the climate in which his team do genuinely discuss now their practice.* (Co-ordinator D)

Coachees

All the coachees made comments at this level related to teaching and learning. They described the benefits as aspects of the coaching conversation. For example, 'time to break down a plan into small steps', 'looking at obstacles to making the changes they were considering' and 'being able to verbalise a plan'.

> *I was forced to verbalise and articulate my thinking and be explicit. At the end I was very clear in my own mind and what I was going*

Table 3: Perceived benefits at the individual personal/emotional level.

Perceived by CPD co-ordinators (6)	Perceived by coachees (5)
Emotional benefits – job satisfaction, motivation, reassurance, confidence, feeling valued, feeling supported (6) Coachee 'owned' the process (1)	Emotional benefits – job satisfaction, motivation, reflection, feeling valued, feeling supported (5)

Number of participants who mentioned a theme shown in brackets

Table 4: Perceived benefits at the individual daily practice level.

Perceived by CPD co-ordinators (6)	Perceived by coachees (5)
Related to teaching practices ■ Actual changes in practice – for example; pace of lesson, better differentiated questions, moving from 'good' to 'outstanding', improved pupil attainment (6) ■ Increased risk-taking in classroom and trying new strategies (2) ■ More sharing of ideas between staff (4)	■ Aspects of the coaching conversation – for example; time to break the plan into small steps, consider obstacles, verbalise a plan (5) ■ Increased time for reflection (4) ■ Ownership of the process – being able to focus on their own goal, plan the 'next steps' for themselves and consider what was right for their pupils (5) ■ Skills of coaching used in teaching (e.g. time for pupils to reflect) (1)
Related to middle leaders ■ Time to reflect on leadership skills resulted in more effectively leadership (3) ■ More empowered (3) ■ More confident to lead and challenge staff (3)	

Number of participants who mentioned a theme shown in brackets

> *to do next. That was good as if you externalise your thoughts you make it relevant to your pupils.* (Coachee E)

Increased time for reflection was also a theme four coachees noted at this level.

> *The biggest benefit is the time to think about teaching, to take time out to think about it.* (Coachee C)

All the coachees also noted benefits related to ownership. They mentioned specific benefits such as being able to focus on their own target, consider what was right for them and their pupils, and to come up with their own ideas.

> *All the time she [the coach] was very good at not saying 'well, why don't you do this, or that', she was … encouraging me to think and come up with my own answers… leaving the ball firmly in my court, it is up to me to find my solutions.* (Coachee B)

One coachee, who had found the coaching difficult, noted that the 'huge changes' in his daily practice had been possible because of the ownership he had been able to have in devising how to improve areas of weakness.

> *I now look back at it and see the benefits of it….. the involvement of me in that, in like 'here is a problem that I spotted … what do you think will be helpful in that?' so as well*

Table 5: Perceived benefits at the schoolwide level
Number of participants who mentioned a theme shown in brackets

Perceived by CPD co-ordinators (6)	Perceived by coachees (5)
■ Better communication between all staff, and between teachers and leadership team, increased openness in the culture (4) ■ Better leadership from middle and senior leaders effects whole-school outcomes (3)	■ More collaborative working across faculties and sharing ideas between staff (4) ■ Able to support colleagues better due to knowing coaching skills and questions to ask to help colleague reflect (4) ■ able to reflect more effectively on difficult situations for themselves (4)

Table 6: Level at which specialist coaching was perceived to have most impact

Level of impact	Role within school	Theme of impact
Individual personal	NQT (newly qualified teacher)	■ Emotional benefits – job satisfaction, motivation, reassurance, confidence, feeling valued, feeling supported
	Experienced under-performing teacher	■ Time to reflect on their commitment to changes within the school
Individual daily practice	NQT	■ More time to reflect ■ Changes in teaching practices
	Middle leaders	■ More time to reflect on leadership skills resulted in more effectively leadership ■ More empowered
School wide	Middle leaders	■ More confident to lead and challenge staff

> *as the incremental approach … it was that we were both thinking, rather than from upon high … like 'here is the one thing you can do', it was more…'here is an issue, what is your first thought about how you can do that?'* (Coachee D)

One coachee noted how coaching skills had benefited their teaching as they had used the same skills with the pupils. For example, they noted that their questioning of pupils had improved and they saw the importance of thinking time for the pupils.

A summary of these findings can be seen in Table 4.

Perceived benefits at the schoolwide level

CPD co-ordinators

A theme noted by four CPD co-ordinators was better communication between teachers, staff and leadership, and one described this as an increased 'openness' in the culture.

> *I think improved communication is a great part of coaching.… not just in the classroom but the whole [school] structure.… Of senior management talking to the rest of the staff… different roles, teachers, faculties… communication with each other.* (Co-ordinator E)

Another benefit theme at this level was better leadership skills which three co-ordinators felt impacted at the whole school level.

> *Yes, I know through conversations with her that [since the coaching] she … is much more aware of what you need to be doing in leadership…so last year (it was) in IDP but [now] also school wide.* (Co-ordinator B)

Coachees

At the schoolwide level four coachees also mentioned that a benefit of coaching was more collaborative working across faculties and sharing of ideas.

> *One of the benefits for the whole school is that you do have more collaboration across faculties, you get to know your colleagues outside curriculum areas, which can be something we don't do….. so you work with others in collaboration, across faculties especially, not just the same people you work with all the time.* (Coachee A)

Many of the coachees' comments related to benefits derived from learning the skills of coaching. One theme mentioned by four coachees was being able to better support colleagues and how to reflect on situations to help oneself at difficult times.

> *Well, I think we were already reflective but it provided us with the skills to sort of know what to do with that, and how to help others… Even now when I am talking to a colleague that is going through a situation, I have really learnt how to let them speak.* (Coachee C)

> *I came out of it feeling much more of this was my thing, this does not feel beyond me to solve it on my own… you don't want people to regurgitate answers, you want people to be able to ask the same questions when they are doing it alone to find the answers. If I had been told the answers from on high then it would have been very easy to think then… well … when something else happens I just need to get someone else in to tell me what …[to do]* (Coachee D)

A summary of these findings can be seen in Table 5.

