The Australian Psychological Society Ltd

Interest Group in Coaching Psychology

The British Psychological Society

Special Group in Coaching Psychology

International Coaching Psychology Review

Volume 8 No. 2 September 2013

ISSN: 1750-2764

International Coaching Psychology Review

Subscriptions
International Coaching Psychology Review (ICPR) is published in March and September. It is distributed free of charge to members of the British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology and the Australian Psychological Society Interest Group in Coaching Psychology members. It is available to non-members (Individuals £50 per volume; Institutions £60 per volume; single copies £25) from: The British Psychological Society, SGCP, St. Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7DR. UK.

Abstracting and indexing: The *ICPR* is abstracted in psycINFO, Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts and Google Scholar. The *ICPR* is included Cabell's *Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Educational Psychology and Administration* and Cabell's *Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Educational Curriculum and Methods.*

Notes for Contributors

The *ICPR* is an international publication with a focus on the theory, practice and research in the field of coaching psychology. Submission of academic articles, systematic reviews and other research reports which support evidence-based practice are welcomed. The *ICPR* may also publish conference reports and papers given at the British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology (BPS SGCP) and Australian Psychological Society Interest Group in Coaching Psychology (APS IGCP) conferences, notices and items of news relevant to the International Coaching Psychology Community.

Case studies and book reviews will be considered. The *ICPR* is published by the BPS SGCP in association with the APS IGCP.

1. Circulation
The circulation of the *ICPR* is worldwide. It is available in hardcopy and PDF format. Papers are invited and encouraged from authors throughout the world. It is available free in paper and PDF format to members of the BPS SGCP, and free in PDF format to APS IGCP members as a part of their annual membership.

2. Length
Papers should normally be no more than 6000 words, although the Co-Editors retain discretion to publish papers beyond this length in cases where the clear and concise expression of the scientific content requires greater length.

3. Reviewing
The publication operates a policy of anonymous peer review. Papers will normally be scrutinised and commented on by at least two independent expert referees (in addition to the relevant Co-Editor) although the Co-Editor may process a paper at his or her discretion. The referees will not be aware of the identity of the author. All information about authorship including personal acknowledgements and institutional affiliations should be confined to the title page (and the text should be free of such clues as identifiable self-citations, e.g. 'In our earlier work…').

Continued on inside back cover.

The British Psychological Society
Special Group in Coaching Psychology

*

The Australian Psychological Society Ltd
Interest Group in Coaching Psychology

*

International Coaching Psychology Review

*

Volume 8 No. 2 September 2013

*

Contents

Editorial: Emerging themes in coaching psychology

Michael J. Cavanagh & Stephen Palmer

ANOTHER BUMPER ISSUE of the *International Coaching Psychology Review.* Two major themes appear to be emerging from the papers received for this issue . They are concerned with generating a deeper understanding of relationship in coaching, and transformational development in both the coach and the client. These themes point toward the continuing maturation of the Coaching Psychology. There is a trend in the literature that is moving beyond questions such as 'does coaching work' and step wise models of coaching practice, toward a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the coaching process. This trend is asking questions about the purpose of coaching, its dynamics and the relationships that need to be noticed, fostered and developed if coaching is to maximise its potential offering to the world. While it is still early days in that journey, it is both stimulating and enjoyable watching it unfold.

Belinda Sun and colleagues begin the issue with a fascinating study into the types of relationships formed between coach and coachee in both skills and transformational coaching. They distinguish between the working alliance formed between coach and coachee, and the deeper 'real' or personal relationship that is formed through the work. This real relationship is marked by greater realism of perception and genuineness between the coach and coachee. Their findings suggest that transformational coaching encourages deeper relationships that are more akin to those formed in therapy.

In a similar vein, Spaten and Flensborg report on a qualitative study that considers the experience of both middle managers acting as coaches, and the people they coached. Spaten and Flensborg find that the establishment of the coaching relationship, and a balance between personal development goals and work oriented goals were important in the establishment of a positive and rewarding working alliance between coach and coachee. The skill and empathy of the coach, and the establishment of clear boundaries between the coaching and managerial relationships were important in establishing and sustaining an effective working alliance.

Mario Virgili reviews the mindfulness literature and mounts an argument that mindfulness may be a useful addition to the coach's armoury on several levels. Mindfulness may serve to assist both the coach and the coachee to manage the challenges and emotional stresses of the coaching engagement and goal striving. In addition, Virgili suggests that the inclusion of mindfulness practice may open up new pathways for understanding the change process and working within it.

Susing and Cavanagh pick up the theme of developmental or transformational coaching and consider the intersection between personality and developmental stage. Their review of the literature suggests that personality is not as fixed as was once thought. Developmental coaching may significant changes in personality traits such as neuroticism. The wealth of research showing important relationships between personality, job performance and leadership suggest that further research should be focussed on the relationship between developmental coaching and personality change.

Sarah Corrie and David Lane take us into a consideration of the decision making process in coaching. The literature in the areas suggests that practitioners in psychologically informed fields such as therapy and counselling, have a poor track record with

respect to the accuracy of their decisions and the use of systematic decision making protocols. They also suggest that there is little justification for thinking that coaches would be better at decision making. They present a four quadrant model for decision making in different contexts and suggest that formal training in decision making may well be of use in increasing the accuracy and efficacy of decision making in coaching.

Rees and Porter continue the theme of enhancing diagnostic and decision making skills, but this time among managers receiving coaching. They argue that a systems perspective is important in making accurate diagnoses of organisational ailments. Such a perspective enables managers to differentiate between symptoms and causes, and to consider processes as they unfold across boundaries in the organisation. They argue that this more discriminating and networked understanding of problems and solutions is likely to lead to more effective outcomes and avoid the problems associated with inaccurate problem identification.

In a brief report, Manfusa Shams continues the theme of practice improvement at a more collective level. She opens up a discussion on the SGCP's recent initiative in establishing Peer Coaching Practice. These are coaching communities of practice designed to be a platform for peers to share and develop their thinking and practice in coaching psychology. Dr Shams uses her experience of a Peer Practice Group to reflect on the benefits that might accrue to participants and the profession.

The issue ends with the reports of the SCGP and IGCP chairs. Their reports discuss a panoply of conferences, congresses and projects that have occurred or are underway since our last issue. In particular, the SGCP invite readers to their 4th European Coaching Psychology Conference to be held in Edinburgh, 12–13 December this year and the IGCP announce that they are holding a major conference in Melbourne, 16–18 October, 2014. We commend their reports for your reading pleasure.

Correspondence

Michael J. Cavanagh
Coaching Psychology Unit,
Department of Psychology,
The University of Sydney,
Sydney, Australia.
Email: Michaelc@psych.usyd.edu.au

Stephen Palmer
Coaching Psychology Unit,
Department of Psychology,
City University London,
Northampton Square,
London, UK.
Email: S.Palmer-1@city.ac.uk

Paper

A preliminary exploration of the working alliance and 'real relationship' in two coaching approaches with mental health workers

Belinda J. Sun, Frank P. Deane, Trevor P. Crowe, Retta Andresen, Lindsay Oades & Joseph Ciarrochi

Objectives: *The coaching relationship has been described as the catalyst for change. This study explores the coaching relationship by comparing the working alliance and the 'real relationship' – the undistorted and authentic experience of the other – in participants in skills coaching and transformational coaching.*
Design: *A 2 (coaching condition) x 2 (time) factorial design was used.*
Method: *Staff from community psychiatric recovery services were trained in a new service delivery approach (Collaborative Recovery Model), followed by coaching from internal coaches once per month to enhance implementation of the training. All trained staff were invited to participate in the research. Forty coachees met the requirements for inclusion in the study (>=3 coaching sessions in six months). Coaches completed a coaching alliance measure after each session. Coachees completed measures of working alliance and real relationship after six months of coaching.*
Results: *Analyses indicated that the coaching relationship is stronger after receiving transformational coaching, from both coachees' and coaches' perspectives. Relationships developed over time in transformational coaching, but not with skills coaching.*
Conclusions: *The results provide preliminary evidence that transformational coaching encourages the development of stronger coaching relationships. Future research should examine the effect of coaching approach on the outcomes of coaching.*
Keywords: *Coaching alliance; coaching relationship; real relationship; transformational coaching and working alliance.*

COACHING is an increasingly popular professional development tool used in organisational settings (Bacon & Spear, 2003; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). Several researchers have argued that the coach-coachee relationship is an essential component of coaching (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Lowman, 2005). Indeed, the coaching relationship has been described as the very foundation of coaching: the 'vehicle for change' (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007, p.163). However, while there is a large body of literature surrounding the nature and importance of the therapeutic relationship, little empirical research has been conducted on the coaching relationship. In this paper we make a preliminary exploration of the coaching relationship in two different approaches to coaching: skills coaching and transformational coaching.

Stober et al. (2006) suggested that evidence from other fields, such as psychotherapy, could be brought to bear on coaching in order to progress evidence-based practice. However, a number of authors have pointed out that there are important differences between coaching and therapy, such as the presenting needs of the person, the purpose and type of goals being

pursued, and the degree to which the relational dynamics are explored (Crowe et al., 2011). While coaching is generally aimed at a non-clinical population, is future-oriented and focused on a clear stated goal (Ives, 2008), therapeutic interventions are seen as focusing on resolving issues that have arisen from the past (Grant, 2003). Coaching relationships tend to focus less on relational dynamics and have weaker emotional bonds than therapeutic relationships (Hart et al., 2001). Nevertheless, these distinctions are becoming blurred with the increase in personal development coaching. Ives (2008) described nine types of coaching, which can differ on three dimensions: Directive vs. non-directive, developmental vs. goal-focused and therapeutic vs. performance-based. The more developmental or therapeutic the coaching, the more the relationship between coach and coachee is likely to become central to the process, and become a catalyst for change (Spinelli, 2010).

Qualitative studies have explored coaches' and coachees' perceptions of their relationship (e.g. Machin, 2010; O'Broin & Palmer, 2010). Machin (2010) identified trust as the most important element of the relationship, while O'Broin and Palmer (2010) similarly found bond and engagement to be major themes, of which trust was a key aspect. Both of these studies were limited by very small sample sizes, and Machin urged further quantitative research to shed more light on how coaches and coachees view their relationship. There is a large body of empirical research into the therapeutic relationship, which is seen to consist of three elements: the working alliance, transference and the 'real relationship' (e.g. Gelso & Hayes, 1998). However, although transference has rarely been examined within the coaching context, one qualitative study amongst professional coaches questioned its relevance to the coaching relationship (Hart et al., 2001). Therefore, this study focuses on a quantitative exploration of the working alliance and the real relationship constructs in the coaching relationship.

The working alliance

The working alliance construct is used extensively in the psychotherapy field, and refers to the quality and strength of the collaborative relationship between client and psychotherapist (Bordin, 1979). The working alliance consists of three dimensions: tasks, bonds and goals. *Tasks* are the activities that constitute the process of counselling; *goals* are the desired outcomes of counselling; and *bonds* refer to the personal relationship issues including trust, acceptance and confidence (Bordin, 1979). The strength of the working alliance between a client and therapist depends upon the degree to which they agree on the goals and tasks of the therapy and the strength of their relational bond. Baron and Morin (2009) found that the working alliance plays an important role in coaching outcomes.

The concept of working alliance has also been applied to the relationship between a psychotherapist and supervisor (Bordin, 1983). The supervisory relationship is arguably more akin to the coaching relationship than is the therapeutic relationship. Efstation et al. (1990) explored the notion of supervisory working alliance. They identified *rapport*, *client focus* and *identification* as the main factors from the perspective of supervisors, while only *rapport* and *client focus* were identified from the trainees' perspective. Clients and their psychotherapists (Tryon et al., 2007), and psychotherapists and their supervisors (Burke et al., 1998) tend to view their working alliance differently, therefore, it is important to examine both a coachee's and coach's perception of their working alliance.

The real relationship

The real relationship has been defined as the personal relationship, separate from the working alliance, and is comprised of two elements: genuineness and realism (e.g. Gelso & Carter, 1994). Genuineness refers to a person's ability and willingness to be authentic, open and honest in their relationship (e.g. Gelso & Carter, 1994). In contrast, realism refers to the realistic, undistorted

perceptions that one person holds of another (e.g. Gelso & Carter, 1994). Gelso and Hayes (1998) theorised that the real relationship and working alliance 'have a reciprocal impact; each influences and is influenced by the other' (p.143). Some empirical support has been found for this argument. From both a client perspective and a psychotherapist perspective, ratings of real relationship and working alliance have been found to have moderate (Marmarosh et al., 2009; Fuertes et al., 2007) to strong (Marmarosh et al., 2009) correlations, suggesting that the two relationship dimensions are related, yet also distinct from each other. Fuertes et al. (2007) found client and therapist ratings of the real relationship, and not the working alliance, predicted ratings of client progress. Similarly, Marmarosh et al. (2009) found therapist ratings of the real relationship to be the only element of the therapeutic relationship to predict therapy outcomes.

Watkins (2011) asserted that the real relationship is an important, but unstudied, aspect of the supervisory relationship, and that the real relationship impacts on the development of the working alliance in supervision. To our knowledge, the real relationship has not been examined in a coaching context, but it may be posited that it would have similar relevance to a theoretical understanding of the coaching relationship.

Coaching relationship and type of coaching

Type of coaching may influence the nature of the coaching relationship. O'Broin and Palmer (2010) found that participants in a qualitative study had different views of the coach-coachee bond. One interpretation they offered was that different types of coaching required different depths or qualities of relationships, as suggested by Kauffman and Bachkirova (2009). Two distinctly different types of coaching are skills coaching and transformational coaching (Hawkins & Smith, 2007, 2010; Segers et al., 2011). Skills coaching is directed at improving a coachees' skills or competencies, whereas transformational coaching aims to help coachees' achieve change by shifting to a higher level of functioning by changing habitual responses to issues (Hawkins & Smith, 2010). The characteristics of these types of coaching are summarised in Table 1.

Based on the psychotherapy and coaching literatures, it may be expected that transformational coaching would require a strong working alliance, with high levels of rapport, to enable the discussion of thoughts, feelings, and values. In contrast, skills coaching may not require such a strong alliance, because issues discussed tend to be more skills performance oriented (i.e. specific work-related behaviours) and less focused on personal development/change. Therefore, coachees who participate in skills coaching may also be expected to invest less of 'themselves' in their coaching than those who participate in transformational coaching (Crowe et al., 2011; Hawkins & Smith, 2010). Consequently, it is expected that coaches and coachees who participate in transformational coaching would develop a stronger real relationship with each other than those who participate in skills coaching.

Aims and hypotheses

This study represents a preliminary quantitative exploration of coaches' and coachees' perceptions of their relationship following six months of either skills-based or transformational coaching. It is hypothesised that: (1) Coaches' ratings of the coaching alliance will increase more over six months during transformational coaching than six months of skills coaching; (2) Coachees' ratings of the working alliance after six months of coaching will be higher in transformational coaching than in skills coaching; (3) Coachees' ratings of their real relationship with their coaches will be higher after six months of transformational coaching than skills coaching; and (4) There will be a moderate positive correlation between the coachees' ratings of the strength of their working alliance and real relationship with their coach.

Table 1 Comparison of Skills coaching and Transformational coaching.

Skills coaching	Transformational coaching
● the goals are those of the organisation ● is directed at helping a coachee to develop their skills and competencies in order to improve their effectiveness in their current role ● is didactic – does not specifically examine a coachee's underlying beliefs, attitudes and emotional reactions to a situation ● low level of engagement	● explores the values and life vision of the client ● is directed at helping a coachee to experience a 'felt shift', where they start to think, feel and act differently ● involves exploration of the beliefs, attitudes and emotional reactions underlying the coachees' habitual way of responding to situations ● high level of engagement

Hawkins & Smith, 2010; Segers et al., 2011.

Method

Context

The study was part of a larger research project centred on the implementation of a new service delivery model being introduced into a number of non-government mental health services in Australia (Deane et al, 2010). The Collaborative Recovery Model (CRM) is an established mental health coaching intervention that was designed for use by recovery support workers to help them foster the personal growth and development of their clients (Oades et al., 2009). Staff trained in the new model were invited to participate in the research.

Participants

Rehabilitation support staff from four non-government mental health organisations in southern and eastern Australia undertook a three-day training workshop in the CRM and were required by management to implement the principles and practices in their workplaces. Trainees were expected to take part in coaching to improve implementation of the training. Coaches were senior staff selected and allocated by service managers. In order to facilitate openness between coach and coachee, all efforts were made to appoint a coach who was not a direct line manager, and was from a team geographically separate from the coachee.