Level at which each type of coaching was perceived to have most impact

Specialist coaching

All of the comments on specialist coaching activities indicated that it impacted at the individual daily practice level due to the increased time to reflect. Coachees also perceived there to be great impact at the individual personal level through emotional support such as motivation, reinforcement and encouragement.

Further analysis of which role was being coached within each of the specialist coaching examples was conducted to explore the above difference. It was found that the role in school being coached influenced the perceived level of impact.

Where newly qualified teachers (NQTs) were coached the impact was at the individual personal and individual daily practice level. Where middle and pastoral leaders were coached the impact was at the individual daily practice and schoolwide levels.

> *For the [specialist coaching] with the NQTs, where was the main benefit?*
>
> *Initially personal [points to IP] but then it comes into their daily practice [points to IDP].* (Co-ordinator A)
>
> *So with the [specialist] coaching for middle leaders, where would you say that benefited?*
>
> *I would say for some of them in their practice and because of the roles some of them were holding there were school wide benefits, like when they were chairing meetings and how they approached things because they were experienced and leading things in school.* (Co-ordinator C)

Specialist coaching was also considered to impact at a different level when more experienced, under-performing teachers were being coached. The two CPD co-ordinators who spoke about this perceived that these teachers benefited at the individual personal/emotional level as it helped them reflect on their continuing involvement with the teaching profession.

> *We had eight people on it [specialist coaching programme] and six have left the school. That could be interpreted as success. The vast majority have chosen to…leave the profession, so maybe they did not engage in it*

Table 7: Level at which co-coaching was perceived to have most impact.

Level of impact	Theme of impact
Individual personal	■ Emotional benefits – job satisfaction, motivation, reassurance, confidence, feeling valued, feeling supported
Individual daily practice	■ Actual changes in practice – for example; pace of lesson, better differentiated questions, moving from 'good' to 'outstanding' ■ Increased risk-taking in classroom and trying new strategies ■ Sharing of ideas between staff ■ Increased time for reflection ■ Skills of coaching used in teaching (e.g. time for pupils to reflect)
Schoolwide	■ More support between colleagues ■ Better communication between all staff roles

> *very much, as we wanted, as it was sort of the straw that broke the camel's back, but they thought about it and said 'I have made my decision'… they left, that could be described as a good outcome for the school.* (Co-ordinator F)

A summary of these findings can be seen in Table 6.

Co-coaching

All four CPD co-ordinators who discussed co-coaching noted benefits at the individual daily practice level.

> *We set up coaching trios [co-coaching] … there was a particular focus, each person had to work on something to do with teaching and learning…we were in a situation where we had to improve our teaching and learning dramatically [to avoid the Ofsted category of special measures] and it worked!* (Co-ordinator F)

Three specifically noted that the benefits of co-coaching moved from individual daily practice to the schoolwide level.

> *It was between IDP and SW, as there was more support between colleagues… and better questioning of pupils, definitely much improved, and [they were] more open to change … so in fact probably more school wide than individual.* (Co-ordinator F)

Comments from the three coachees who experienced co-coaching indicated that they also perceived the impact to be mostly at the individual daily practice level. This was due to the following aspects of coaching: that they had ownership over the process (e.g. to focus on their own target and plans); the skills they learnt from the coaching sessions (e.g. the type of questions to ask); and the pressure to do something, and share ideas, as they were working with a peer.

> *Accountability to colleagues made a difference – there was an integrity to do something yourself and also to share ideas to help others.* (Coachee E)

The impact of co-coaching was therefore perceived by both roles to be at the personal/emotional level but mostly at the individual daily practice level. CPD co-ordinators additionally perceived that this impact led to benefits at the schoolwide level.

A summary of these findings can be seen in Table 7.

Discussion

This research sought to contribute new data to the evidence base on the benefits of coaching within schools and to illustrate the possible wider impact of coaching in schools, such as change in teachers' skills in the classroom, beyond the wellbeing and emotional impact.

The development of this evidence base will enable school leaders to consider whether coaching is 'just [going to] make them [the teachers] feel good' or whether other benefits will be achieved alongside this.

Data gathered from two different roles involved in coaching (CPD co-ordinators and coachees) in a sample of secondary schools, illustrated that benefits from specialist coaching and co-coaching can be seen at a range of levels throughout the school.

Evidence of impact was found at the individual, personal level in the form of emotional benefits for teachers such as increased job satisfaction, motivation and feeling valued as other research in coaching has also shown (Cordingly, 2005; Leat & Lofthouse, 2006).

This research has also found evidence of perceived benefits in relation to teachers' actual daily practice, both within the classroom and the wider school. The CPD co-ordinators noted changes in pace of lessons, better differentiated questions, staff moving from 'good' to 'outstanding' in observations, increased risk-taking in classrooms and staff trying new strategies. These findings build on earlier studies providing evidence for actual changes in teachers' practice after coaching. For example, supporting Zwart et al.'s (2007) and Allan's (2007) claims that coaching can result in changes in teachers' professional practice such as increasing their experimentation in classes.

Comments from the coachees indicated that the increased time to reflect and other specific aspects of the coaching conversation supported them to make these changes in their practice because it prompted changes in their reflection and learning pattern. The aspects from the coaching conversation they referred to were factors such as considering obstacles, isolating one 'next step' and being asked to verbalise a plan. This indicates that coachees were engaging in double-loop, rather than single-loop learning (Harris & Muiys, 2005) which resulted in a move away from routine problem-solving and encouraged them to think of more innovative strategies they could try. These changes were seen by the CPD co-ordinators and noted as increased risk-taking in the classroom and in teachers trying new strategies.

Both the CPD co-ordinators and coachees also perceived benefits from the coaching that were schoolwide. They noted more communication, collaboration and openness within the school as staff talked more to each other about teaching and shared strategies. This provides evidence for Tschannen-Moran's (2010) claim that coaching not only engages the teacher in development of their own practice but there is more collaborative working as teachers talk more about teaching to colleagues. Tolhurst (2010) has proposed that learning the process of coaching would help staff use time they have together more productively. Findings from the coachees and CPD co-ordinators supports this. The coachees noted that after learning the skills of coaching they felt more able to help colleagues reflect because they knew, for example, what helpful questions to ask. The CPD co-ordinators also perceived that coaching contributed to better communication between all staff in the school, including between teachers and the leadership team. These findings support writers such as Allen (2008), Johnson (1999), Tolhurst (2006, 2010) and Tschannen-Moran (2010) who have proposed that coaching can contribute to culture change as it will impact on the way staff communicate and reflect in the organisation.

Benefits of specialist coaching

The findings from the current study indicate that specialist coaching has a slightly different impact depending on the role the coachee holds within the school.

Middle leaders

The benefits for middle leaders were seen in their individual daily practice and, as a consequence of this, at the schoolwide level. There was a theme from the findings that specialist coaching helped middle leaders define their values and consider their leadership style, and this enabled them to lead colleagues more effectively.

The benefits with middle leaders were found to impact at the schoolwide level as

coaching improved the leader's capacity and skills. This supports Tolhurst's (2010) assertion that coaching for middle leaders helps them encourage reflective practice of staff, challenge them more if required and to develop effective distributed leadership across the school.

Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and experienced, under-performing teachers

This study suggests that when used with newly qualified (NQTs) and experienced, under-performing teachers, specialist coaching has impact at the individual personal/emotional level. The findings here indicate that for NQTs their daily practice is also enhanced. With under-performing, experienced teachers the findings of the current study indicate that the chance to reflect deeply at a personal level brings slightly different benefits. It appears that it enables them to explore their commitment to any changes that the school may be undergoing (e.g. pressure from being graded inadequate by Ofsted). This may result in changes in daily practice, if they commit to the changes, or them making the choice to leave the school/profession.

Benefits of co-coaching

Benefits from co-coaching were perceived by coachees and CPD co-ordinators to be at the individual daily practice level as aspects of the coaching conversation and increased reflection time enabled them to develop their teaching skills in the classroom. The coachees noted that the ownership they had over the process supported them to make these changes as they were able to focus on their own goals, their own next step and consider what was appropriate for them and their class specifically.

Both roles noted that these benefits also impacted at the schoolwide level as staff reflected on their teaching more, even outside the coaching conversations, and supported each other to problem-solve issues. Coachees noted that after learning coaching skills they were better able to support colleagues as they knew what questions to ask to help someone reflect.

Limitations of the study

A convenience sample (of local schools) followed by a purposive sample (to seek out CPD co-ordinators and coachees) was used in the study. As a consequence the sample may have a volunteer bias (Heiman, 2002) as participants all wanted to talk about, and possibly all felt positive, about coaching. Due to the low return rate the sample size is small. When using IPA however, a small, homogeneous sample is appropriate since IPA does not seek to 'make… general claims' (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p.55) but to explore how participants are making sense of their world by encouraging them to talk in depth about their experiences.

Due to lack of time and research colleagues the qualitative data was analysed by the researcher only. Two checks were used to increase the validity of the analysis. First, during the interviews respondents were asked to code the type of coaching activity they mentioned. This ensured that coding by the researcher and school professional was similar. Second, the questionnaire data and interview data regarding the levels at which respondents placed the benefits were compared to check congruence.

It is important to note, as three CPD co-ordinators and one coachee did, that it is difficult to conclude whether the benefits discussed come exclusively from coaching. This is because other CPD activities were often engaged in simultaneously. For example, peer observations, that took place alongside co-coaching and were arranged across different faculties, also contributed to the increased communication within the school.

Future research on the benefits of coaching could usefully focus on gathering views from different roles in a school, not just the coachees. For example, views of the CPD co-ordinator, as in the current study, or the coachees' line manager or pupils.

Implications of the findings

This research has provided evidence, from two different sources in a sample of secondary schools that: (i) the perceived benefits of coaching can be seen at three different levels within the school; and (ii) to a limited

degree, different types of coaching benefit a school in different ways.

The current study has contributed to the body of knowledge showing that coaching is perceived to have an impact on a teachers' daily practice as well as support them emotionally. It has illustrated that benefits at the emotional/ personal level, positive changes in the coachees behaviours within the classroom and schoolwide are all possible outcomes from coaching.

Co-coaching was found to impact strongly on teachers' daily practice and help develop teachers' meta-cognition regarding their teaching practice. This form of coaching also appears to impact strongly on the schoolwide culture by developing relationships and encouraging more talk in school about teaching and learning. Combining co-coaching with observations and ensuring coachee pairs are from across different faculties was found to be particularly helpful in achieving this. Co-coaching would therefore be a useful type of coaching for schools wanting to develop reflection on daily practice and communication across the school. As schools become more autonomous the DfE (2010) is encouraging schools to develop 'in-school systems' (p.73) to share effective practice. This study indicates that co-coaching within schools could help to achieve this. The development of a reflective culture within a school, where there is a focus on moving forward and where staff have the skills to cascade new knowledge across the organisation, could be paramount to school success in the future.

This research also sought to explore in more detail when, and how, different types of coaching would be useful in a schools' journey of improvement. This would enable school leaders and staff supporting schools to make a more evidence informed choice of when to use a particular type of coaching.

Where enhancing middle leaders' confidence and willingness to challenge staff is required specialist coaching can support a school to improve capacity in its leadership and develop effective distributed leadership. Tolhurst (2010) notes that 'schools often invest time and resources in training teachers … [but] very little time is spent on preparation for leadership' (p.140).