Procedure

Trainees were invited to take part in the research by participating in coaching and completing measures at various time points. Participants were allocated randomly by work team to the standard skills-based Implementation coaching or a Transformational coaching condition. During the first two days of training, all participants were taught the guiding principles and components of the CRM, as well as how to use the CRM protocols – written protocols completed during sessions with clients (see Deane et al., 2010; Oades et al., 2009). The third day of training differed for the two conditions. Those in the Implementation condition completed skills-oriented tasks directed at enhancing their ability to implement the CRM protocols with their clients. In contrast, those in the Transformational condition, using the CRM protocols, completed personal values clarification, motivational and goal-setting exercises in relation to their own lives. Those in the Implementation condition were advised that the purpose of the coaching was to 'assist you to solve problems of implementation and further develop skills in the protocols of CRM', whilst the coaches and coachees in the Transformational condition were told that the purpose of the coaching was to 'continue the values focus in your work and in your life' that had been introduced in the

third day of training. The coachees were instructed to start implementing CRM with their clients, and to attend a coaching session with their coach once per month for 12 months. The coaching sessions could be conducted in person, over the phone, or via Skype.

Coach training

Coaches had all received previous CRM training and were experienced in client support work using the model. Although the CRM is in itself a coaching approach, coaches were given an additional four hours of coaching training. Training was delivered by members of the research team who are experienced both as psychologists and coaches. Ongoing coaching support was provided via 'coach the coach' sessions for one hour per month in a small group setting. Coaches were trained to structure the coaching sessions according to the GROW model (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005; Whitmore, 2002). This involved: (a) setting goals for each coaching session with the coachees ('Goals'); (b) exploring the coachees' current situation (their current 'Reality'; (c) examining their options with them ('Options'); and (d) evaluating each of the options, creating a plan, and problem solving any difficulties the clinicians may have implementing the plan ('Wrap up').

The tasks of the coaching sessions differed according to condition. Coaches in the Implementation coaching condition were trained to assist the coachees to refine their skills in implementing the CRM protocols and motivational enhancement strategies with their clients. In contrast, coaches in the Transformational coaching condition were trained to assist the coachees to implement the CRM protocols in relation to the coachees' personal goals and values (see Deane et al., 2010, for a description of the protocols). Transformational coaching directly paralleled the coaching that the coachees were giving their clients (see Crowe et al., 2011, for further information about the parallel process). Coaches were asked to complete a Coaching Record at the end of each coaching session, which included a measure of the coaching alliance. Strict confidentiality regarding the content of coaching sessions was emphasised.

Coaches and coachees were asked to attend a one-day CRM booster session six months after they attended initial CRM training. Coachees participating in the research completed a set of measures, which included the working alliance and real relationship, at the booster session.

Materials

Coaching Alliance Scale. Coaches completed the Coaching Alliance Scale at the end of each coaching session, while completing the Coaching Record. The Coaching Alliance Scale is a three-item scale devised for the study, based on Bordin's (1979, 1983) model of the therapeutic and supervisory working alliance. The three items are: 'How much do you believe you and your coachee worked on mutually agreed upon goals?'; 'How much do you believe you and your coachee agreed that the way you worked on the goals of the session was appropriate?'; and 'How well do you believe you and your coachee got along during the session?' Coaches rated their responses on an 11-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 *(no agreement)* to 10 *(total agreement)* for the first two items, and from 0 *(poor relationship)* to 10 *(very strong relationship)* for the third item. The mean of the three items was calculated to obtain an overall alliance rating for each session. Cronbach alpha scores for the three items across the six coaching sessions were .70, .88, .83, .85, .90 and .81 respectively.

Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory – Trainee Form (SWAI-T; Efstation et al., 1990). The SWAI-T was completed by coachees at the six-month booster session. It is a 23-item scale designed to measure aspects of the relationship between a trainee counsellor and his/her supervisor. The SWAI-T contains two subscales, Rapport and Client Focus. An example item from the Rapport subscale is,

'I feel comfortable working with my supervisor' and an example item from the Client Focus subscale is, 'In supervision, my supervisor places a high degree of importance on our understanding the client's perspective'. Each item is rated on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 *(almost never)* to 7 *(almost always)*. Higher mean scores are indicative of stronger rapport and greater focus on clients. The SWAI-T was modified for this study to make it relevant to the coaching context by changing the words 'supervisor' to 'coach' and 'therapist' to 'coachee'. Efstation et al. (1990) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .90 for the Rapport subscale and .77 for the Client Focus subscale. In this study, the co-efficient alphas were .96 for the total scale, .96 for the Rapport subscale, and .88 for the Client Focus subscale.

Real Relationship Inventory – Client Form (RRI-C; Kelley et al., 2010). The RRI-C was completed at the six-month booster session. The RRI-C is a 24-item scale which measures the strength of the real relationship between a client and their therapist, and consists of two subscales, Realism and Genuineness. Due to a clerical error, items 23 and 24 were omitted from the inventory, resulting in 22 items. Respondents rate the items on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 *(strongly disagree)* to 6 *(strongly agree)*. Mean ratings represent the scale scores. An example item from the Realism subscale is 'I appreciated my therapist's limitations and strengths', and an example item from the Genuineness subscale is 'I was able to be myself with my therapist'. Higher mean scores suggest stronger real relationships. Since no real relationship scale has been developed for coaching or supervision, the RRI-C was modified to suit the coaching context of this study by changing the words 'therapist' to 'coach' and 'therapy' to 'coaching'. Kelley et al. (2010) report an internal consistency score of .95 for the total score, .90 for the Realism subscale, and .91 for the Genuineness subscale. In this study, coefficient alphas of .95, .91, and .88 were obtained for the total scale, Genuineness subscale, and Realism subscale respectively.

Data collection and analysis

Coach data, the Coaching Alliance, was gathered from returned Coaching Records which were completed after each coaching session. Coachee data, the SWAI-T and RRI-C, were collected at one time point, at the six-month booster training session. A two-way ANOVA compared Coaching Alliance scores in each condition from the first coaching session with those from the last session within the six-month study period. Coachees' scores on the SWAI-T and RRI-C were also compared between conditions, and correlations were examined between the SWAI-T and the RRI-C.

Results

Coaching received. Within the six-month study period, 66 participants received coaching, ranging from one to six (M=3.09, SD=1.56) sessions. We analysed data only for those who had received at least three sessions and completed measures at the six-month booster session. Forty coachees (21 Transformational, 19 Implementation) and their 23 coaches met these requirements. Within this sample, there was no significant difference between conditions in the number of coaching sessions received (Transformational, M=3.86, SD=1.01; Implementation, M=4.42, SD=1.02).

Demographics. The 40 coachees included in the final sample were 28 females and six males (six missing), age ranges 18 to 30 years (N=17), 31 to 40 years (7), 41 to 50 years (5), over 50 years (7) (4 missing). Twenty-four (60 per cent) of these had Bachelor Degree qualification or higher and eight had a post-school qualification (8 missing). Professions were identified as: Welfare Worker (N=9), Psychologist (6), Nurse (6), Social Worker (5), Mental Health Worker (5), Other (5), with four missing. Years of working in the mental health field were: <2 years (N=11),

2 to 10 years (17), over 10 years (5), with nine missing. Twenty-three coaches provided three or more coaching sessions to at least one coachee (number of coachees per coach ranged from 1 to 3, Mdn=2). Coaches were senior staff or team leaders, 6 Males and 16 Females (1 missing), age ranges 18-30 years (*N*n=1), 31 to 40 years (3), 41 to 50 years (2), 51 to 60 years (4), over 60 (1), with 12 missing.

Coaching Alliance. To assess change in Coaching Alliance across time, we compared Coaching Alliance rating from the first coaching record (Time 1), and the last coaching record within the six-month study period (Time 2). Therefore, the Time 2 coaching session ranged from the third to the sixth session.

Table 2 provides the means and *SD*s for each group at Time 1 and Time 2. In testing the assumptions for a mixed ANOVA we found a moderate negative skew in alliance ratings for both groups at Time 2. Although these could be improved with transformations, the Time 1 alliance ratings then became less normally distributed. Thus, we retained the original untransformed variables in a mixed ANOVA, but as a precaution conducted a series of nonparametric tests to verify the pattern of results. All other assumptions of the mixed ANOVA were met (e.g. equality of variances).

A 2 (Time) by 2 (Group) mixed ANOVA of Coaching Alliance revealed a significant time by group interaction, $F_{(1,37)}=9.55$, $p<.01$. Figure 1 shows the pattern of the interaction. Those in the Transformational coaching condition showed significant increases in alliance ratings over time whilst those in the Implementation coaching condition showed no significant change. A series of nonparametric tests confirmed the results, with a Wilcoxon paired test showing a significant increase in alliance in the Transformational group from Time 1 to Time 2 ($Z=-3.24$, $p<.01$, $r=-.52$) and no significant change for those in the Implementation group over time ($Z=-0.47$, *ns*). A Mann-Whitney *U* test indicated that at Time 1 there was no significant difference between the Transformational and Implementation groups on alliance ratings ($U=134.0$, *ns*) but at Time 2 the Transformational condition had significantly higher ratings than those in the Implementation condition ($U=119.5$, $p<.05$, $r=-.32$).

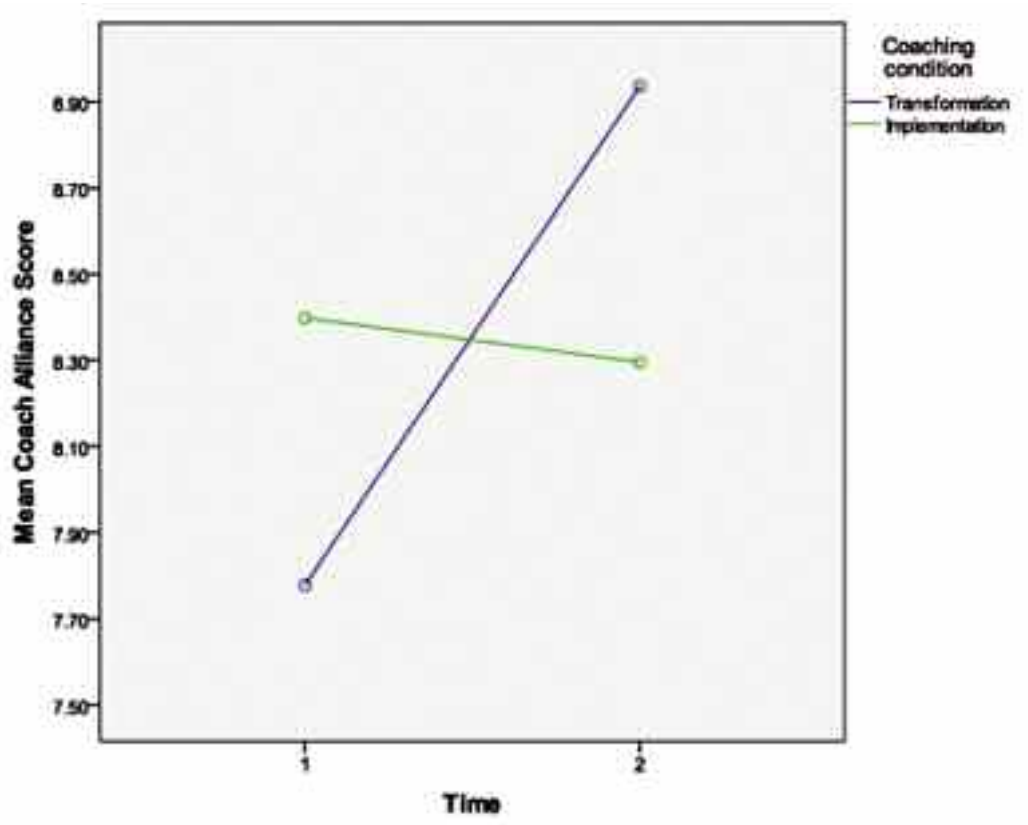
SWAI-T. Since data for the SWAI-T did not meet normality assumptions, nonparametric tests were conducted to examine differences between conditions after six months of coaching. A Mann-Whitney *U* test showed a significant difference on SWAI-T total between Transformational (Mdn=6.34) and Implementation (Mdn=5.63) conditions,

Table 2: Descriptives for Coaching Alliance for each condition at Time 1 and Time 2.

	Condition	
Time	Implementation (*N*=18)	Transformational (*N*=21)
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*
Time 1	8.40 (0.99)	7.78 (1.18)
Time 2	8.30 (0.91)	8.94 (0.94)

Note: Time 1=Coaches alliance rating after first session.
Time 2=Coaches' Alliance ratings after last session within six-month period.

Figure 1: Change in Coach Alliance scores over a six-month period.



U=103.50, *p*<.05, *r*=–.36. There was also a significant difference between the Transformational and Implementation conditions on the Rapport subscale (Mdn=6.67 and 5.92 respectively), *U*=104.00, p<.05, *r*=–.36 and Client Focus subscale (Mdn=6.00 and 5.29 respectively), *U*=106.50, *p*<.05, *r*=–.35. These results indicate a stronger alliance has developed between coach and coachee with transformational coaching.

RRI-C. Independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to examine differences between conditions on the RRI-C. Means and standard deviations are shown in Table 3. The differences between groups on RRI-C Total and the Genuineness subscale were not significant. However, a significant difference was found between coaching conditions on the Realism subscale (*t*=2.26, *p*<.05), indicating a more realistic perception of the relationship in the Transformational condition than in the Implementation condition.

Moderate to strong relationships were found between the total RRI-C and the SWAI-T, and all their subscales. Spearman's correlations between the total scores and between the subscale scores are displayed in Table 4. Similar results were found for both conditions, ranging from *rs*=.51, *p*<.05 for SWAI-T Rapport and RRI-C Genuineness in the Transformational condition, to *rs*=.79, *p*<.01 for SWAI-T Total and RRI-C Genuineness in the Implementation condition. The results support the hypothesis that these concepts, although related, are not the same.

Table 3: Descriptives for Real Relationship Inventory – Client form (RRI-C).

	Condition	
	Implementation (*N*=18)	Transformational (*N*=16)
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*
RRI-C Total	3.78 (0.60)	4.17 (0.52)
RRI-C Genuineness	3.80 (0.64)	4.18 (0.62)
RRI-C Realism	3.75 (0.59)	4.15 (0.45)

Table 4: Spearman's correlations between RRI-C and SWAI-T (*N*=32).

	RRI-C Total	RRI-C Genuine	RRI Realism
SWAI-T Total	.758**	.779**	.743**
SWAI-T Rapport	.709**	.704**	.695**
SWAI-T Client Focus	.698**	.735**	.685**

Note:
SWAI-T=Supervisory Working Alliance – Trainee;
RRI-C=Real Relationship Inventory – Client.
** *rs*<0.01 (2-tailed).

Discussion

The findings provide preliminary support for the notion that the working alliance and real relationship have similar roles and dynamics in coaching as they do in therapy or supervision, and supporting the proposition that the psychotherapy literature may inform research into the coaching relationship (Stober et al., 2006). A moderate to strong relationship was found between the coachees' ratings of their working alliance and real relationship with their coach, consistent with studies of the real relationship in psychotherapy (Fuertes et al., 2007; Marmarosh et al., 2009).

Transformational coaching resulted in a stronger coaching relationship between coach and coachee, from the perspective of coaches as well as coachees. After three or more sessions, coaches' ratings of the coaching alliance had improved in transformational coaching, but not in skills coaching. Given that skills coaching is thought to involve a lower level of personal engagement between a coach and coachee (Stern, 2004), it is possible that the coaches and coachees did not need to develop a stronger working alliance over time in order to progress with skills coaching. Future research should examine whether this is the case.

Coachees in transformational coaching also reported stronger working alliance ratings than those receiving skills coaching, with higher rapport and client focus ratings. It is notable that transformational coaching resulted in higher perceived client focus, even though coaching was specifically aimed at the goals and values of the coachee. This

could be a reflection of the goals and values that the coachees brought to the coaching session in this workplace context. Alternatively, it could be attributed to the effects of 'parallel process' which informed the training and coaching approach. Parallel process is usually an unconscious process in which the relationship between client and therapist is mirrored in the supervisory relationship. However, parallel process can be harnessed as a tool in clinical supervision (Crowe et al., 2011). This may have led coachees to a deeper understanding of their relationship with their clients, and to greater empathy regarding the tasks and processes of the newly-introduced service model.

Mixed results were found for the hypothesis that transformational coaching would lead coachees to perceive a stronger real relationship with their coach than would skills coaching. Those receiving transformational coaching reported greater realism between themselves and their coaches. This suggests that coaches and coachees perceive each other more accurately when they explore 'deeper' issues, such as the coachees' values, thoughts, and feelings, than when they focus on skills aimed at trying to alter the coachees' behaviour. Genuineness ratings, although showing a similar trend, were not significantly higher for transformational coaching. It was expected that exploring more personal issues would require, or result in, a deeper and more genuine relationship. However, since measurement was cross-sectional, we cannot determine whether ratings had improved over time.

There were a number of limitations to the present study and these have implications for future research in this area. First, it would have been informative had coachee ratings been collected across time, rather than after six months of coaching. Although we found significant differences in coaching relationships between the coaching approaches, we do not know how the relationships from a coachee perspective developed over time under the two conditions. Given the potential importance of the real relationship to coaching outcomes, as has been found in therapeutic outcomes (Marmarosh et al., 2009; Fuertes et al., 2007), it is important for future research to examine changes in real relationship over time in the coaching context.

Second, more insight into the similarities and differences between coaches and coachees' perceptions of their relationship may have been gained if measures with a common theoretical grounding had been administered at the same time points. While we found evidence of parallels between the coaching relationship and the therapeutic and supervisory relationships, there is a need for specifically developed and validated measures of the coaching alliance. Just as Efstation et al. (1990) found the supervisory working alliance had different salient factors than the therapeutic working alliance, so different elements may be important to the coaching relationship. This should be examined from both a coach and coachee perspective.

Finally, there were relatively low rates of uptake of coaching in these mental health organisations, with only 40 participants receiving three or more sessions in six months. Although there was an expectation that employees would participate in coaching, this was not compulsory. Whether the low uptake was due to other organisational or work demands, dissatisfaction with the coaching process or a function of natural turnover is not known. Staff turnover in the field of mental health is notoriously high, and the organisations in this study experienced a 20 per cent turnover in a one-year period. Clearly, there is a need for management and staff to be convinced of the benefits of coaching if it is to be given a higher priority.

In conclusion, preliminary evidence was found that the dynamics of coaching relationships are similar those in therapy and supervision, highlighting that psychology research may inform the study of the coaching relationship. There is a need to

develop measures specifically for the coaching relationship, from the perspectives of coaches and coachees, perhaps requiring further qualitative work. Quantitative research could then be undertaken to examine coaches' and coachees' relationships across time. Transformational coaching resulted in stronger and deeper coaching relationships than skills coaching, supporting the notion that coaching models closer to the therapeutic end of the spectrum require relationships more akin to the therapeutic relationship. Would this stronger coaching relationship result in better outcomes from coaching? Given the centrality of the relationship to therapy outcomes, future research should explore the effect of the various aspects of the coaching relationship on the goals of coaching.

The Authors

Belinda J. Sun
Illawarra Institute for Mental Health,
University of Wollongong.

Professor Frank P. Deane
Illawarra Institute of Mental Health and
School of Psychology,
University of Wollongong.

Dr Trevor P. Crowe
Illawarra Institute of Mental Health and
School of Psychology,
University of Wollongong.

Dr Retta Andresen
Illawarra Institute of Mental Health,
University of Wollongong.

Dr Lindsay Oades
Australian Institute of Business Wellbeing,
Sydney Business School,
University of Wollongong.

Dr. Joseph Ciarrochi
School of Social Sciences and Psychology,
University of Western Sydney.

Correspondence

Belinda J. Sun
Illawarra Institute for Mental Health,
Building 22, University of Wollongong,
Northfields Avenue,
Wollongong, NSW 2522,
Australia.
Email: belinda.sun@gmail.com

References

Alexander, G. & Renshaw, B. (2005). *Super coaching: The missing ingredient for high performance.* London: Random House Business.

Bacon, T.R. & Spear, K.I. (2003). *Adaptive coaching: The art and practice of a client-centered approach to performance improvement.* Palo Alto, CA: Davis-Black.

Baron, L. & Morin, L. (2009). The coach–coachee relationship in executive coaching: A field study. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 20*, 85–106.

Bordin, E. (1979). The generalisability of the psychoanalytic concept of the working alliance. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice, 16*, 252–260.

Bordin, E, (1983). A working alliance based model of supervision. *The Counseling Psychologist, 11*, 35–42.

Burke, W.R., Goodyear, R.K. & Guzzard, C.R. (1998). Weakenings and repairs in supervisory alliances: A multiple case-study. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 52*, 450–462.

Crowe, T.P., Oades, L.G., Deane, F.P., Ciarrochi, J. & Williams, V. (2011). Parallel processes in clinical supervision: Implications for coaching mental health practitioners. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 9*(2), 56–66.

Deane, F.P., Crowe, T.P., Oades, L.G., Ciarrochi, J., Marshall, S., Williams, V. et al. (2010). *Facilitating the transfer of collaborative recovery training into clinical practice: Intervention and coaching protocols.* Wollongong, Australia: Illawarra Institute for Mental Health, University of Wollongong.

Efstation, J.F., Patton, M.J. & Kardash, C-A., M. (1990). Measuring the working alliance in counsellor supervision. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 37*, 322–329

Fuertes, J.N., Mislowack, A., Brown, S., Gur-Arie, S., Wilkinson, S. & Gelso, C.J. (2007). Correlates of the real relationship in psychotherapy: A study of dyads. *Psychotherapy Research, 17*(4), 423–430.

Gelso, C.J. & Carter, J.A. (1994). Components of the psychotherapy relationship: Their interaction and unfolding during treatment. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 41*, 296–306.

Gelso, C.J. & Hayes, J.A. (1998). *The psychotherapy relationship: Theory, research, and practice.* New York: Wiley.

Grant, A. (2003). The impact of life coaching on goal-attainment, metacognition, and mental health. *Social Behavior and Personality, 31*, 253–264.

Gyllensten, K. & Palmer, S. (2007). The coaching relationship: An interpretive phenomenological analysis. *International Coaching Psychology Review, 2*, 168–177.

Hart, V., Blattner, J. & Leipsic, S. (2001). Coaching versus Therapy: A perspective. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice & Research, 53*(4), 229–237.

Hawkins, P. & Smith, N. (2007). *Coaching, mentoring, and organisational consultancy: Supervision and development.* New York: Open University Press.

Hawkins, P. & Smith, N. (2010). Transformational coaching. In E. Cox, T. Bachkirova & D. Clutterbuck, *The complete handbook of coaching* (pp.231–244). London: Sage.

Ives, Y. (2008). What is 'coaching'? An exploration of conflicting paradigms. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 6*, 100–113.

Kampa-Kokesch, S. & Anderson, M.Z. (2001). Executive coaching: A comprehensive review of the literature. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 53*, 205–228.

Kauffman, C. & Bachkirova, T. (2009). Spinning order from chaos: How do we know what to study in coaching research and use it for self-reflective practice? *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, 2*(1), 1–9.

Kelley, F.A., Gelso, C.J., Fuertes, J.N., Marmarosh, C. & Lanier, S.H. (2010). The Real Relationship Inventory: Development and psychometric investigation of the client form. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 47*, 540–553.

Lowman, R.L. (2005). Executive coaching: The road to Dodoville needs paving with more than good assumptions. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 57*, 90–96.

Machin, S. (2010). The nature of the internal coaching relationship. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 4*, 37–52.

Marmarosh, C.L., Gelso, C.J., Markin, R.D., Majors, R., Mallery, C. & Choi, J. (2009). The real relationship in psychotherapy: Relationship to adult attachments, working alliance, transference and therapy outcome. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 56*, 337–350.

Oades, L.G., Crowe, T.P. & Nguyen, M. (2009). Leadership coaching transforming mental health systems from the inside out: The Collaborative Recovery Model as person-centred strengths-based coaching psychology. *International Coaching Psychology Review, 4*, 25–36.

O'Broin, A.O. & Palmer, S. (2010). Exploring key factors in the formation of coaching relationships: Initial indicators from the perspective of the coachee and coach. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, 3*, 124–143.

Segers, J., Vloeberghs, D., Henderickx, E. & Inceoglu, I. (2011). Structuring and understanding the coaching industry: The Coaching Cube. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 10*, 204–211.

Spinelli, E. (2010). Coaching and therapy: Similarities and divergences. *Psychotherapy in Australia, 17*(1), 52 – 58.

Stern, L.R. (2004). Executive coaching: A working definition. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 56*, 154–162.

Stober, D.R., Wildflower, L. & Drake, D. (2006). Evidence-based practice: A potential approach for effective coaching. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 4*(1), 1–8.

Tryon, G.S., Blackwell, S.C. & Hammel, E.F. (2007). A meta-analytic examination of client-therapist perspectives of the working alliance. *Psychotherapy Research, 17*, 629–642.

Watkins, C.E. (2011). The Real Relationship in psychotherapy supervision. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 65*, 99–116.

Whitmore, J. (2002). *Coaching for performance* (3rd ed.). London: Nicholas Brealey.

Paper

When middle managers are doing employee coaching

Ole Michael Spaten & Winnie Flensborg

Objectives: *Until now, rather limited empirical research has been conducted as regards managers who coach their employees (Crabb, 2011). The aim of this research was to investigate the managers' challenging and successful experience when coaching their employees and how these coaching sessions were assessed by their employees.*

Design: *The overall study investigated 15 middle managers – from a major Danish nationwide company who were trained to coach by two coaching psychologists through theoretical presentations, individual coaching and peer coaching sessions with direct supervision (learning-by-doing: Spaten, 2011b) – when they were coaching their 75 employees through an online survey and semi-structured interviews.*

Methods: *Four middle managers and employees were interviewed after the intervention. Thematic analysis was chosen and elicited three main themes: (1) coaching skills; (2) professional and personal development; and (3) the coaching relationship and power relation.*

Results: *The study found that the manager as coach should be highly sensitive and empathetic in building the coaching relationship, should be aware of the power relation, and should draw clear boundaries between their role as leader and their role as coach. The middle managers' coaching skills were assessed very positively by employees.*

Keywords: *Executive; employee coaching; middle management; template analysis; semi-structured interviews – qualitative data; coaching; power relations, and productivity.*

AS THE CORPORATE WORLD becomes shrouded in the mists of partially unknown global changes, attempts are being made to sustain middle and top managers' peak performance. Towards this end, huge amounts of money are spent on a growing coaching industry: globally, the estimated number of coaches is approaching 50,000, and today they generate a turnover of nearly US $2 billion (ICF, 2012).

According to the ICF, both turnover and coach numbers will continue to show an increasing trend in years to come. This growth has been exponential in the past decade, according to previous figures: in 2003, *The Economist* estimated the corresponding turnover figure at US $1 billion, and in 2008 the ICF (International Coach Federation) estimated the number of people engaged in coaching to be around 30,000 (Spaten, 2011b).

Coaching is an extensive and all-embracing industry: around 94 per cent of US-based Global 1000 enterprises and more than 65 per cent of non-US-based Global 1000 enterprises (Bono et al., 2009) make use of coaching. Coaching may assume a wide variety of shapes when aiming to enhance both personal and professional leadership and management, but in general, coaching is most frequently used by private enterprises to support action plans for management (Spaten, 2011c). Excellent, or at least satisfactory, management and leadership are crucial when organisations are about to launch their strategies, missions and plans.

While it is clear that coaching is a large industry (and 'big business'), a very limited amount of research has been conducted in the field (Crabb, 2011; Spaten, 2011a), and though the research that does exist generally shows that executive coaching is beneficial.

To take one example, Smither et al. (2003) showed how managers who worked with an executive coach were better able to formulate specific (rather than vague) goals than their peers, and that they improved more than other managers who did not receive any kind of coaching. Grant et al., (2004, 2009) demonstrated through surveys and quantitative investigations that coaching by managers has a positive effect on the mental health of the coachee: coaching significantly reduces participants' depression and anxiety levels (Duijts et al., 2008). Individual investigations have also demonstrated that coaching, including activities related to problem-solving, goal setting, feedback, evaluation, and so on, increases productivity by up to four times more than if only activities such as training and education were instigated (Olivero, Bane & Kopelman, 1997). Coaching considerably enhances the likelihood that what is learnt will be successfully implemented in daily activities.

In summary, the use of coaching in private enterprises is widespread, but only sporadic research is being conducted in the field. Already pointed out by Grant and Cavanagh (2004), a vanishingly small amount of methodologically sound, peer-reviewed, empirical coaching research exists. By contrast, a very large amount of literature has been written on the topic, including more than 400 books on executive coaching alone over the past decades (Bono et al., 2009). In Denmark, more than 40 books on coaching have been published since 2007. In line with international literature, the Danish publications comprise interesting case studies, investigations of 'best practice', theoretical reflections and deliberations concerning different types of coaching, as well as a number of individual perspectives on coaching (Spaten, 2013). Of these books, which have sold well, fewer than five include systematic, peer-reviewed research into coaching psychology. Consequently, an overall analysis demonstrates that we are in possession of limited empirical evidence showing whether coaching (by managers) works, how it works, and how coaching participants perceive and assess different interventions (Spaten, 2013; Grant & Cavanagh, 2004; Peterson, 2002; Kilburg, 2001).

The present study was conducted with the intention of reducing this gap between, on the one hand, the extensive practice and abundant theoretical literature on coaching, and on the other hand, the very limited research-based knowledge on coaching, including the coaching of a coach's own employees. A large proportion of that little amount of research is being conducted in the area comprises studies of 'executive coaching' (Bono et al., 2009; Bond & Naughton, 2011), which focuses on the executive segment of employees in an organisation. Executive coaching has been extensively described, whereas internal coaching by managers has received very little attention, for example, stated by Gregory and Levy: 'despite its continued growth in organisations, minimal research has been conducted on employee coaching' (2010, p.111). Research in the quality and efficiency of coaching conducted within organisational frameworks is also required (Evers, Brouwers & Tomic, 2006).

The research presented here is, therefore, concerned with internal middle manager coaching and on the coaching skills of the manager. The research question of the overall study is two-fold: what successful and challenging experience do middle managers gain when coaching their employees, and how do the employees evaluate the middle managers' coaching skills? As a starting point for this study, the first part of the article aims more precisely to characterise the nature of coaching in organisations.

Coaching in organisations

Coaching in organisations may be divided into two main areas: 'executive' coaching, where top executives are coached, typically by an external coach, and 'employee' coaching, where employees are coached by their direct manager (Gregory & Levy,

2010). There are significant differences between these two types of coaching. One is that the 'coaching relationships' (Palmer & McDowall, 2010) are fundamentally different: in executive coaching, the executive will typically select their own coach, whereas in employee coaching the employee has no influence on who will coach them: their superior will conduct the coaching. One hypothesis of the study will be that the nature of the coaching relationship reflects this fundamental difference.

Table 1 states two of the general differences between executive and employee coaching, and the following two subsections further explore differences and similarities between these two types of coaching. It will be clarified, for instance, that the typical goals of both types of coaching are similar, for instance, to improve and develop performance at work.

Executive coaching

One of the essential differences between employee and executive coaching is that the latter is generally carried out by external consultants who have no formal authority over their clients. Executive coaching is defined as a short- or medium-term relationship between a (top) manager and a consultant, with the aim of improving and developing the work efficiency and competences of the manager (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). During the past few years, this type of coaching has also developed into a means to facilitate learning, and to move executives from high performance to excellent performance (ibid.).

From the research literature, we may identify three characteristics which typify executive coaching: (1) the use of 'one-on-one' consultations regarding work related topics; (2) coaching sessions based on 360 degree feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses; and (3) the goal of improving the efficiency of the (top) executive in his/her current position (Bono et al., 2009; Bowles et al., 2007; Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

According to Feldman and Lankau (2005), an executive coach does not assume the role of technical expert, is not employed for traditional organisational consultation, and will typically not deliver any recommendations for precise business interventions. Executive coaching focuses on improving the performance of the executive in his/her *current* job. Usually, the coaching relationship will last for a period of six to 18 months, and is formally entered into by contract (Yukl, 2002). No personal bond is required between the executive and the coach, and the relationship tends to be more structured in its nature compared to employee coaching. The similarity between these two types of coaching is that both aim to change short-term behaviour and enhance performance, rather than to change emotions in the long term (ibid.; Kauffman & Scouler, 2004).

Employee coaching

The coaching relationship in employee coaching is a working partnership between an employee and his/her direct manager which focuses on sustaining the task performance and meeting the development needs of the employee (Gregory & Levy, 2010). This

Table 1: Who coaches and selects the coach.