NQTs receiving specialist coaching experience the benefits emotionally and it impacts on their daily practice. During a period of change, such as when a school has been rated inadequate, staff feeling resistant to the changes may benefit from specialist coaching to support them to reflect on their commitment to the change process. This can help the reculturing of a school as resistance is discussed and explored so enabling staff to move through the cycle of denial, resistance and exploration to commitment (Scott & Jaffe, 1989) and consider whether or not they wish to leave the school.

In schools where teachers need support to reflect on, develop, and improve their teaching the findings indicate that co-coaching achieves this through teaching them a structure they can use with colleagues to reflect on their unique situations and focus on a plan to move forward which is right for them. Communication and openness between staff in the school was also seen as a benefit from this type of coaching.

Conclusion

This study has therefore found that alongside the emotional, personal benefits from coaching, which support staff to 'feel good', there are also a range of further benefits. These include changes in staff practices in the classroom and in their interactions across the school. Evidence of these outcomes will enable school leaders to be less sceptical about the 'feel good' factor. They can celebrate this in the knowledge that there is likely to be other changes, and benefits, from coaching in an educational setting to the individual, their colleagues, pupils and the organisation as a whole.

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The client as active ingredient: 'Core self-evaluations' as predictors of coaching outcome variance

David Tee, David Shearer & Gareth Roderique-Davies

This pilot study builds on previous research applying the 'active ingredients' model to coaching psychology and seeking to identify client traits that may predict coaching efficacy. It examines the relationship between the four 'core self-evaluation' traits (self-esteem, generalised self-efficacy, locus of control and neuroticism) and the attainment of contracted coaching goals. Data were collected from 45 participants on a co-coaching programme based in a UK university. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis that there will be a correlational relationship between client 'core self-evaluation' scores and coaching goal attainment, with the results showing a positive but non-significant relationship. A reliance on self-reporting, an inconsistency in the use of Goal Attainment Scaling as a means of operationalising the criterion variable and a greater homogeneity in goals set are all suggested as possible improvements for future research on client coachability.
Keywords: *coaching psychology, client factors, coachability, active ingredients.*

COACHING READINESS by the coachee' formed one of the International Coaching Research Forum's (ICRF) 16 key themes for research (Kauffman, Russell & Bush, 2008). However, there has been little published research regarding what factors determine the readiness of coaching clients in the intervening years. An awareness of these factors would practically guide client preparation for coaching, as well as alert client and coach to potential barriers to goal attainment. In addition, such knowledge may also allow an informed debate as to whether it is ethically appropriate to encourage potential clients to invest time or money into coaching, where other developmental interventions may be more efficacious in helping them attain their desired outcomes.

Coaching psychology frameworks.

Efforts to identify the antecedents of successful coaching produced a number of early coaching psychology frameworks, such as Feldman and Lankau's (2005) three factor model, Joo's conceptual framework (2005) and Bluckert's (2006) three factor model. Such frameworks are typically based on a sample of extant literature with no exhaustively applied criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Although there are thematic similarities amongst these early frameworks, the rationale for arriving at them varies, with Bluckert (2006), for example, claiming three specific factors ('coach competence and professionalism', 'coaching relationship' and 'client factors') as self-evident. As a notable exception, Joo (2005) did conduct a more formal systematic review, but ended up with material predominantly sourced from practitioner – rather than research – literature. In the absence of a robust, empirically supported framework within the coaching psychology literature, the decision was made to examine research from related 'helping by talking' professions.

Psychotherapy's 'active ingredients' model

Large-scale, rigorous research into the effectiveness of psychotherapy has been conducted since the 1930s, with consistent evidence supporting its effectiveness (Bergin & Lambert, 1978). Researchers have sought to identify what the components

are in psychotherapy that lead to successful intervention, with Asay and Lambert (1999) detailing four 'active ingredients', alongside their percentage contribution to outcome variance: Therapeutic Relationship (30 per cent) [including the tailoring of the therapeutic alliance, positive regard, attachment style and self-disclosure (Norcross, 2002)]; Expectancy, Hope and Placebo Effects (15 per cent) [The patient's belief that they are receiving, or due to receive, an effective treatment]; Theory and Techniques (15 per cent) [factors common to all therapies, listed by Smither (2011) as belief in the rationale for treatment, the healing context and the working alliance] and Client/Extratherapeutic Factors (40 per cent) [client characteristics and the client's social and support systems, history and experiences]. This final factor is central to the rationale behind this present study: that there is evidence from a related 'helping by talking' intervention that suggests 'Client/Extratherapeutic Factors', *in distinction from the client-practitioner relationship,* is the single largest determinant of the intervention's efficacy.

The coaching client as 'active ingredient'

Within counselling and psychotherapy research, 'Client Factors' have been defined as:

> *Those that exist 'within' the person of the client…In other words, they are identifiable outside of what takes place in therapy (so not just the client's immediate feelings towards the therapist), and are relatively enduring and stable ways of being.* (Cooper, 2008)

This suggests that there may be identifiable characteristics of coaching clients that may influence the efficacy of coaching intervention. However, published research focusing on the coaching client in isolation is limited, with more research interested in the contribution that the relationship of client and coach combined make to coaching efficacy (e.g. De Haan et al., 2013; Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015; Jowett et al., 2012; O'Broin, 2016). McKenna and Davis (2009) were the first to explicitly propose that meta-analyses into the active ingredients from psychotherapy may also be of relevance to coaching researchers, although their paper was purely theoretical. Smith and Brummel (2013) researched three of the active ingredients within an executive coaching context, but their design omitted the fourth 'ingredient': 'Client/Extratherapeutic Factors'. Similarly, Grant (2014) highlights the emergence of the active ingredients model as a focus of coaching research but then focuses on four facets of the coach-client relationship itself [(i) autonomy support; (ii) the extent to which a coachee feels satisfied with the actual coach–coachee relationship; (iii) the extent to which the coaching relationship was similar to an 'ideal' coach–coachee relationship; and (iv) a goal-focused coach–coachee relationship]. De Haan et al. (2016) frame their study by referencing the 'Active Ingredients' model, but then particularly focus on the nature of the coach-client relationship as a predictor of efficacy.