Executive coaching	Employee coaching
Top executives are coached by an external coach.	Employees are coached by their direct manager.
Coachee selects his/her own coach.	Coachee does not select his/her own coach.

relationship also draws upon experience from former co-operation and evaluations in the workplace, and is, therefore, not merely a coaching relationship. More precisely, employee coaching is defined as a development related activity in which 'an employee works one-on-one with his or her direct manager to improve current job performance and enhance his or her capabilities for future roles and/or challenges, the success of which is based on the relationship between the employee and manager, as well as the use of objective information, such as feedback, performance data, or assessments' (Gregory & Levy, 2010, p.111).

Employee coaching is, therefore, believed to enhance the usefulness of feedback, form the basis of goal-setting, and preferably assists employees in working their way towards these goals, hence improving their performance. At a personal level, individual differences between the manager and the employee will have implications for the coaching relationship and for the efficacy of a given coaching process. So not only the organisational context but also interpersonal relations are of importance to coaching. Waldroop and Butler (1996) emphasise this: no behaviour – not even coaching – 'takes place in a vacuum' (p.112). But importance is certainly also ascribed to the organisation's 'feedback environment' in determining the result of the coaching, including quality, coaching frequency and an informal feedback supply procedure (Smither et al., 2003). However, the manager's ability to instil confidence into the coaching relationship is one of the key factors in a successful coaching process (Gregory & Levy, 2011). The confidence of the employee in his/her manager partly mediates the effect of transforming management on the employee's perception of the coaching process.

The manager may contribute to the creation of a high-quality coaching relationship through listening to individual concerns and constructing a positive feedback environment based on confidence and empathy (ibid., p.80). Some of the above dimensions described and studied in employee coaching may be factors that would influence any coaching relationship to the same extent, but as the employee is not involved in the selection of his/her coach, and as the manager is usually not replaceable, it cannot be taken for granted that the coaching relationship will be adequate and flawless. Summing up, the above mentioned represents some of the most important characteristics about executive and employee coaching.

Table 2 summarises the significant differences and similarities between the two types of coaching.

Table 2: Goal, duration and relations in executive and employee coaching.

Executive coaching	Employee coaching
Short/medium-term relationship between manager and coach (six to 18 months).	Relationship includes experience from previous co-operation and may be continuous or last for an indeterminate period.
The aim is to improve and develop the work efficiency and competences of the executive.	The aim is to improve and develop the employee's performance in his/her present job.
The coach is replaceable.	The coach is not replaceable.
Coaching is conducted by consultants with no authority over the clients.	The coaching relationship is a working partnership between the employees and their direct managers.

Method of this study

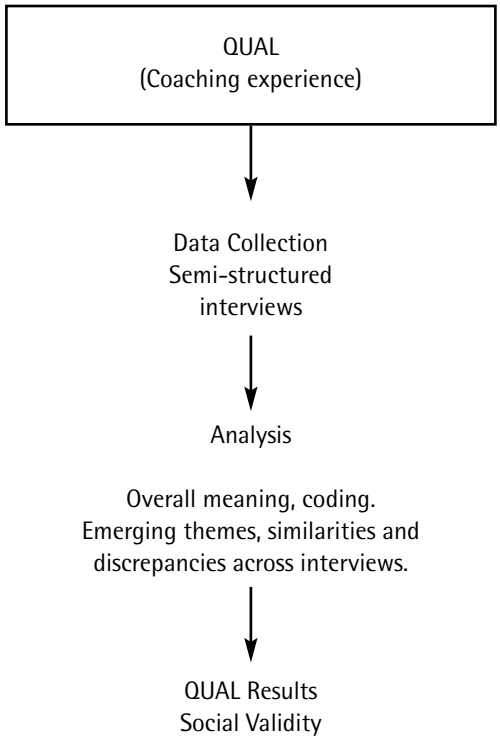
The overall research has – as mentioned – a two-fold aim, in that it will study both the middle managers' successful and challenging experience of coaching their employees and also how the coachees (the employees of the middle managers) assess the quality of the coaching sessions. When research interests include an investigation of both individual and general experiences, and evaluation and assessment, it may typically be relevant to apply mixed methods (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2007). A mixed method design (Hanson, 2005) in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected relates, but in this paper the qualitative analysis only will be present and the quantitative work will be saved for further breakdown and examination (Creswell, 2007).

Design

The overall research project uses a longitudinal, sequentially explaining design with quantitative data collection and qualitative interviews. The data collection takes place through clearly, distinctly separated phases of the research process. First, quantitative data are collected, followed by the qualitative data, in strict accordance with the requirements of a sequential mixed design (Creswell, 2009). Whereas the quantitative data provide a general overall impression of how the coaching sessions are assessed and evaluated, the qualitative data provides in-depth knowledge about the experience gained by middle managers and employees as coach and coachee, respectively. The overall aim is to create a maximally comprehensive picture of the phenomenon being studied, in which quantitative and qualitative data complement each other. This article covers the first qualitative presentation of the findings and the process is schematised in Figure 1.

Later it is planned to publish an article which will cover the quantitative findings from the study.

Figure 1: Study design detailing study phases.



Participants

The 15 middle managers participating in this study were in the final phase of a 30-month professional business programme, during which they all participated in bi-monthly training workshops learning coaching skills, among other business workshops. Previous research has documented the quality of coach training based on principles of 'action-reflection-learning' (Spaten & Hansen, 2009). Thus, the middle managers worked as experienced coaches, whereas 75 employees (coachees) were recruited from among the middle managers' own employees in departments from across Denmark. In some departments all of those who signed up to be coached (up until the maximum of five coachees) were chosen and if there were more than five, they were randomly picked to participate in the subsequent coaching sessions. After the coaching interventions, and among these 15 middle managers and 75 employees, four middle managers and employees were randomly selected for being interviewed and they signed up voluntarily.

Semi-structured interviews – and the qualitative data analysis

At the end of the coaching sessions, four middle managers and employees were interviewed, and these interviews will be the focus of the present paper. Various more general and specific types of question were included in the semi-structured interview guide. Examples of interview questions are as follows: How would you describe your experience of the coaching session? What did you particularly like about the coaching? What worked less well during the coaching session?

In the following phase, the interviews were transcribed and analysed using Template Analysis (TA), following the guidelines from King (1998, 2002) and Langdridge (2007). TA is rather parallel to Smith's (1996) Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) building on phenomenological psychology but also includes concepts from discursive psychology (King, 1998). In TA a thick phenomenological description will represent the meaning ascribed by the individual to their specific experience, in this case of a coaching session. The analysis construct a coding template which contains different codes that represents themes identified in the data. This is a thorough process by cautious reading back and forth by several re-readings of the text. Typically the codes are structured hierarchically with first level codes representing broader themes in the data and then second level codes with *'narrowly focused themes within these themes'* (King et al., 2002, p.333). The analytic work involves non-stop modified lists of codes through continuous re-readings of the interview transcript's until a full data description *'…is feasible without reaching the state at which the description is so finely detailed that any attempt to draw together an interpretation becomes impossible'* (King et al., 2002, p.333). This work, through the stages of TA, results in the identification of a number of emerging first order themes: (1) Coaching skills; (2) Professional and personal development; and (3) Coaching relationship and power relations. Additional results from the qualitative analysis will be described in the results section below.

Procedure and ethical considerations

Fifteen middle managers each coached five of their employees five times during a period of three months, which amounted to a total of nearly 400 coaching sessions. After the coaching process had been completed, four employees and managers also participated in individual qualitative interviews with a duration of around 45 minutes.

As regards ethical questions concerning the research, colleagues from the Centre for Qualitative Studies at Aalborg University, and the affiliated research group, were consulted. Information regarding the research project was also submitted to the company and discussed with the company and all involved parties. The research project management explained that participation

was voluntary, and that any participants were free to withdraw their consent without notice. The non-participation option applied to coaching sessions as well as the subsequent interviews for both managers and employees. The participants were also informed about the framework and rules regarding confidentiality and anonymity in the final presentation of the study, and pseudonyms were used throughout. Furthermore, it was agreed that all interview sessions would be followed by a short debriefing session. All coaches took part in a preliminary presentation of significant findings from survey results in the end of 2011. In addition, presentations and a report of the research results are scheduled to be forwarded to all participants. No conflicts of interest are considered to exist as regards this work, for which the researchers were financially supported by their Department and external funds.

Analysis and discussion

The following analysis and discussion takes as its point of departure the themes drawn from the template analysis, as discussed above (coaching skills, professional and personal development, coaching relationship and power relations).

- Theme 1: Coaching skills, comprises three subthemes in particular: (a) planning, framing and time; (b) problem identification; and (c) empathy and contact.
- Theme 2: Professional and personal development, comprises two subthemes in particular: (a) personal development of the coachee; and (b) the coachee's experience of fruitful coaching.
- Theme 3: Coaching relationship and power relations, focuses on the conditions of fruitful coaching.

Qualitative data will be presented in the following sections through the analysis and discussion of the three main themes from the TA (King et al., 2002) and their sub-(ordinate) themes drawn from TA.

Theme 1: Coaching skills

In order to gain basic insights into how the coaching was conducted, the theme of coaching skills examines the skills highlighted by coachee and coach as being of crucial importance. In this way, the theme contributes to a discussion of a key question asked by this research project: What experience did the middle managers gain through coaching their employees? Here, the focus is on the importance of coaching skills, and the theme also illustrates how the coaching sessions were evaluated by the coachees. Three specific subthemes are explored, as mentioned above: (A) planning, framing and (precious) time; (B) (the promotion of good) problem identification; and (C) (the ability of the coach to create) empathy and contact.

First, however, a brief review of coaching literature will be undertaken to illustrate which coaching skills (Öestrich, 2008; Auerbach, 2006; Grant & Cavanagh, 2004) are considered to be essential. The following elements (A–F) describe what the coach should achieve in creating a successful coaching session.

A. Create a clear framework for the coachee and the coaching session.
B. Identify the problem clearly and explicitly.
C. Create an empathetic relation with the coachee.
D. Conduct a dialogue regarding actions and increase the coachee's self-knowledge, for instance by using the SPACE model (Palmer & Gyllensten, 2008).
E. Find possible solutions and set achievable goals with the coachee, for instance, by using PRAKSIS (Spaten, Kyndesen & Palmer, 2012).
F. Ensure that the coachee leaves the session with a good idea or a plan for future action (Grant & Zackon, 2004; Palmer & Whybrow, 2009).

In the present study, A, B and C will be studied in particular, whereas D, E, and F will only be considered to a lesser degree. The analysis highlights specific focal points in relation to employee coaching.

(A) Subtheme: Planning, framing and precious time for coaching

The ability to create a clear 'framework' is described as the fundamental competence underpinning successful coaching sessions (Palmer, 2010). Framing is also of essential importance in connection with the third theme of the study (*The coaching relationship and power relations*, as discussed below). An unclear framework may, for instance, result in problematic role identification and an imbalance in the coaching relationship. In essence, framing is the act of providing the coachee with an introduction that describes as clearly as possible the course of the coaching session, so that the coachee does not spend undue energy reflecting on this issue (Öestrich, 2008).

Framing also includes the planning of the actual coaching process, an aspect which several participants returned to during the interviews; therefore, this aspect has received considerably more attention in employee coaching than in typical coaching sessions. Planning is decisive for the success of the coaching process (Palmer & Gyllensten, 2008; Pill, 2012), and during the follow-up interviews the coaches pointed out the challenge of planning the coaching process. The challenge was to find time for the coaching of employees in a busy and stressful work schedule.

Precious time must be considered important as regards resources made available for coaching in the given context. In addition to the general wish to extend coaching sessions, a wish is expressed to have larger time gaps between the coaching sessions in order to implement the new insight developed by the coachee. The interviewee states:

> *The entire coaching course should be longer with larger time gaps between the individual coaching sessions (…) and then she said she would like to continue with coaching, and so would I, and should it be two to three times a year for instance, or according to need?*

The interview accentuates that coach and coachee wish to continue with coaching sessions two to three times a year. The time perspective varied for individual coachees, however.

> *Yes. Then it would have been rewarding, as I think we would have gained something if we had had a session every month; that would have been more appropriate I think.* (2:55)

The opinions of coach and coachee vary as regards the time gap between sessions that would yield maximum benefit, but among the interviewee there seems to be a general agreement that the coaching sessions must be spread out more in order to provide additional time for reflection.

> *And so, I actually think that I have started quite early but it has still meant that some work tasks, for whatever reason, sickness and attending courses, have coincided, and that the entire co-ordination process, I actually think that I had time to get some of the other final coaching sessions finished because I knew that some of them would have to be pushed forward, that would be inevitable, so with a couple of them I am running a bit late after all, and I have simply had some appointments where we agreed that we had to delay the coaching if there was some work that needed to be done.* (2:33)

Planning has posed some coaching challenges: for instance, the above coach was well aware of the co-ordination process, which may sometimes become complicated when a coaching process has to be adapted to the life of an organisation.

(B) Subtheme: Good problem identification

Both coachee and coach point to effective identification of problems as an essential part of coaching skills. This element relates closely to the theme of *Precious time*: time plays a key role in a busy and challenging work life, and the efficient use of time therefore becomes more important than if coaching is conducted in a different context. The manager's coaching of his or her employee takes place during working hours, and time for coaching is deducted from the time which might be spent on work tasks in the organisation. Considering these conditions, it becomes crucial that the coaching sessions are efficient and, therefore, good

problem identification becomes a decisive point of departure. If the problem identification is insufficient, the coaching will not provide the optimal outcome for coach and coachee.

These results from coaching research are also identified as essential for successful coaching sessions: Szymanska (2008) emphasises, for instance, that the coach should identify the correct problem and narrow it down to one concrete element which can be worked on during the course of the coaching session. Once the problem has been identified, the coach may find it advantageous to use the SPACE model in order to shed light on all aspects of the problem; this may also function as an educative process for the coachee (Szymanska, 2008; Cavanagh 2005). Coaching researchers Palmer (2007), Palmer and Szymanska (2007) and Spaten, Kyndesen and Palmer (2012) emphasise that the first part of a successful coaching session consists of careful problem identification. The coach might ask, for instance: What is the social context of your problem? Which thoughts (or feelings, actions or possibly physical reactions) do you notice in relation to the problem?

The focus of the coach on achieving good problem identification is indeed expressed several times during our interviews. Below the coach describes how much energy is in fact spent on finding the best issues/problems to talk about, with a view to best motivating the coachee.

> *So all the time I have had to throw out some bait to inspire them, like… I think (…) it was necessary to offer some examples or some directions to what exactly was it we were to talk about?* (1:97)

In the above, a middle manager describe how it is essential to 'throw out some bait' to the coachee in order to achieve the best problem identification. Here, this may indicate that the coach is focusing on his or her guiding role in finding the issue or problem that is most inspiring for the coachee and which will, therefore, motivate the coachee most. Motivation is indeed described in more detail in an interview in which a coach states:

> *And when I look back on this and will have to use my experience for future coaching, we must get much better at – or I must get much better at perhaps 'massaging' into the conversation, so that we know exactly what we are going to talk about, so that they don't just turn up and say, like, I don't really know what it is that we are going to talk about, but I have thought about this topic. This is what has been the greatest challenge, because when we are actually sitting there all is fine, but then the coachee hasn't thought of something, and then motivation is not really very high (no), on their part.*

So if the coach is to optimise the outcome for the coachee, and the coachee is to be motivated for coaching, the coach should support the coachee in finding a suitable problem to work with. Finding such a problem is the biggest challenge for the coach. Coaching research also demonstrates that thorough problem identification will result in the problem being handled in a suitable way, which will elicit the greatest motivation on the part of the coachee and consequently the highest degree of goal achievement (see, for instance, Spaten, Løkken & Imer, 2011; Grant & Zackon, 2004; Palmer & Gyllensten, 2008).

Another interesting wording used in the above quotation is 'massaging into the conversation', by which the speaker means making the topic of conversation clear, thus enhancing explicit problem identification. This aspect is also emphasised by Palmer (2007), following Wasik (1984), as being essential for successful coaching.

As is evident, middle managers participating in the present research are focusing extensively on adequate problem identification, which is an aspect described as essential by other scholars in this research field (e.g. Grant & Grene, 2001). In order for problem identification to be successful, it is important to establish excellent rapport between coach and coachee, so that a suitable point of departure can be found for the coaching process. In order to ensure that coach and

coachee agree, it is necessary for the parties to make real and genuine contact (Rogers, 1995). This brings us to the third subtheme, *Empathy and contact.*

(C) Subtheme: Creating empathy and contact

The coach's abilities in creating empathy and contact abilities have turned out to be a key aspect, emphasised by both coachees and coaches as decisive in our interview data. Coaching research stresses the importance of the coach's empathy and listening skills. For instance, listening includes the ability to return to elements in the story told by the coachee, rather than waiting for a break in the speech flow to occur, making it possible to ask the next question (Stober, 2006, p.30). Empathy and contact also consist in being able to reflect body language and use appropriate listening noises (Rogers, 1995). In addition, it is important to maintain eye contact and give the coachee time to answer complicated questions. These aspects are decisive in building a trustful relationship with the coachee, making it possible to ask mildly confrontational questions without the coachee feeling attacked (ibid.; Palmer & McDowall, 2010). This aspect is further accentuated in employee coaching due to the apparently asymmetrical relationship and its power aspects, which will be illustrated and expanded later on during the presentation of theme three: *The Coaching relationship and power relation.*

The importance of central coaching skills, such as, for instance, empathetic active listening and providing space for the coachee, are to be illustrated by the following testimony:

> *Yes, and perhaps being able to hold on to some of the things, the small signals I might send and provide, just grabbing hold of them and saying 'what was it that you just said?' and seeing them as part of a whole, and perhaps some things I haven't thought about, that things were connected in that way. To stir up some thoughts in my mind, right, and that again is a question of being serious about it, isn't it?* (4.333)

The personal contact which the employee has with his or her manager during the coaching session is decisive in determining the extent to which the coaching will yield an outcome. It is evident from the above interview excerpt that the coach is experiencing a sense of security, and that a development is in progress through *thoughts being stirred up* in the mind of the coachee when the coach is listening actively and pointing out possible connections between thoughts and stories. Thus framing, structure, contact, empathy and contract are decisive in employee coaching, and it is important to keep these factors in mind. In the discussion of the following theme, these will be further elucidated, drawing upon the template analysis.

Theme 2: Professional and personal development

This theme illustrates the dialectics between personal and professional development, which existing research characterises as basic, intertwined and interconnected. Among other aspects, this theme includes the manager's recognition that when employees are developing personally, they are apparently also developing professionally. Furthermore, the relation between coach and coachee is in focus, and the coach describes it as advantageous to know the coachee's personality in advance. The coach also gains personal and professional benefit from the coaching process.

In a study from Harvard University including 140 coaches, 76 per cent stated that they had worked on personal issues with their coachees, even though only three per cent had been hired to work with personal as opposed to professional issues (for further details, see Coutu & Kauffman, 2009). In spite of a tripartite agreement between coach, coachee and direct manager that coaching should focus on work-related issues, it seems that other issues (including those of a personal character) may come into focus during coaching sessions. The relevance of this aspect of coaching, particu-

larly in employee coaching, is emphasised by Collins and Palmer (2011).

This raises an interesting question: is it problematic if personal issues are discussed in manager-employee coaching? This question cannot be answered unequivocally, but one aspect of this theme is addressed in the following subtheme, which examines how personal development relates to and enhances professional development.

Subtheme: Does the coachee's personal development enhance his or her professional development?

The analysis of this subtheme demonstrated that coaches experienced the necessity of striking a balance between personal and professional coaching topics, even though they turn out to be reciprocally connected. In the following, a coach describes how personal coaching topics may also have business-related significance:

> *But I also think that discussing personal themes is rewarding in a business-related sense, this is what* ***I*** *believe, it cannot be measured anywhere, but I just believe that I get happier and more motivated employees from doing so.* (1:188)

Furthermore, the coach describes his or her idea that an employee may be more motivated by receiving coaching which is also related to personal issues. Research has emphasised the importance of this aspect (Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009).

Subsequently, a coach describes how he handles this act of balancing, considering that coaching should not only be personal but also embedded in business-related issues:

> *Maybe it goes like this, oh, but it's nice that you will listen to me, and it's always very nice to work in a place which makes space for letting me talk about things that take up energy in my private life, and you are able to help me so that I can change it. Then I say you are welcome to do so, because it may also help you to be more focused on your tasks when you are at work.* (2.895)

Here the coach presents his or her view to the coachee that the coaching of personal issues may bring about better professional results. This illustrates that the personal outcome is also an important result of the coaching sessions: the following testimonies reveal the extent of the impact of coaching sessions on the coachees' self-knowledge and personal development. A number of the participating coachees emphasise how the personal development they have achieved through the coaching process is influencing their work satisfaction and efficiency. An instance of personal development positively influencing professional life is described in this interview:

> *…this question, does this add something to my personal bottom line? Well, what I discovered over the five coaching sessions is that in the end it did. Both personally and in relation to my work I think that I gained a great deal. It made me change my views on some issues, I suppose it is this thing about seeing the difference between the coaching and one's own view of the world; because I was both coached and did some things that were different from what I normally do, and also in relation to changing the way I see things (…) perhaps you are having some kind of guideline inside yourself and are actually following this, because that's actually what you were brought up to do perhaps 10 or 20 years ago, and then all of a sudden to have this changed. That was what was so fascinating, I think – and it is.* (3:59–3:76)

The above coachee is left with a changed worldview after the coaching sessions and has, through the coaching process, begun to focus on some old habits – and the limitations they were imposing on life here and now. During the interviews, the coachee experiences development and finally acknowledges that the process has resulted in general personal development and an increase in self-knowledge.

> *And it may be hard when things/there is a telephone call and there are meetings, right, and well in that discussion we agreed that I would try to take one day a month to work from home and get some things sorted out, and then say that now I am simply disconnecting the phone and taking my computer home to get some of these things done, in order to clear things up and keep the things down that may be bothering me.* (4:215)

We might say that, in general, the coaching sessions have increased the self-knowledge and the personal development of the individual coachee, which is also apparent at the workplace and has an impact on work efficiency. Through coaching, solutions are found to problems which also affect work life, so even though personal topics are discussed and included in coaching sessions during work hours, doing so positively affects the overall situation. This leads us on to the next subtheme.

Subtheme: The coach experiences personal and management-related benefits

This theme illustrates that middle managers taking on the task of coaching are also experiencing personal gains from acting as coach – the benefits are becoming reciprocal, as shown in the following quote.

> *Well, as a manager it is my impression that I, well I think, well I become damned egotistical, well it gives some satisfaction that I feel that when she comes back she has had a good coaching session (yes), and then I actually become, I suppose I'm bloody happy that we did actually take this step and pat my own shoulder a bit.* (1:181)

In this example, the reciprocal gains are described in a very clear and explicit manner, as the coach mentions how the coaching sessions provides him or her with personal satisfaction. In addition, as in the previous subtheme, benefits in the workplace accrue from the coachee's professional development which arises his or her own personal development. This will affect the coach as a manager, as this contributes to the strength and competence of the team under the coach.

But to be able, as a middle manager, to coach your employees, in both the professional and personal dimensions, requires a well-developed relation between manager and employee. Below, an employee describes the importance of this relation in connection with the coaching sessions, which are termed 'meetings':

> *I felt we were equals during each meeting, and that was important, I think (…) It is in fact important, talking of power, it is important that the coach is able to step down or step up to the right level, which the coach must, as a matter of fact/or where the person she meets is, or the person he meets; because if I had been sitting with a feeling that some manager from some place who is just coming out to tell me that you must remember that I'm the boss here, and then we can move on to the coaching, then I wouldn't have told the coach anything at all.*

The association between personal and professional development is unfolding in a fruitful coach-coachee relation. Here the experience of equality is described as completely essential for the coachee in relation to the coach. Equality is achieved by the coach by showing empathy and by being 'at equal levels with' the employee, so that a sense of trust emerges in the situation. The importance of an equal relation is described by O'Broin and Palmer (2010, p.38): *'The relation must be based on mutual respect and empathy'*. According to the employees we have interviewed, mutual respect is characterised by being 'at equal levels with'. In the above quotation, this forms an essential basis for optimal contact in the coaching relation. If mutual respect and empathy are essentially present, the coachee is able to make constructive use of the coaching session. The coachee can go into the coaching session without worrying about the possible intentions, or whether confidentiality is safeguarded.

In the event that mutual respect and empathy are not present, or if confidentiality is not assured, the employee may easily be reluctant to participate. Research has pointed out in a number of contexts that the interpersonal relationship between coach and coachee is of paramount importance (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2006; O'Broin & Palmer, 2010; Palmer & McDowall, 2010). This relationship should be characterised by trust, equality and confidence, with the former property argued to be fundamental: *'A 'trusting relationship' is paramount for effective coaching'* (Ting & Riddle, 2006, p.111).

The quantitative findings show a significantly positive evaluation of the coaching process, suggesting that the required trusting relationships were established. But in the following testimony, a coachee also points to the 'delicate balance' that the coach is required to strike in order to facilitate equality and a trusting relationship:

> *This is a delicate balance – it is one thing that he is the manager next door, and quite another matter that when he enters my office, he is the coach – so to speak. He is still the person who should be in control. He is the one to be in control of this coaching session – on the basis of some questions and some models he has learnt – and because of some training he has completed. Then he must still be the person in control – and on the other hand, he must let go of his role as manager.*

As seen here, the delicate balance involves the coach being in control of the interview and the coaching session, but at the same time letting go of his or her role as manager and take on the distinct role of a coach (Orth et al., 1987). The appropriate form of control for the coach exists in an equal relationship in which it is mainly the coachee who sets the agenda for the coaching session.

The controlling role of the coach includes the power held by the coach, which is immanent here. This brings us to the third theme emerging from the template analysis: *the coaching relationship and the power relation.* The interplay between the need for equality in the relationship and the controlling power held by the coach is of paramount importance in the relationship between coach and coachee.

Theme 3: The coaching relationship and the power relation

In the qualitative analyses this essential theme is illustrated on the basis of the following two questions.

1. Is the coach able to create an equal relationship and build trust with the coachee even though coach is still clearly in control during the coaching session?
2. Is the power held by the coach, as the daily manager and because of his or her role as coach, as problematic an aspect as might be presumed?

The interpersonal relationship between coach and coachee, with a focus on the power held by the coach, was a key finding from the template analysis. In the following discussion, the above two questions will be expanded upon, drawing on existing literature in the field.

It is widely recognised that power is immanent in and exerts an influence on the relationship between coach and coachee (see, for instance, Dam Hede, 2010; Elliot, 2011). It is important to consider this power dimension, as the quality of the relationship between coachee and coach is paramount for the positive result of the coaching session (O'Broin & Palmer, 2007). In fact, the power and the quality of the relationship are inseparable in the coaching relationship, and, therefore, it becomes a key issue that the coach is aware of the power relation between coach and coachee – even more so when the coach is also the boss.

Research in the application of evidence-based management theories to coaching managerial development (Elliot, 2011) argues that the power relationship should be considered as important as authority and trust in the coaching relationship. This tripartition is also referred to in a previous interview excerpt in which the coachee says:

> *I felt we were equals during each meeting, and that was important, I think (…) It is in fact important, talking of power, it is important that the coach is able to step down or step up to the right level which the coach must, as a matter of fact/or where the person she meets is, or the person he meets.*

The influence of power on the coaching relationship has been investigated by Welman and Bachkirova (2010) in their analysis of the relationship between coach and coachee, resulting in the following definition of power as a concept in the coaching relation. They define power on the basis of two fundamental types (ibid., p.141):

'One is power over somebody, the ability to dominate him or her, to impose one's will on them. Or the other is power to do something, to be able, to be potent.'

When seen in relation to findings from the qualitative analysis, this definition describes the double relationship which is at the centre of the coaching relationship. Balancing becomes essential due to the coach's position as manager. It becomes critical to be able at once to abandon the power of the manager, and to adopt the power of the coach in the coaching relation. This delicate balancing act is described by Fromm (1960) on the basis of a distinction between power and dominance. He introduces the hypothesis that *'A person with a lack of potency is more likely to strive for domination'* (ibid., p.140).

Here, Fromm (1960) posits that individual potency will determine whether the fundamental power relations will turn into domination. From this we may extrapolate that the personal abilities of the coach are decisive and essential for the maintenance of power balance. If these are not sufficiently developed, power is misused in the relation between coach and coachee in a way that manifests itself as domination. If they are sufficiently developed, the power held by the coach may be used in a positive way for the *empowerment* of the coachee, as pointed out by Welman and Bachkirova (2010, p.141).

Subtheme: The conditions of fruitful employee coaching

The power relations between coach and coachee have been studied by several researchers, taking as their point of departure what may be termed 'the symmetry problem'. The symmetry problem is considered by, for instance, Dam Hede (2010) to be a universal condition for a fruitful conversation. It includes three dimensions: (1) The institutional structure; (2) The conversation-dynamic character; and (3) The self-technological dimension (see Dam Hede, 2010, p.33, for further information). The first of these is the most relevant for the present study.

In the institutional dimension, Dam Hede (2010) describes the asymmetrical difference in the subject-object relation, which is characterised by power, position and the distribution of roles (Dam Hede, 2010). For the present study, this is the very institutional dimension (between manager and employee) within which coaching takes place, a relation which is considered of paramount importance by the respondents, and which is emphasised and expanded on in this theme of the template analysis.

The asymmetry is dependent on the extent to which the coach/authority functions as a link between possible resources useful for the coachee (e.g. further education or knowledge), and power over their employment in respect of hiring and firing (Dam Hede, 2010). In the following testimony from a coachee it is pointed out how asymmetry in resources, here in the shape of knowledge, also plays a role:

> *What I mean is that some of the things I have said during the coaching sessions, they will remain there – and it is not something that will be misused against me in some situation – or to make things better for me.*

We get the impression that the employee has considered the possible misuse of the knowledge which the coach obtains from the coaching process. However, at the same time it certainly seems that trust has been established, and that the coachee is not expecting such knowledge to be misused.

The asymmetry in the relation is further complicated by the fact that the employee may provide the coach with an insight into how the employee's development is progressing. We find a number of examples which express this asymmetry. Below, the manager describes knowledge derived from an employee through coaching sessions:

> *I'm almost 100 per cent certain that I wouldn't have known this if it wasn't for the coaching. Then I might have heard it in six months, and then you might say that it wasn't important.*

This shows that asymmetry is present in the coaching relation, mainly in the form of the exchange of knowledge which would not

otherwise have been available to the coachee or to the coach. This aspect has been documented in previous studies of employee coaching, which point out that employee coaching may promote job satisfaction if the asymmetry is not too strong or futile (see, for instance, Bowles et al., 2007; Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009; Grant & Zackon, 2004).

Welman and Bachkirova (2010, p.145) also point to three types of factor which are essential to focus on when considering power in the coaching relation: *'Factors influencing the predisposition to exercise power in the coach; Contextual issues, including the power of the coachee; Dealing with power in the immediacy of the coaching interaction'.*

It is perhaps mainly contextual aspects that are seen as particularly important in the present study, as typified by the following quote:

> *It is a delicate balance – it is one thing that he is the manager next door, and quite another matter that when he enters my office, he is the coach – so to speak. He is still the person who should be in control.*

When the coach walks through the door, the manager is entering, and once the door has been closed, the manager has changed roles and is now the coach. This makes the context in which coaching takes place a key aspect, since a change in roles is vital for a profitable result for both parties. Furthermore, the significance of the distribution of roles is seen in the above testimony, which is a role distribution in the subject-object relation which Dam Hede (2010) describes to be of paramount importance in the institutional dimension of the asymmetrical relation.

It therefore seems of essential importance that the coach emphasises the fundamental role of confidence in the coaching session (Palmer & McDowall, 2010). Once confidence has been established between coach and employee (coachee), this may result in the coach receiving some information, due to his or her role as coach, and consequently also as manager. This aspect is developed in the following subtheme.

Subtheme: Dilemmas of the coach: balancing personal and professional issues in confidential coaching sessions

A number of times, the manager has had the experience of having to navigate between the roles of manager and coach, when knowledge and consequently power is acquired from the coaching sessions with employees. This further complicates the asymmetry in the relation. It may, therefore, be seen as a strength that the coach includes these reflections when contemplating his or her coaching practice.

> *Yes, it works both ways because I also receive a lot of good input, but at the same time I also get my hands tied a bit – in some areas at least.* (1:925)

Balancing between personal and professional issues may be awkward and challenging for the coach. The above coach may feel paralysed in some areas, whereas the manager below sees it as his or her duty, as manager, to also offer space for listening to the personal issues of the coachee.

> *It does, yes, but it is also important for me as manager to offer space for listening to personal issues. That I don't just say that I'm afraid you'll have to speak to someone else about this, this is not the place to discuss such things.*

This insight regarding personal and professional issues emphasises the importance for the coach of setting clear boundaries, so that the coaching does not become exclusively personal, but also includes a work-related focus. So, it is important that there is space for personal topics during coaching sessions, but equally important for the coachee that the manager sets boundaries, to ensure that the coaching topics do not become *too* personal. The ability to set these boundaries becomes an aspect of the power of the coach, which is of especial relevance in the case of employee coaching.