If researchers are to accept the assumption that psychotherapy's 'active ingredients' framework is of relevance to coaching psychology and, therefore, that 'Client/Extratherapeutic Factors' are a potential predictor of efficacy, then it is necessary to hone in on a defensible lens through which to scrutinise such factors. Cooper's (2008) definition of 'Client Factors' as both stable and enduring points towards a consideration of 'traits', central to the field of differential psychology and evidenced as predictors of performance. For example, emotional stability and conscientiousness are related to transformational leadership (Judge & Bono, 2000), academic achievement is related to diligence, self-discipline and achievement-orientation (O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007) and self-oriented perfectionism is a predictor of exercise dependence (Hill, Robson & Stamp, 2015). Therefore, enduring traits that differentiate one potential coaching client from another may predict whether coaching is an ethically defensible and time-worthy intervention for that client.

Core self-evaluations

The current lack of consensus on the key traits needed to determine client factors that actively influence coaching efficacy means there is an extensive list of potential correlates. There have been studies that make use of the Five Factor Model of personality, with Stewart et al. (2008) correlating it with a self-report of transfer of learning, whilst Jones, Woods and Hutchinson (2014) correlated it with client perceptions of coaching effectiveness. For coaches working with executive and workplace clients, Mackie (2015) advocates the relevance of the broad dispositional trait 'core self-evaluations' (CSE). This has been described by Judge, Locke and Durham (1997) as the basic conclusions that individuals hold about themselves. Initially devised as a predictor of job satisfaction, further research suggests that it also predicts work motivation and job performance (Judge & Bono, 2001) as well as career success and lower stress levels (Judge, 2009). Judge et al. (1997) argue that CSE is comprised of four specific traits: self-esteem, generalised self-efficacy, emotional stability (low neuroticism) and locus of control. Self-efficacy has been positively correlated with higher task performance (Wilson & Narayan, 2016) and coaching client job performance improvement (Bozer, Sarros & Santora, 2013), whereas self-esteem has been used as a criterion variable in career coaching research (Dirkx, 2015). Mackie (2015) used CSEs as a predictor of coaching efficacy, alongside 'developmental readiness' and 'coaching readiness', but operationalised efficacy using transformational leadership behaviour rather than goal attainment.

Study aim and hypothesis

This study aimed to generate empirical data for the largest single active ingredient: client factors. This was in order to measure whether CSE has any coaching efficacy predictive validity and contributes towards the 40 per cent of outcome variance attributed to client factors. Therefore, it was predicted that there will be a positive correlation between client 'core self-evaluation' scores and coaching goal attainment. In addition, it was hypothesized that participants assigned to the coaching condition would make greater progress towards coaching goal attainment than participants assigned to the control condition.

Method

Participants and design

This research used a between-participants experimental design, with participants (N=45) randomly assigned to either the experimental (coaching) or control (no coaching) condition. The dependent variable was client progress towards coaching goal attainment. In addition, participant scores on CSE scales were obtained prior to being assigned to a condition. A convenience sampling strategy was adopted, with self-volunteering participants drawn from an undergraduate psychology degree programme within a UK university. Of the forty five participants recruited, thirty nine completed the study. 64 per cent of the participants were female (n=29) and the mean age was 20.7 years (SD=2.88 years). In the experimental condition, 69 per cent of the participants were female (n=18) and the mean age was 20.08 years (SD=2.42 years). In the control condition, 58 per cent of the participants were female (n=11) and the mean age was 21.47 (SD=3.39 years).

Measures

Recent coaching and positive psychology research has made use of a 12-item CSE Scale devised by Judge, Erez, Bono and Thoresen (2003) (cf. MacKie, 2015; Stein & Grant, 2014). For this present study, each of the four elements in the predictor variable 'Core Self-Evaluation' were measured using full scales developed in previously published studies. This was to allow for future factor analysis of any items within each of the four scales that might specifically predict coachability.

Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)
Self-esteem was measured using all 10 items and a four-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. An example item is 'I take a positive attitude towards myself' (α ranges from .77 to .88). In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .86.

General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995)
All ten items were used to measure generalised self-efficacy on a four point scale, ranging from not at all true to exactly true. An example item is 'When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions'. According to Schwarzer and Jerusalem (ibid.), in samples from 23 nations, Cronbach's alphas range from .76 to .90. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .74.

'Neuroticism' sub scale (Eysenck, Eysenck & Barrett, 1985)
All 12 items were used to measure neuroticism on a two-point 'Yes/No' scale. An example item is 'Are you a worrier?' According to Eysenck et al. (ibid.), the 'Neuroticism short scale' has a reported reliability of .80. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .70.

Locus of Control (Rotter, 1966)
All 29 items were used to measure locus of control. An example forced choice item is 'When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work/It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow'. Internal consistency scores ranged between .65 and .79. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .81.

As coaching has been argued to be a goal-focused process (Grant, 2006), the criterion variable – the efficacy of the coaching intervention – was operationalised as the degree to which the contracted coaching goal was achieved. Goal Attainment Scales (GAS) were used as a pre- and post-experimental measure. Originally developed by MacKay and Lundie (1968), these have been adopted as a method of programme impact evaluation and calls have been made for the broader use of GAS as a means by which coaching researchers will be able to make comparisons between studies (Grant et al., 2010; Grant, 2013). For a detailed exploration of the use of GAS in coaching, see Spence (2007).

Procedure
Participants provided written informed consent to take part in the study and were advised of their right to withdraw during the research or to have their data subsequently withdrawn upon request. Participants in both conditions completed the 'core self-evaluations' instruments. They then used goal attainment scaling to identify a measurable goal they desired to achieve within a six-week period. This then became the midpoint on a five-point scale of attainment, with four alternative attainment levels agreed (5=Best Expected Outcome, 4=More than Expected Outcome, 3=Expected Outcome, 2=Less than Expected Outcome, 1=Worst Expected Outcome). Finally, the client identified their current level of attainment on the scale, so that progress could be noted at the end of the study.

Participants in the experimental condition took part in six weekly blocks of activity. Each block had two elements: a one hour coach training workshop, based on a programme devised by Grant and Greene (2001), followed by a further one hour supervised co-coaching session, where participants took turns coaching their partner on progress towards the desired goal. Participants in the control condition did not take part in any intervention.

At the conclusion of the six week study participants in both conditions recorded the point on the Goal Attainment Scale that they had reached in relation to their desired outcome. Ethical approval for this study was granted by the host university's Faculty Ethics Panel.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations and correlations amongst variables.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Self-esteem	20.11	5.00	–				
2. Generalised self-efficacy	30.56	3.26	.61**	–			
3. Neuroticism	6.40	2.76	–.46**	–.38**	–		
4. Locus of control	11.69	4.54	–.51**	–.55**	.38**	–	
5. Goal attainment	1.28	0.92	–0.02	–0.11	0.03	0.13	–

Results

Analysis revealed no significant differences in the demographic characteristics of the coaching and control conditions, nor any outliers in the data for the study variables. Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations and correlations of the study variables. The results show that the four CSE variables are significantly correlated but that none of these predictor variables are significantly correlated to the criterion variable.

An independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis that there would be a significant difference in goal attainment between the coaching condition and control condition participants. The mean progress towards goal attainment for coaching participants (M=1.29, SD=.81) was not significantly different (t=.08, df=37, two-tailed p=.94) to that of participants who received no coaching (M=1.27, SD=1.10).

A multiple regression analysis was conducted in order to test the prediction that CSE scores predict levels of goal attainment. Preliminary analyses ensured no violation of assumptions of normality, multicollinearity, linearity and homoscedasticity. The variance explained by core self-evaluations was 9.7 per cent ($F(4,34)=.92$, $p < .47$). Of the component CSE elements, locus of control (beta=-.35, p<.09) and generalised self-efficacy (beta=-.28, p<.21) made the largest unique contributions, but neither were statistically significant.

Discussion

The current research examined CSE as a predictor of coaching efficacy. The result did not produce a statistically significant relationship between client 'core self-evaluation' scores and coaching goal attainment. In addition, it found no significant difference in goal attainment between the coaching and the control conditions, indicating that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

This was a pilot study and the sample size was therefore relatively small. An *a priori* power analysis for a study with this design, a small effect size and a power of 0.8 indicates a sample of 620 participants would be needed. The sample size for this pilot study falls below these thresholds, so any conclusions have to be treated with great caution. Nonetheless, the aim of this pilot study was to investigate whether the four variables within the CSE construct appear to correlate with coaching outcomes. More broadly, it also responded to the call from Grant et al. (2010) to adopt goal attainment scaling as a measure of coaching outcomes and to continue coaching psychology research using CSE as a predictor variable (MacKie, 2015).

The results from this pilot suggest that the co-coaching intervention did not have any significant effect on client progress towards goal attainment, or that any of the individual elements of the CSE construct in isolation significantly correlate with goal attainment. However, the overall CSE construct

did account for 9.7 per cent of the outcome variance, contributing a quarter of the 40 per cent 'Client/Extratherapeutic Factors' element of the 'Active Ingredients' model.

Limitations of the present study include the fact that measures of both the predictor and criterion variables were reliant on self-report. Whilst the psychometric instruments used for the four CSE variables have high reliability, reliance on self-report of goal attainment progress from coaching clients is a particular limitation. Reported progress may be affected by self-deception, demand characteristics or other subjective factors. Future research might instead make use of goals for which objective data of attainment is available.

Study participants each identified a goal of personal relevance to them, before creating five levels of attainment using the GAS process. Firstly, this did not produce homogeneity of goals. Whilst GAS allows goals to be weighted for perceived difficulty, this is more appropriate in rehabilitation contexts, where the therapist may have objective data or repeated experience of the effort or timescales involved in attaining a particular goal (for example, rebuilding of muscle strength following an injury). Within a coaching context, the coach may have no personal experience or technical knowledge concerning the client's goal and what might be a realistic attainment target within a given timeframe. Therefore, building in a difficulty 'weighting' remains a subjective judgement. Furthermore, the percentage bands participants assigned to each of the five GAS levels also varied, with some setting their desired outcome as a specific single percentage point, whilst others set it within a 20 per cent band of possible outcome scores. In this present study, the researchers converted participant responses by generating a 10 point +/– 5 per cent range around the single percentage point (or mid point where participants gave a band of scores) to introduce consistency. Nevertheless, a more consistent use of assigning attainment levels within coaching studies using GAS will allow for more meaningful future meta-analyses.

As with any study using co-coaching, there was a variance in the competence and commitment of the participants. Mackie (2015) sought to address this by using professional coaches, with a mean of 12 years experience. Until the 'Active Ingredients' for the coach are better understood, future research might benefit from identifying similarly defensible criteria for what makes an experienced coach, and then only using coaches that meet these criteria.

Finally, the present study was conducted over a six-week period, with coaching sessions held at weekly intervals. This constrained the amount of progress that coaching clients could reasonably make towards attaining their goal, both from session to session and over the duration of the relationship as a whole. Future research could adopt more typical executive and workplace coaching session frequencies to allow clients more opportunity to attend to goal progression.

Despite these limitations, these initial findings are in keeping with those of MacKie (ibid.), whose results showed partial but largely non-significant support for CSEs as a potential predictor of coachability. Given the findings Judge (2009) reports from more robust, larger scale studies into other occupational psychology criterion variables, it does seem that CSE has potential efficacy and that efforts to conduct more controlled research into CSE as a coaching client factor may contribute to the evidence base for coaching psychology.