From the present analysis it appears that the context is of paramount importance in the asymmetrical relation. The ability of the coach to navigate the power dynamics and make role distribution manifest is a key focus point in employee coaching if a fruitful

result is to emerge through the coaching sessions.

Summary: Middle manager coaching of employees and internal vs. external coaching

According to Heslin, Vandewalle and Latham (2006), the coaching of employees is a key task for middle managers in several major American enterprises, and this phenomenon is widespread and increasing in Danish enterprises (Coaching Barometret, 2009). This makes it highly relevant to conduct studies of this practice. In this article we are well underway in analysing and discussing how employees evaluate the coaching competences of middle managers, and which challenges and opportunities we are able to identify in the coaching of employees by managers.

One of the issues which is considered most pertinent is the power balance in the coaching relationship, as described in theme 3. According to Welman and Bachkirova (2010), the power balance is a key focus point in all types of coaching, but when the coach is also the manager of the coachee, this seems even more critical. Welman & Bachkirova (ibid.) point out, for instance, how the coach may be tempted to exert power (both consciously and unconsciously) in coaching. It may be, for instance, that the coach is uncertain of his or her own skills, or that the coach wishes to achieve a certain result through the coaching: for instance, improvements in efficiency or the solution of internal conflicts. This risk seems to be heightened when the coach is also a manager and wishes to achieve a certain goal. According to Welman and Bachkirova (2010), this is problematic as decisions made on the basis of a coaching session in which the coach has more or less consciously exerted this power do not lead to actions or changes outside of the coaching context, and, therefore, the coaching has no effect. On the basis of this study, we would further emphasise the paramount importance of actively including the power issue in coaching, especially when this balance has an effect on decisions or discussions. The dilemma of being manager and coach at the same time has been illustrated in the present study, where the theme mainly has emerged from the qualitative analysis.

Another aspect of the experience of middle managers coaching their employees (internal coaching by managers) concerns in more general terms the relationship between coach/manager and coachee/employee. Several researchers (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011; O'Broin & Palmer, 2010) find, as mentioned, that the coaching relation is of vital importance for the results of the coaching process, cohering with the observations of Palmer & McDowall (2010, p.3): *'Stephen Taylor has presented research that showed that most people resign from their job because they are "sick of their immediate boss", pointing to the fact that good relationships are key to retention and engagement in the workplace, Taylor saying that 'the difficult bit [at work] is the area of interpersonal relationships"'*. The relationship between manager and employee is of vital importance for the involvement of employees in their workplace, and can be improved through coaching (ibid.). When discussing the relationship between coach and coachee, it is also essential to establish a good (work) alliance, which includes clarification of the goals of the coaching process, the tasks of each of the two parties, and the establishment of mutual respect and empathy (O'Broin & Palmer, 2010). The establishment of a coaching relationship – including a fruitful alliance well established at the beginning of the coaching process – is connected with the previously mentioned power issues, which may possibly be reduced or discussed proactively. In spite of the widely acknowledged significance of these issues, the amount of research on the influence of the coaching relationship on the efficiency of the coaching process is very limited (Gregory & Levy, 2010). The present study contributes to this knowledge.

Finally, let us consider what impact it has on the coaching that a (middle) manager

acts as coach – or in broader terms: Who can coach at a sufficient quality level? Bono has conducted extensive studies of 428 coaches with various educational backgrounds and experience (Bono et al., 2009). Her studies show that, for instance, the difference between a coach education and a psychology education is extremely small, when evaluating coaching skills. Therefore, it cannot be rejected that managers who are formally qualified and educated as coaches may function equally well comparing with psychologists doing coaching. All coaches in the present study have – as mentioned – attended extensive coaching courses over a number of years and are, therefore, presumed to be well qualified for the task. Bono et al. (2009) point out that future research within this area should explore in depth the active ingredients in coaching: for instance, what does the coach do in concrete terms in order to enhance motivation in their employees, which tools and questions are used, and what constitutes high quality coaching? It has been observed (Kvale, 1994) that qualitative interviews in particular can be used to clarify this. Qualitative interviews provide the coach with the opportunity to articulate the course of the coaching process in more concrete terms (ibid.). In their qualitative studies of the effect of coaching on stress reduction, Gyllensten et al. (2005) discuss the different positive and negative aspects of the individual participant's subjective perspective. A rather similar method of analyses, an IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, Smith & Osborn, 2003) was employed in the qualitative studies mentioned above. The results demonstrate that coaching may contribute to a reduction in stress, but paradoxically may also increase stress if it is not considered relevant and useful but is instead only seen as a 'time waster' (Hackett, Palmer & Farrants, 2007). The conclusion of the study was, however, that through coaching the participants obtained tools that they considered to be useful for them in future stressful situations. In general, participants found that coaching helped them combat stress and not, for instance, escape from conflict-ridden situations but instead endure these without imposing another stress factor on themselves (Gyllensten et al., 2005, Palmer & Cooper, 2007).

In the present study of coaching by middle managers, we have identified the importance of clearly delineating the change in roles from manager to coach, and the need to emphasise confidentiality in the coaching relationship. It remains an open question whether it is a fruitful solution at all for an organisation to use internal coaching. It may be claimed that the complex dilemmas of power and relationships are reduced or avoided if an external coach conducts employee coaching instead (Søholm, 2006). On the other hand, there might be a risk that coaching by an external coach remains in a closed circuit between the external coach and the manager, and is not embedded in the daily practice and professional lives of the coachees. Perhaps it will be more fruitful to be aware of, and particular about, the topics which are considered suitable for coaching, whether it is a (middle) manager or an external coach who conducts the coaching. Dam Hede (2010) touches upon this aspect in a study which showed 90 per cent of coachees preferring an external coach; there is, however, no unequivocal support for this finding in the coaching community. Stelter (2002, p.143), however, proposes that *'Coaching should mainly take place internally in an organisation, either with the manager acting as coach or with appointed employees as coaches'*. The argument in favour of Stelter's choice is that the organisational effect will be larger, as the coaching process is embedded in the organisation itself and linked directly to the management and daily work life conditions. On the other hand, it may be argued that an external coach provides the best opportunities for open and honest reflection, and employees will not have to consider too much any power problems related to a given issue.

The results of the present study mainly support the stance that coaching by internal (middle) managers of their employees is feasible and fruitful. The results present such coaching processes as contributing successfully to professional development for both coach and coachee. However, at the same time it is important to acknowledge that the resulting double relation also encompasses a number of delicate issues.

> *But I also think that coaching contributes to the professional development. It can't really be measured anywhere, but I'm convinced that I am getting a happier and more motivated employee as a result of it.*

More focus should be placed on the relation-creating skills of the coach, so that the 'symmetry problem' and power aspects of the coaching relation do not become unnecessarily troublesome. On the basis of the findings of the present study, the coach's relational competences are important, and attention must be paid to the influence of power on the experience of equality in the relation. We can, therefore, recommend that a number of issues should be emphasised in the training of coaches. Designing a safe and trusting framework for the coachee, for instance, and developing the coach's skills in being empathic are essential. To this we can add the coaching competences that were positively evaluated in the study such as problem identification.

Finally, it seems that personal issues should probably not always be banned from the coaching room, since these may contribute to enhancing employee motivation. The analysis actually points out that the coaching of personal topics may contribute to boosting concentration on the workplace job. However, it is important to maintain a primary focus on professional issues in employee coaching, and it is essential to keep the power aspect – as described above – at the forefront of the middle managers' attention.

Conclusion

The two-fold aim of this research was to investigate, on the one hand, the experience gained and challenges met by managers when coaching their employees, and on the other hand, how these coaching sessions were assessed by coachees (the middle managers' employees). The corresponding conclusions of this study can be summarised as follows.

The challenging areas include administrative issues such as the planning and scheduling of coaching appointments, and a natural willingness to adapt that is inherent to the role of coach. To this we can add the issues that render it problematic to coach exclusively on work-related issues. Topics of a more personal character often do not have a direct impact on the employee's professional work, but indirectly the employee can 'grow' at the professional level by developing at the personal level. The middle manager as coach must be adept in balancing between personal and professional issues, and must be able to navigate both streams without capsizing. He or she must ensure that the coachee experiences equality in order for the coaching session to have value. Paradoxically, in this situation, the coach is both coach and manager, and may consequently find it difficult to establish equality in the coaching room, even though this issue was seemingly negotiated successfully in the coaching examined by this research project.

During the course of the study, the middle managers as coaches acquired a great deal of successful experience at both personal and professional levels. In the coaching room, positive experiences occurred when the coachee made good progress towards the goal, or indicated that the sessions were helpful. Such experiences are rewarding for the coach and contribute to their development as a coach, both personally and professionally. It must be emphasised that all employee responses were anonymous to the manager, and the employees knew this; this was intended to promote less biased responses in the discus-

sion regarding the power relation. Thus, the study concludes that the employees participating in the coaching session generally find the process extremely successful; they submit extremely positive assessments. The employees indicate that contact with the coach was empathic, and that, in general, thorough problem analysis took place in coaching sessions (Spaten et al., 2011). Empathy, contact and thorough problem-analysis are essential aspects of facilitating a fruitful experience with positive relations when participating in a coaching or counselling process, as highlighted by a large number of scholars (Rogers, 1995; Palmer & McDowall, 2010; Stelter, 2008).

Although these important results are partly newly found and partly underscore recent studies, major challenges still remain as regards the contribution of research (Rogers, 1995; Palmer & McDowall 2010; Stelter, 2008) in this field concerning both executive coaching and the coaching of employees by internal middle managers. Future research should include both qualitative, more profound and extensive studies, and preferably more participants, and randomised as well as control studies, as far too little light has so far been shed on both the effect and quality of managers' coaching.

Acknowledgements

As is well known, few major research projects can be completed without being embedded in research environments, and I would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues, the psychologists affiliated with the Coaching Psychology Research Unit at Aalborg University. In particular, I thank psychologist Winnie Flensborg, who has been my working and sparring partner through all phases of the project, and Professor Stephen Palmer, who has also followed my research project and provided advice. I could not have accomplished this study without discussions and the exchange of notes and ideas for the qualitative material and the analysis of this with members of the Unit and notably psychologists Anna Imer and Sofie Friis. In the concluding phase with the editing of the article, student assistant Stephanie Backström and Henriette Ernst has stood by. I look forward to co-operation with these colleagues in on-going and future research projects.

The Authors

Dr Ole Michael Spaten, Lic.Psychol., MA., PhD, MISC Accred., Director of Coaching Psychology Research Unit, Head of Psychology Studies, Aalborg University, Denmark.

MSc Winnie Flensborg, Lic.Psychol., Coaching Psychology Research Unit, Senior Lecturer, Aalborg University, Denmark. Furthermore Winnie maintains a private practice with coaching.

Correspondence

Dr Ole Michael Spaten
Coaching Psychology Research Unit,
Psychology Studies,
Kroghstraede 3, 9220 East,
Aalborg University, Denmark.
Email: oms@hum.aau.dk

References

Auerbach, J.E. (2006). Cognitive coaching. In D.R. Stober & A. M. Grant (Eds). *Evidence based coaching handbook: Putting best practices to work for your clients* (pp.103–127). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Bond, A.S. & Naughton, N. (2011). The role of coaching in managing leadership transitions. *International Coaching Psychology Review, 6*(2), 165–179.

Bono, J.E., Purvanova, R.K., Towler, A.J. & Peterson, D.B. (2009). A survey of executive coaching practices. *Personnel Psychology, 62*(2), 361–404.

Bowles, S., Cunningham, C. J. L., De La Rosa, G. M. & Picano, J. (2007). Coaching leaders in middle and executive management: Goals, performance, buy-in. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 28*(5), 388–408.

Cavanagh, M. (2005). Mental-health issues and challenging clients in executive coaching. In M.J. Cavanagh, A.M. Grant & T. Kemp (Eds.), *Evidence-based coaching, Vol. 1: Theory, research and practice from the behavioural sciences* (pp.21–36). Bowen Hills, Australia: Australian Academic Press.

Coaching Barometret (2009). *Coaching Barometret – En foreløbig oversigt over coachingens udbredelse og anvendelse i Danmark. [The Coaching Barometer – A preliminary survey about use and application].* Retrieved from: http://www.ifi.ku.dk/Forskning/projekter/krop_laering_identitet/rs_coaching/forskningsprojekter/rs_coaching_barometer/coaching_haefte/coaching_barometret_2009.pdf.

Coutu, D. & Kauffman, C. (2009). What can coaches do for you? *Harvard Business Review, 87*(1), 91–97.

Collins, A. & Palmer, S. (2011) Developing senior executives within a coaching psychology framework. *Coaching Psychology International, 4*(1), 15–19.

Crabb, S. (2011). The use of coaching principles to foster employee engagement. *The Coaching Psychologist, 7*(1), 27–34.

Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. & Piano Clark, V.L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. (2009). Mapping the field of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 3*(2), 95–108.

Dam Hede, T. (2010). *Coaching – samtalekunst og ledelsesdisciplin. [Coaching – conversations and leadership].* Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur.

Duijts, S.F.A., Kant, I., van den Brandt, P.A. & Swaen, G.M.H. (2008). Effectiveness of a preventive coaching intervention for employees at risk for sickness absence due to psychosocial health complaints: Results of a randomised controlled trial. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine, 50*(7), 765–776.

Ellinger, A.D., Ellinger, A.E., Bachrach, D.G., Wang, Y.-L. & Elmadag Bas, A.B. (2011). Organisational investments in social capital, managerial coaching, and employee work-related performance. *Management Learning, 42*(1), 67–85.

Elliot, R. (2011). Utilising evidence-based leadership theories in coaching for leadership development: Towards a comprehensive integrating conceptual framework. *International Coaching Pschological Review, 6*(1), 46–70.

Evers, W.J.G., Brouwers, A. & Tomic, W. (2006). A quasi-experimental study on management coaching effectiveness. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 58*(3), 174–182.

Feldman, D.C. & Lankau, M.J. (2005). Executive coaching: A review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Management, 31*(6), 829–848.

Fromm, E. (1960). *The fear of freedom.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Grant, A.M. & Greene, J. (2001). *Coach yourself: Make real change in your life.* London: Momentum Press.

Grant, A.M. (2003). The impact of life coaching on goal attainment, metacognition and mental health. *Social Behavior and Personality 31*(3), 253–264.

Grant, A.M. & Cavanagh, M.J. (2004). Toward a profession of coaching: Sixty-five years of progress and challenges for the future. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 2*(1), 1–16.

Grant, A.M. & Zackon, R. (2004). Executive, workplace and life coaching: Findings from a large-scale survey of International Coach Federation members. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 2*(2), 1–15.

Grant, A.M. & Cavanagh, M.J. (2007). The Goal-Focused Coaching Skills Questionnaire: Preliminary findings. *Social Behavior and Personality, 35*(6), 751–760.

Grant, A.M., Curtayne, L. & Burton, G. (2009). Executive coaching enhances goal attainment, resilience and workplace well-being: A randomised controlled study. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 4*(5), 396–407.

Gregory, J.B. & Levy, P.E. (2010). Employee coaching relationships: Enhancing construct clarity and measurement. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, 3*(2), 109–123.

Gregory, J.B. & Levy, P.E. (2011). It's not me, it's you: A multi-level examination of variables that impact employee coaching relationships. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 63*(2), 67–88.

Gyllensten, K., Palmer, S. & Farrants, J. (2005). Perceptions of stress and stress interventions in finance organisations: Overcoming resistance towards counselling. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly, 18*(1), 19–29.

Gyllensten, K. & Palmer, S. (2006). Experiences of coaching and stress in the workplace: An integrative phenomenological analysis. *International Coaching Psychology Review, 1*(1), 86–98.

Gyllensten, K., Palmer, S., Nilsson, E.-K., Regnér, A.M. & Frodi, A. (2010). Experiences of cognitive coaching: A qualitative study. *International Coaching Psychology Review, 5*(2), 98–108.

Hackett, A., Palmer, S. & Farrants, J. (2007). An investigation into stress and coaching needs of staff working in the hospice service. *The Coaching Psychologist, 3*(3), 139–143.

Heslin, P.A., Vandewalle, D. & Latham, G.P. (2006). Keen to help? Managers' implicit person theories and their subsequent employee coaching. *Personnel Psychology, 59*(4), 871–902.

ICF (2012). *2012 ICF Global Coaching Study Executive Summary.* Retrieved 27 September 2012, from: http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/2012ICFGlobalCoachingStudy-ExecutiveSummary.pdf

Kauffman, C. & Scouler, A. (2004). Toward a positive psychology of executive coaching. In A. Linley & S. Josephs (Eds.), *Positive psychology in practice.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Kilburg, R.R. (2001). Facilitating intervention adherence in executive coaching: A model and methods. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 53*(4), 251–267.

King, N. (1998). Template analysis. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative methods and analysis in organisational research.* London: Sage.

King, N., Carroll, C. Newton, P. & Dornan, T. (2002). 'You can't cure it so you have to endure it': The experience of adaptation to diabetic renal disease. *Qualitative Health Research, 12*(3), 329–346.

Kvale, S. (1994). *Interview.* Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag.

Langdridge, D. (2007). *Phenomenological psychology: Theory, research and methods.* London: Pearson Education.

O'Broin, A. & Palmer, S. (2007). Reappraising the coach-client relationship: The unassuming change agent in coaching. In S. Palmer & A. Whybrow (Eds.), *The handbook of coaching psychology: A guide for practitioners.* London: Routledge.

O'Broin, A. & Palmer, S. (2010). Exploring key aspects in the formation of coaching relationships: Initial indicators from the perspective of the coachee and the coach. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, 3*(2), 124–143.

Öestrich, I.H. (2008). Kognitiv coaching – når der ønskes effektivitet [Cognitive coaching – when efficacy is needed]. In K. Gørtz & A. Prehn (Eds.), *Coaching in perspective* (pp.119–134). Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag.

Olivero, G., Bane, K.D. & Kopelman, R.E. (1997). Executive coaching as a transfer of training tool: Effects on productivity in a public agency. *Public Personnel Management, 26*(4), 461–469.

Orth, C.D., Wilkinson, H.E. & Benfari, R.C. (1987). The manager's role as coach and mentor. *Organizational Dynamics, 154*, 66–74.

Palmer, S. & Szymanska, K. (2007). Cognitive behavioural coaching: An integrative approach. In S. Palmer & A. Whybrow (Eds.), *The handbook of coaching psychology: A guide for practitioners* (pp.86–117). London: Routledge.

Palmer, S. (2007). PRACTICE: A model suitable for coaching, counselling, psychotherapy and stress management. *The Coaching Psychologist, 3*(2), 71–77.

Palmer, S. & Cooper, C. (2007). *How to deal with stress.* London: Kogan Page.

Palmer, S. & Gyllensten, K. (2008). How cognitive behavioural, rational emotive behavioural or multimodal coaching could prevent mental health problems, enhance performance and reduce work-related stress. *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive Behavior Therapy, 26*(1), 38–52.

Palmer, S. & Whybrow, A. (Eds.) (2009). *The handbook of coaching psychology: A guide for practitioners.* London: Routledge.

Palmer, S. & McDowall, A. (Eds.) (2010). *The coaching relationship: Putting people first.* New York: Routledge.

Peterson, D.B. (2002). Management development: Coaching and mentoring programmes. In K. Kraiger (Ed.), *Creating, implementing, and managing effective training and development* (pp.160–192). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Rogers, C. (1995). What understanding and acceptance means to me. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 35*, 7–22.

Smith, J.A. (Ed.) (2003). *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Smith, J.A. & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J.A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (pp.51–80). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Smither, J. W., London, M., Flautt, R., Vargas, Y. & Kucine, I. (2003). Can working with an executive coach improve multisource feedback ratings over time? A quasi-experimental field study. *Personnel Psychology, 56*(1), 23–44.

Spaten, O.M. (2011a). *Coaching forskning – på evidensbaseret grundlag [Evidence-based coaching research]*. Aalborg: Aalborg University Press.

Spaten, O.M. (2011b). Educating coaching psychologists. In M.J. Cavanagh & S. Palmer, Educating coaching psychologists: Responses from the field. *International Coaching Psychology Review, 6*(1), 114–117

Spaten, O.M. (2011c). *Middle managers' troublesome and successful experiences with coaching and a skills evaluation – a mixed methods approach*. Paper presented at the 3rd International Coaching Psychology Conference hosted by the British Psychological Society (Invited speaker), London.

Spaten, O.M. (2013). *Trends in coaching literature and recent coaching research published from 2007–2012*. Paper presented at the 3rd International Summer Institute hosted by Ramboll Management, Attractor and the Taos Institute (Invited speaker), Berlin.

Spaten, O.M. & Hansen, T.G.B. (2009). Should learning to coach be integrated in a graduate psychology programme? Denmark's first try. *The Coaching Psychologist, 5*(2), 104–109.

Spaten, O.M., Løkken, L.O. & Imer, A. (2011). Coaching af nystartede universitetsstuderende – Et studie med anvendelsen af kvalitative og kvantitative metoder. [A randomised controlled study on the impact of coaching with freshman student on their level of depression, stress and anxiety]. *The Danish Journal of Coaching Psychology, 1*(1), 13–34.

Spaten, O.M., Kyndesen, A.I. & Palmer, S. (2012). From PRACTICE to PRAKSIS – models in Danish coaching psychology. *Coaching Psychology International, 5*(1), 7–12.

Stelter, R. (2008). Coaching: Samtaler om oplevelser. [Coaching: Conversations on experiences]. In K. Gørtz & A. Prehn (Eds.), *Coaching in perspective* (pp.190–207). Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag.

Stelter, R. (Ed.) (2002). *Coaching – læring – udvikling. [Coaching – learning – development]*. Copenhagen: Dansk Psykologisk Forlag

Stober, D.R. (2006). Coaching from a humanistic perspective. In D.R. Stober & A.M. Grant (Eds.), *Evidence based coaching handbook: Putting best practices to work for your clients.* (pp.17–51). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Stober, D.R. & Grant, A.M. (Eds.). (2006). *Evidence based coaching handbook: Putting best practices to work for your clients.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Stober, D.R. & Parry, C. (2005). Current challenges and future directions in coaching research. In M.J. Cavanagh, A.M. Grant & T. Kemp (Eds.), *Evidence-based coaching, Vol. 1: Theory, research and practice from the behavioural sciences* (pp.13–19). Bowen Hills, Australia: Australian Academic Press.

Szymanska, K. (2008). The downward arrow technique. *The Coaching Psychologist, 4*, 85–86.

Søholm, T. (2006). *Ledelsesbaseret coaching. [Leadership-based coaching]*. Copenhagen: Børsens Forlag.

Ting, S. & Riddle, D. (2006). A framework for leadership development coaching. In S. Ting & P. Scisco (Eds.), *The CCL handbook of coaching: A guide for the leader coach* (pp.34–62). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Waldroop, J. & Butler, T. (1996). The executive as coach. *Harvard Business Review, 74*(6), 111–117.

Wasik, B. (1984). *Teaching parents effective problem solving: A handbook for professionals.* Unpublished manuscript. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina.

Welman, P. & Bachkirova, T. (2010). The issue of power in the coaching relationship. In S. Palmer & A. McDowall (Eds.), *The coaching relationship: Putting people first* (pp.139–158). New York: Routledge.

Yukl, G. (2002). *Leadership in organisations.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Paper

Mindfulness-based coaching: Conceptualisation, supporting evidence and emerging applications

Mario Virgili

Purpose: *The present paper reviews the scholarly literature on mindfulness and coaching and explores the potential contributions to coaching psychology of empirically supported intervention approaches that are based on or incorporate mindfulness concepts or practices.*

Method: *The main psychological mindfulness intervention approaches are described and their effects with non-clinical populations are reviewed. Evidence is then documented to suggest emerging applications of mindfulness interventions to coaching psychology.*

Results: *The evidence reviewed suggests that mindfulness may enhance the well-being and effectiveness of coaches who have a personal practice of mindfulness; improves the well-being and psychological functioning of clients who are taught mindfulness skills; offers a rich repertoire of evidence-based techniques and strategies for facilitating change; and may contribute to theoretical base of coaching psychology, particularly with regards to understanding the process of individual change.*

Conclusions: *This paper makes suggestions for coaching practitioners, discusses practical guidelines for integrating mindfulness into the practice of coaching, and makes recommendations for future research.*

Keywords: *Coaching psychology; mindfulness; acceptance and commitment therapy; mindfulness-based interventions; MBSR.*

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DECADES there has been a growth of interest in the topic of mindfulness among researchers within clinical psychology and the health care disciplines, and it appears that the level of interest has risen sharply over the past several years (Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2011; Shapiro, 2009). The contemporary study of mindfulness has resulted in a number of theoretical developments and empirically-supported intervention strategies for facilitating change, enhancing psychological functioning, and improving well-being. Given that coaching psychology is broadly concerned with these same outcomes (Palmer & Whybrow, 2007) and has an alignment with evidence-based methodologies (Cavanagh & Grant, 2006; Stober & Grant, 2006), contemporary scientific mindfulness research has the potential to contribute significantly to coaching psychology theory development and professional practice.

The present paper reviews the scholarly literature on mindfulness as it relates to coaching, examines the current evidence for the use of mindfulness interventions in the coaching context based on controlled studies of psychological mindfulness interventions conducted with non-clinical populations, and explores ways in which mindfulness theory and research can contribute to coaching psychology. The paper begins with an overview of mindfulness intervention approaches that may be relevant to coaching psychology, including a brief review of the effects of mindfulness interventions in non-clinical populations. This is followed by a review of the scholarly literature on mindfulness and coaching. In the third section, potential ways in which mindfulness theory and research may

contribute to coaching psychology and emerging areas of application are examined. The paper concludes with suggestions for future research, recommendations for coaching practitioners, and practical guidelines for integrating mindfulness into the practice of coaching.

Contemporary mindfulness research

The contemporary scientific study of mindfulness involves several lines of investigation, including neurobiological research into the neural correlates of mindfulness processes in novice and experienced meditators (Cahn & Polich, 2006; Slagter et al., 2011; Treadway & Lazar, 2010); basic experimental research in controlled laboratory settings examining the impact of brief mindfulness inductions on cognitive, emotional and self-regulatory functioning (Brown et al., 2007; Keng et al., 2011); and psychometric studies exploring the relationships between measures of mindfulness and other psychological constructs (Baer et al., 2006; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Hayes, Luoma et al., 2006). While each of these areas of study may have important implications for coaching psychology, the present paper focuses on the evidence that has emerged from outcome studies that have evaluated the effectiveness of mindfulness intervention programmes on cognitive, emotional and behavioural functioning (Baer, 2006; Shapiro & Carlson, 2009; Hayes et al., 1999, 2012).

Conceptualisation of mindfulness

The concept of mindfulness has its origins in Buddhist teachings, and refers to a particular mental faculty developed through various mental disciplines (see Bodhi, 2011; Gethin, 2011; Nyanaponika, 1962). Within the contemporary health care and clinical psychology literature, mindfulness is typically described as a type of attention to one's experiences (e.g. thoughts, emotions, memories, and sensations), as they arise, moment-by-moment, and in a manner that is non-judgmental, non-reactive, open, and accepting (e.g. Baer & Krietemeyer, 2006; Bishop et al., 2004). Despite a general acceptance of these concepts, a clear consensus regarding the precise nature of the mindfulness construct has not been established (Dorjee, 2010; Grossman & Van Dam, 2011) and mindfulness has been conceptualised in a variety of ways in the research literature, including as a state, a trait, an outcome, a range of cognitive or neurological processes, and a set of skills (Davidson, 2010; Shapiro & Carlson, 2009; Baer & Lykins, 2011).

Shapiro and Carlson (2009) distinguish between mindfulness as an outcome, *mindful awareness* or an 'abiding presence' (p.4), and mindfulness as a practice, 'the systematic practice of intentionally attending in an open, caring, and discerning way' (p.4). These two aspects of mindfulness are captured in one of the most influential definitions of mindfulness, 'the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment' (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p.145).

Mindfulness has frequently been conceptualised as an individual trait, and a number of trait measures have been developed (for reviews, see Baer, 2011; Baer et al., 2009). Overall, trait mindfulness measures correlate positively with measures of adaptive characteristics, and correlate negatively with measures of maladaptive functioning (Baer, 2011; for a critical perspective on mindfulness measures, see Grossman, 2008, 2011).

Mindfulness has also been conceptualised in terms of a set of processes and/or skills (e.g. Fletcher & Hayes, 2005; Koerner, 2012). For example, a prominent conceptualisation in the psychotherapeutic literature equates mindfulness with four inter-related change processes termed acceptance, defusion, contact with the present moment, and self-as-context (Fletcher & Hayes, 2005). Together with behavioural skills (i.e. valuing, commitment), these processes constitute the construct of *psychological flexibility* which is defined as 'contacting the present moment

without needless defence while persisting or changing behaviour in the service of chosen values' (Hayes et al., 2011, p.155).

In the psychological literature, the term *mindfulness* may also refer to the construct described by Langer (1989, 2009) as a flexible state of mind characterised by openness to new information, the active creation of new categories, awareness of more than one perspective, and an orientation to the present. Although this conception of mindfulness bears a conceptual similarity to meditative forms of mindfulness, it is considered to be a distinct theoretical construct (Baer, 2003; Langer, 1989) and will not be addressed in the present paper.

The lack of consensus regarding the fundamental nature of mindfulness has given rise to a degree of imprecision in how the term is used in relation to other forms of meditation and to psychological constructs, such as flow, attention, awareness and self-regulation (Grossman & Van Dam, 2011; Mikulas, 2011). Associated with this is ongoing discussion regarding the extent to which definitions of mindfulness in the psychological literature reflect the understanding of mindfulness as it occurs in the traditional Buddhist teachings (Bodhi, 2011; Dreyfus, 2011; Grossman & Van Dam, 2011). Moreover, concerns have been expressed about the consequences of separating mindfulness from its traditional context, thereby not only distorting the mindfulness concept, but also undermining its potential benefits (for discussion of these issues, see Bodhi, 2011; Dreyfus, 2011; Grossman & Van Dam, 2011; Kang & Whittingham, 2010; Mikulas, 2011; Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2011).

Psychological mindfulness interventions

A number of structured intervention programs that are based upon or include mindfulness concepts and practices have now been developed and evaluated with a wide range of clinical conditions (for general reviews, see Baer & Huss, 2008; Baer & Krietemeyer, 2006). Collectively, these intervention approaches are sometimes called *mindfulness- and acceptance-based interventions* (e.g. Baer, 2003; Baer & Krietemeyer, 2006). It has also been proposed (Hayes et al., 2011) that mindfulness-based interventions, along with several other recently developed therapeutic approaches, constitute a distinct family of cognitive-behavioural approaches, termed *contextual cognitive behavioural therapies*. Considered together, mindfulness- and acceptance-based interventions share a focus on the use of strategies and techniques based on the acceptance of experiences as they arise in the present moment, a 'distancing' from the stream of habitual or automatic cognitive activity, and a focus on changing the client's relationship to psychological events rather than changing the form or frequency of those events (Baer & Huss, 2008; Hayes et al., 2011).

Despite these commonalities, the various psychological mindfulness intervention approaches differ among themselves in a number of ways, including how mindfulness is conceptualised, whether or not formal meditation practices are used, the relative amount of psychological content and techniques included (e.g. behavioural and cognitive-behavioural strategies), and format used (i.e. group or individual) (Baer & Huss, 2008; Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). It is also important to note that the psychological mindfulness interventions differ from mindfulness forms of meditation as they occur in traditional settings (e.g. Vipassana, Zen), most notably with respect to how mindfulness is understood and its overall aims (for a discussion, see Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011; Grossman, 2010; Rapgay & Bystrisky, 2009; Wallace & Shapiro, 2006). In the present paper, the term *psychological mindfulness intervention* is used to differentiate mindfulness practices as they occur within psychological treatment programs and mindfulness practices that occur in the context of traditional forms of meditation such as Vipassana and Zen, termed here *mindfulness meditation*.

While a number of psychological mindfulness interventions have been developed, those that currently appear to be relevant for

coaching include mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn, 1990) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT; Hayes et al., 1999, 2012). These two approaches would appear to be of immediate relevance to coaching because they have generated the most empirical support in both clinical and non-clinical populations; constitute theoretically coherent and empirically-supported change methodologies in accordance with the requirement that coaching psychology be evidence-based (for a discussion of the scientist-practitioner model in coaching, see Cavanagh & Grant, 2006); and are considered to have applicability beyond the clinical context (Baer & Krietemeyer, 2006; Gaudiano, 2011; Teasdale et al., 2003).