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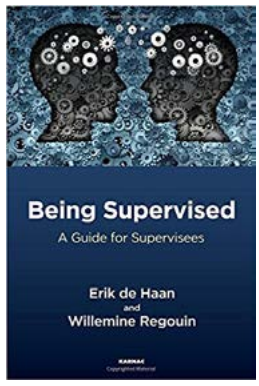
Book Review

Being Supervised: A Guide for Supervisees

Erik de Haan & Willemine Regouin



Reviewed by Sarah Corrie

SUPERVISION is widely regarded as playing an important – if not critical – role in the quality control of the so-called helping professions. Increasingly seen as a whole career activity whose models, frequency, style and methods delivery will vary as a function of context and stage of professional development, supervision is now regarded by many as a specialism in its own right. Indeed, there is a burgeoning literature which seeks to examine the nature of supervision and how it is conducted, as well as the expertise necessary for its delivery.

The literature on supervision spans themes as diverse as models and methods, supervisor and supervisee characteristics, how to optimise learning and development, issues of power and diversity, assessing supervisee (and supervisor) competence and delivering feedback – amongst others. It is curious then, that the perspective of the supervisee remains largely neglected. There are few texts aimed directly at helping supervisees reflect upon how to understand and gain the most from the process. This book is, therefore, a timely and welcome addition to the literature, taking as its primary intended audience those who are receiving (or who are about to receive) supervision.

Originally published in Dutch in 1991, with subsequent editions following until 2015, this volume has now been published in English. It is offered as a resource that can aid reflection on what supervision adds to an individual's learning and development, and what to expect from engaging in the process. The reader's journey is supported by case vignettes and 'reflective assignments' to help readers consolidate their learning and enable them to personalise the material to their own circumstances and needs.

The book is organised in three main sections. Within this overarching structure, themes recur and are designed to reflect what the authors describe as the 'spiral shape of learning in supervision' (p.xiii). Part I is concerned with 'starting the supervisory journey' and introduces those who are about to begin supervision to what is a multifaceted learning environment. There is a helpful recognition of the bewilderment that can accompany a person's first steps into the world of professional practice – a world which can appear quite different from how it advertises itself to be in the relative security of the classroom setting. To help readers navigate this phase, Part I examines the process of contracting (supervision can be commissioned in a variety of settings which have very real implications for what is negotiated and delivered), and the 'what' and 'how' of the learning opportunities that are provided. Part I also explores dealing with disappointments, and different forms of potential friction (in theoretical orientation, style, personality differences between supervisor and supervisee) are examined.

Part II addresses the reader who is now 'on the supervisory journey'. Taking the reader through the initial, middle and final stages of supervision, consideration is given to a range of themes that include the work-

ing relationship, aligning expectations, establishing objectives, boundaries, evaluative aspects, and endings.

Part III is intended for advanced supervisees and explores further the relationship between the person and the profession. The authors make the point that as experience is gained, new questions arise, and this section offers a way of reflecting on, and contextualising, a substantive period of supervision through focusing on three core areas: the person of the supervisee, the profession of the supervisee, and what the authors term 'the in-between'. This section adopts a more philosophical perspective, addressing a variety of themes that span different forms of knowing, types of learning, working and work support.

This is a helpful book that is both encouraging and empowering – particularly for those who are less familiar with what supervision will (or may) entail. The challenge of becoming a professional and what it means to open oneself to a process of external scrutiny is considered thoughtfully and sensitively. Moreover, in a professional environment that increasingly requires individuals to deliver (where possible) empirically-supported interventions, and organise their learning around competence frameworks, there is a refreshing emphasis on the value of supervision as helping the reader discover their authentic voice as a professional practitioner, and supporting them in learning how to practice 'in their own way.'

As a short text, certain aspects of the supervisory process and current debates are inevitably given limited consideration or are omitted. For example, the different contexts in which supervision is mandated and delivered (and helping readers think through the implications of this) is relatively underplayed, as is the way in which supervision might be delivered (and experienced) when bound to a specific curriculum or competence framework. The implications of its evaluative and managerial functions are also not explored in detail. (In some supervisory contexts, particularly those connected with formal training, a supervisor's evaluation may determine whether an individual is permitted to progress to the next stage of their career.) However, the book does not claim to supply a comprehensive review of supervision or the literature which underpins our current knowledge of it. Rather, its appeal rests in its accessibility to those who are wanting to understand more about the opportunities and potential challenges afforded. This book will serve as a reassuring and thought-provoking companion for many embarking on the rich, fruitful and at times challenging learning environment known as supervision. And therein lies its value.

Reviewer

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Report

Special Group in Coaching Psychology Chair's Note

David Webster

THE SGCP IS UNIQUE In the coaching psychology space: where else would you be able to engage in conversations about performance, learning, wellbeing and mental health with colleagues from all of the psychological disciplines – sports psychologists, educational psychologists, clinical and counselling psychologists, neuro and occupational psychologists? The SGCP has immense appeal in this regard, and this is represented in the numbers, with over 5000 linked in group members and around 2500 members of the SGCP proper. We are in a prime position to be the leading organisation of its kind in the UK, and informing the conversation internationally. This is our focus around the Committee table – how can we make the most of this uniqueness for the benefit of you, the membership, and ultimately, those you serve – clients and service users?

All this is significant when we look at the context within which we sit. The BPS is undergoing significant change over the next 18 months and at the time of writing members are being consulted on those changes, with an online process and forthcoming roadshows. We have been contributing to the discussion on those changes and positively influencing what we see as ensuring that the BPS is a modern organisation more able to give real 'voice' to its membership. The SGCP can be a unifying body given its cross disciplinary membership, and as a group, is likely to benefit from the changes.

In fact, enabling others to have or to find their 'voice' is surely a crucial part of what coaching and coaching psychology does. With terrorism back on the streets of London and Manchester and tragedy in West London, and social upheaval and political engagement reaching new heights, change is all around us and we have a clear role to support others in a multiplicity of ways. This struck me again just last week, when one of our number described how she has been on call to support victims of the Grenfell Tower fire. This is just one example of thousands, I am sure, of our members' skill in supporting others in times of crisis and shift. For those involved in responding in this way, we wish you all the best and look forward to learning from you.

The ICPR plays a critical role in continuing to create the body of knowledge and learning from which we all draw as psychologists and is a critical part of our strategic plan. Alongside its sister publication, *The Coaching Psychologist* it is building an unparalleled resource for us as coaching psychologists and can inform conversations in the Peer Practice groups, the Learning Centre workshops, and the annual conference. So, please consider your own work and learning and how you may be able to contribute to this publication, to our collective growth and to the conference. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank Dr Roger Hamill, the ICPR Editor, who has, for the last two years, ensured that the publication retains the high standards for which it is known. He passes the reigns on to others at the end of 2017 – huge thanks, Roger.

This year's SGCP Conference is in Birmingham on 7–8 December 2017 – please seek out our website for further details. From whichever discipline you hail, and whatever your interest in coaching psychology, you have a unique home in the SGCP.

David Webster, *Chair SGCP*

Report

Interest Group in Coaching Psychology News

Vicki de Prazer

AS I MENTIONED in the last issue of ICPR (March 2017), the main goal this year for the Australian Psychological Society's Coaching Psychology Interest Group (CPIG) has been to focus our efforts on utilising the great wealth of talent and expertise within our membership to provide opportunities for the exchange of information, knowledge, and ideas, that foster the contribution of psychology to coaching.

CPIG recognises that to continue to pursue Excellence in Coaching, the links between researcher and practitioner need to be vigorously supported and communicated.

We are pursuing these two priorities via three strategies.

Enhancing our use of social media with a dedicated team established to develop regular content, source articles and research of interest to our members, and to encourage and monitor online review and discussion of 'hot topics'. We also see the opportunities here for more dialogue with the international community of coaching psychologists, along with the marketing of programs, publications and events globally.

We have established a team to develop a programme of Webinars to ensure all our members have access to quality professional development and networking opportunities. With many CPIG members spread across Australia in regional and rural areas, being more inclusive and accessible is essential. We plan to establish a library of webinars, thus capturing the expertise and knowledge in our group, as well as inviting others in the wider community to provide content for this area.

Our third strategy for the exchange of knowledge and expertise, and the integration of evidenced research and practice is our ISCP Congress, planned for July 2018. We are currently finalising our theme and structure for this conference. Our aim is to make this a significant event on the international calendar of coaching events in 2018. We will provide more information on this soon; pop it in your diary.

I am very keen to see the global coaching psychology community communicate more in 2018 and invite you to contact the Coaching Psychology Interest Group and perhaps visit Australia and share your expertise and perspectives.

Best wishes to all.

Vicki de Prazer
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4. Online submission process

(1) All manuscripts must be submitted to a Co-ordinating Editor by email to:
Roger Hamill (UK): icpreditoruk@gmail.com
Sandy Gordon (Australia): sandy.gordon@uwa.edu.au

(2) The submission must include the following as separate files:

- Title page consisting of manuscript title, authors' full names and affiliations, name and address for corresponding author.
- Abstract.
- Full manuscript omitting authors' names and affiliations. Figures and tables can be attached separately if necessary.

5. Manuscript requirements

- Contributions must be typed in double spacing with wide margins. All sheets must be numbered.
- Tables should be typed in double spacing, each on a separate page with a self-explanatory title. Tables should be comprehensible without reference to the text. They should be placed at the end of the manuscript with their approximate locations indicated in the text.
- Figures can be included at the end of the document or attached as separate files, carefully labelled in initial capital/lower case lettering with symbols in a form consistent with text use. Unnecessary background patterns, lines and shading should be avoided. Captions should be listed on a separate page. The resolution of digital images must be at least 300 dpi.
- For articles containing original scientific research, a structured abstract of up to 250 words should be included with the headings: Objectives, Design, Methods, Results, Conclusions. Review articles should use these headings: Purpose, Methods, Results, Conclusions.
- Overall, the presentation of papers should conform to the British Psychological Society's Style Guide (available at www.bps.org.uk/publications/publications_home.cfm in PDF format). Non-discriminatory language should be used throughout. Spelling should be Anglicised when appropriate. Text should be concise and written for an international readership of applied psychologists. Sensationalist and unsubstantiated views are discouraged. Abbreviations, acronyms and unfamiliar specialist terms should be explained in the text on first use.
- Particular care should be taken to ensure that references are accurate and complete. Give all journal titles in full. Referencing should follow BPS formats. For example:
  Billington, T. (2000). *Separating, losing and excluding children: Narratives of difference*. London: Routledge/Falmer.
  Elliott, J.G. (2000). Dynamic assessment in educational contexts: Purpose and promise. In C. Lidz & J.G. Elliott (Eds.), *Dynamic assessment: Prevailing models and applications* (pp.713–740). New York: J.A.I. Press.
  Palmer, S. & Whybrow, A. (2006). The coaching psychology movement and its development within the British Psychological Society. *International Coaching Psychology Review 1*(1), 5–11.
- SI units must be used for all measurements, rounded off to practical values if appropriate, with the Imperial equivalent in parentheses.
- In normal circumstances, effect size should be incorporated.
- Authors are requested to avoid the use of sexist language.
- Authors are responsible for acquiring written permission to publish lengthy quotations, illustrations, etc. for which they do not own copyright.

6. Brief reports

These should be limited to 1000 words and may include research studies and theoretical, critical or review comments whose essential contribution can be made briefly. A summary of not more than 50 words should be provided.

7. Publication ethics

BPS Code of Conduct – Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines.
Principles of Publishing – Principle of Publishing.

8. Supplementary data

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