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). MBSR is a group-based structured intervention that is explicitly based on traditional Buddhist mindfulness meditation and was originally developed in a behavioural medicine setting for patients with stress-related and chronic pain conditions (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, 2011). In its standard form, MBSR consists of an eight-week group programme for around 30 participants, including three-hour weekly sessions, a six-hour silent retreat, and daily at-home formal and informal mindfulness meditation practice. Abbreviated versions of MBSR have also been developed for working populations (e.g. Klatt et al., 2009; Mackenzie et al., 2006). The content of a standard MBSR includes instruction and training in formal mindfulness practices (sitting meditation, mindful yoga, and body scan) as well as sessions on specific topics such as stress reactivity, communication skills, and self-acceptance. MBSR aims at developing participants' awareness and acceptance skills, thereby enabling them to relate to their experience in a more open, accepting, and non-judgemental manner. With continued practice, participants develop the ability to lessen the impact of habitual and reactive patterns of cognition, feeling and behaviour which allows them to respond more effectively to various life situations as these arise moment-by-moment.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). ACT was developed as an individual-level therapeutic approach in the 1980s as part of a behavioural research programme into language and cognition (Hayes et al., 1999, 2001, 2012). More recently a number of group-format programmes have also been developed for working adults (e.g. Bond & Bunce, 2000; Flaxman & Bond, 2010b) and is called Acceptance and Commitment Training in this context. ACT has not traditionally taught formal mindfulness meditation practices, but utilises metaphors, experiential exercises, and other techniques in order to promote mindfulness (Hayes & Strosahl, 2004; see Forsyth & Eifert, 2007 for an exception to the formal use of meditation). ACT combines mindfulness/acceptance skills with behaviour change skills for the purpose of increasing an individual's willingness to come into fuller and undefended contact with present moment experience, recognise his or her values, and commit to behaviours that are consistent with those values (Hayes & Strosahl, 2004; Levin & Hayes, 2009).

Outcome evidence

The psychological mindfulness interventions discussed in the present article have been applied to a range of mental and physical health conditions, including anxiety disorders, depression, chronic pain, substance abuse, chronic diseases, and eating disorders (Baer, 2006; Blackledge et al., 2009; Didonna, 2009; Hayes, Follette et al., 2004; McCraken, 2011; Roemer & Orsillo, 2009; Shapiro & Carlson, 2009). Reviews of the outcome literature have generally supported the effectiveness of these interventions for these conditions (e.g. Baer, 2003; Bohlmeijer et al., 2010; Chiesa & Serretti, 2011; Fjorback et al., 2011; Greeson, 2009; Grossman et al., 2004; Hoffman et al., 2010; Keng et al., 2011; Mars & Abbey, 2010; Merkes, 2010;

Pull, 2008; Shennan et al., 2011; for reviews that have not supported mindfulness interventions, see Öst, 2008; Powers et al., 2009; Toneatto & Nguyen, 2007).

A smaller number of studies have examined the impact of these interventions on a variety of non-clinical populations, including health care professionals (e.g. Brinkborg et al., 2011; Shapiro et al., 2005), employees of private and public organisations (e.g. Bond & Bunce, 2000; Davidson et al., 2003; Flaxman & Bond, 2010b), adults from the community (e.g. Farb et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2001), and college students (e.g. Jain et al., 2007; Masuda et al., 2007). Overall, the findings of such outcome studies indicate that MBSR/MBIs and ACT can have beneficial effects on psychological functioning and well-being in healthy adults (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009; Eberth & Sedlmeier, 2012; Flaxman & Bond, 2010a; Irving et al., 2009). For example, considering only the findings from controlled trials with non-clinical populations, MBSR has been reported to have a positive effect on psychological distress, burnout symptoms, relaxation, positive and negative emotions, perceived stress, interpersonal relationships and satisfaction with life (Astin, 1997; Carson et al., 2004; Cohen-Katz et al., 2005; Davidson et al., 2003; Jain et al., 2007; Klatt et al., 2009; Mackenzie et al., 2006; Nyklícek & Kuijpers, 2008; Poulin et al., 2008; Shapiro et al., 2005). Similarly, in controlled intervention studies, ACT has been reported to have a positive effect on psychological distress, burnout symptoms, perceived stress and attitudinal and behavioural changes (Bond & Bunce, 2000; Brinkborg et al., 2011; Flaxman & Bond, 2010b, 2010c; Hayes, Bissett et al., 2004; Luoma, Hayes, Twohig et al., 2007; Masuda et al., 2007; Varra et al., 2008).

Processes of change and treatment components

With accumulating evidence supporting the effectiveness of psychological mindfulness interventions, research attention has turned to the processes or mechanisms whereby these interventions have their effects. With respect to MBSR and other MBIs, proposed mechanisms include self-reported mindfulness, attention regulation, emotional regulation, decentering, reperceiving, positive emotion, and self-compassion (for reviews, see Baer, 2010; Chambers et al., 2009; Hölzel et al., 2011). The evidence from studies that have conducted mediation analyses generally support the role of self-reported mindfulness (Bränström et al., 2010; Carmody & Baer, 2008; Nyklícek & Kuijpers, 2008) and self-compassion (Keng et al., 2012) for the effects of MBSR on relevant outcomes. With respect to ACT, there is evidence to support both the treatment components and the therapeutic processes suggested by the psychological flexibility model (for reviews, see Gaudiano, 2011; Hayes et al., 2011; Levin et al., 2011; Ruiz, 2010).

In summary, evidence from controlled intervention trials indicates that the short-term practice of mindfulness skills (i.e. up to eight weeks) confers a number of benefits for psychological functioning and well-being in both clinical and non-clinical populations. While the evidence is positive, several theoretical and methodological issues have been identified, including the absence of a clear definition and operationalisation of the mindfulness construct, a reliance on self-report measures, and limited research regarding both the precise contribution of different components of multi-component programs to their overall effectiveness and the long-term effects of interventions (Chiesa et al., 2011; Chiesa & Serretti, 2009; Davidson, 2010; Gaudiano, 2011; Hayes et al., 2011; Keng et al., 2011).

Coaching and mindfulness literature

To date, only a handful of scholarly publications have had as their major focus mindfulness and coaching. Although the present article is concerned with recently developed empirically supported interventions, it is noted that mindfulness and related concepts have been utilised in professional coaching from its inception to the present day. For example, in *The Inner Game of Tennis*,

Timothy Gallwey (1974) emphasised the importance of present-moment non-judgemental awareness for personal effectiveness. Similarly, Fernando Flores emphasised the development of self-awareness, or the ability to observe experience in a non-attached way, as a central feature of *Ontological Coaching* (see Flaherty, 2010).

More recently, Passmore and Marianetti (2007) have explored the role of mindfulness in coaching and suggest that practicing mindfulness can assist professional coaches in their preparation for coaching sessions, maintaining focus and emotional detachment during coaching sessions, as well as providing a set of skills that can be taught to coachees for managing stress and developing resilience. Similarly, Chaskalson (2011) suggests that mindfulness is a means by which coaches can extend and enhance their existing coaching skills either directly as a set of techniques and skills that can be incorporated into a coaching programme, or indirectly through the enhancement of non-specific factors that can enhance coaching relationships. Chaskalson (2011) also provides a number of brief examples of how mindfulness can be incorporated into coaching relationships in the workplace. Collard and Walsh (2008) describe a mindfulness-based coaching intervention, sensory awareness mindfulness training (SAMT), which consists of a combination of mindfulness and cognitive therapy skills, and was developed specifically for use in non-therapeutic settings. Moran (2010) has proposed that ACT, which combines mindfulness and behaviour change skills, constitutes an evidence-based framework for executive coaching and describes how it may be particularly helpful in enabling leaders to develop a range of crisis-resiliency and values-directed behavioural change management skills.

A number of books written for professional coaches also address mindfulness to various extents: Blonna (2010) describes how ACT principles and techniques can be used in a general coaching context; Silsbee (2008, 2010) outlines an approach to coaching based on mindfulness principles and techniques; Gardner and Moore (2007) provide a case study describing the application of an ACT-based performance enhancement approach in a workplace developmental context; and Grant and Greene (2004, 2005) incorporate mindful breathing into their solutions-focused coaching model.

To date there is very little empirical research on the use of mindfulness concepts or skills in a coaching context. In an uncontrolled intervention study, Collard and Walsh (2008) report that a group mindfulness training programme reduced levels of self-reported stress in a small sample (N=11) of university employees. Spence et al. (2008) demonstrate that mindfulness training used in conjunction with solutions-focused and behavioural coaching enhanced the attainment of health goals in comparison to health education alone. Finally, Singh and colleagues have developed a mindfulness-based *mentoring* intervention that has been demonstrated to improve aspects of psychiatric team functioning (Singh et al., 2006) and the adoption of different treatment modalities among staff in facilities for individuals with developmental disabilities (Singh et al., 2002).

Applications of mindfulness to coaching psychology

Coach well-being and effectiveness

As previously suggested (Passmore & Marianetti, 2007; Marianetti & Passmore, 2010), engaging in a personal practice of mindfulness may enhance a coach's well-being and effectiveness. Indirect evidence in support of the well-being effects of mindfulness practice comes from studies that have examined the effects of various forms of mindfulness training with experienced and trainee therapists and health care providers. For example, participation in mindfulness training is associated with reduced self-reported stress (Cohen & Miller, 2009; Shapiro et al., 2007), psychological distress (Rosenzweig et al., 2003; Shapiro et al., 1998, 2007) and

burnout (Cohen-Katz et al., 2005) in health care providers and therapists. In addition, it is associated with increased positive emotion (Shapiro et al., 2007), self-compassion (Shapiro et al., 2005, 2007) and quality of life (Bruce et al., 2002).

A second potential benefit for coaches who maintain a personal practice of mindfulness is that it may enhance qualities and skills that are considered important to an effective coaching relationship. In the psychotherapeutic context, it has been suggested that mindfulness training develops skills that can strengthen the therapeutic relationship, such as attention, presence, empathy, self-regulation and compassion (Germer et al., 2005; Falb & Pargament, 2012; Hick & Bien, 2008; Shapiro & Carlson, 2009); these qualities and skills are also relevant to the coaching relationship (O'Broin & Palmer, 2007). Indirect empirical support for this proposition comes from studies with health care providers demonstrating that various mindfulness practices are associated with increased empathy (Shapiro et al., 1998), self-awareness, awareness and acceptance of the client (Christopher et al., 2006), ability to stay focused (Christopher et al., 2006; Schure et al., 2008), emotional intelligence (Cohen & Miller, 2009), and the ability to be attentive and listen deeply to patients' concerns (Beckman et al., 2012).

A third potential benefit for coaches who practice mindfulness may come in the form of enhanced client outcomes, independently of whether mindfulness techniques are taught. For example, in a randomised controlled trial, Grepmair et al. (2007) found that the patients of trainee counsellors who had been taught Zen meditation displayed greater reductions in overall symptoms, and reported a better understanding of their difficulties and possibilities for improvement than clients of non-meditating trainees. However, on the basis of a review of the research literature, Escuriex and Labbé (2011) concluded that the research was inconclusive regarding whether health care providers who either practiced mindfulness or were higher on measures of mindfulness obtained better results with clients than others who did not practice mindfulness or scored lower on measures of mindfulness. The authors concluded that more research is required to determine whether or not the benefits of mindfulness for therapists also provide positive outcomes for their clients.

Coachee outcomes

The evidence from controlled intervention studies with non-clinical populations reviewed previously indicates that adults who are taught mindfulness practices and skills demonstrate improvements in aspects of psychological functioning and well-being, including psychological distress, negative emotions, stress and burnout symptoms, general relaxation, positive emotions, satisfaction with life, and interpersonal functioning (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009; Eberth & Sedlmeier, 2012; Flaxman & Bond, 2010a; Irving et al., 2009). It can be expected that coachees who are taught mindfulness practices and skills will also exhibit these outcomes and the available research supports the use of mindfulness interventions with the types of coaching for which these outcomes are relevant (e.g. life coaching, personal coaching). As controlled intervention studies of the effects of psychological mindfulness interventions have almost exclusively focussed on self-reported psychological distress and well-being measures, there is less evidence currently available for types of coaching that are interested in outcomes (e.g. leadership competencies, organisational effectiveness) that may be relevant to other types of coaching such as executive and leadership coaching. This is an area where collaborative research between coaching psychologists and mindfulness researchers may benefit both areas.

Frameworks, strategies and techniques

A third contribution of mindfulness to coaching is through extending a coach's repertoire of evidence-based strategies,

frameworks and techniques for enhancing psychological well-being and functioning, and facilitating change. The psychological mindfulness interventions discussed in the present article have developed a wide range of techniques, including both formal meditation practices and other techniques that do not utilise formal meditation (for details, see Baer & Huss, 2008; Baer & Krietemeyer, 2006; Hayes et al., 2012; Strosahl et al., 2004). As such, the psychological mindfulness approaches may be seen as a source of theoretically-grounded and evidence-based resources that can contribute to coaching psychology practice (see Grant, 2007; Stober & Grant, 2006).

Specific techniques that may be of relevance to coaching include traditional mindfulness meditation practices such as mindful breathing, the body scan technique, everyday mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 1990), and loving-kindness meditation (Fredrickson et al., 2008), as well as psychological techniques for promoting experiential acceptance, presence, attention, cognitive defusion, and self-compassion (Hayes et al., 2012; Neff, 2011; Shapiro et al., 2006; Williams et al., 2000). These techniques are readily adaptable to a coaching context and can be used to complement coaching strategies across different theoretical modalities. For example, Grant and Greene (2004) use mindful breathing as a specific technique for managing the negative emotions associated with making changes in the context of a solutions-focused coaching model.

While specific mindfulness techniques can be used to complement a coach's existing theoretical model or approach, psychological mindfulness approaches may also serve as distinct theoretical frameworks upon which to base coaching practices. In particular, the ACT model is now sufficiently developed to serve as an independent framework for application to coaching practice (Moran, 2010). Moreover, with its emphasis on values-directed behavioural change management skills, the ACT model appears particularly well-suited for workplace coaching (Hayes, Bunting et al., 2006; Moran, 2010). Although less well elaborated than the ACT model, a version of MBSR called *Mindfulness-Based Mind Fitness Training* (MMFT; Stanley & Schaldach, 2011) may also be a suitable framework for workplace coaching, particularly in the development of resilience in professionals who are exposed to intense and chronic cognitive, emotional and physical demands (Heydenfeldt et al., 2011a; Stanley et al., 2011).

Theoretical developments

A fourth broad area in which the study of mindfulness may make a contribution is to the theoretical base of coaching psychology. Theoretical developments that have emerged from the study of mindfulness that may be relevant to coaching psychology include the neurological aspects of learning (Slagter et al., 2011), processes and mechanisms underlying human change (Baer, 2010; Hayes et al., 2011; Teasdale & Chaskalson, 2011), emotional and self-regulatory processes (Chambers et al., 2009), and performance enhancement (Gardner & Moore, 2007).

Perhaps of greatest relevance to coaching psychology is the emerging view that psychological mindfulness interventions involve processes of change that operate differently from traditional cognitive-behavioural treatments (Barraca, 2012; Brown & Holt, 2011; Hayes et al., 2011; Teasdale & Chaskalson, 2011; but see also Hofmann & Asmundson, 2008). Traditional cognitive-behavioural therapies have developed a large array of methods predicated on the idea that we can and should work at directly reducing or modifying the content of internal experience (thoughts, feelings, sensations, and memories), such as cognitive re-structuring, challenging the validity of dysfunctional thoughts, and substituting more realistic or positive thoughts. By contrast, psychological mindfulness approaches advocate the use of processes such as *decentering*, cognitive defusion, and experiential acceptance, which alter the function of unwanted internal

experience rather than its content (Hayes et al., 2011). These approaches emphasise the importance of greater openness to, and acceptance of, one's own experience as the precondition for sustained positive change (Teasdale & Chaskalson, 2011). This emerging view of human change is having a significant impact in the areas of clinical and health psychology, and is likely to have a similar impact upon coaching psychology in the future.

A second level of theoretical contribution for coaching psychology may emerge at the interface of collaboration between mindfulness research and positive psychology (e.g. Baer & Lykins, 2011; Brown & Holt, 2011; Shapiro, 2009). In its original Buddhist context, mindfulness is part of a broader programme that has as its aims not only the amelioration of human suffering, but also the cultivation of advanced states of well-being, positive emotions and qualities, and psychological functioning (Ricard, 2006; Shapiro, 2009; Styron, 2005; Wallace, 2005). Given its origins in the domains of clinical psychology and behavioural medicine, the contemporary study of mindfulness within Western scientific contexts has focused on mindfulness meditation as a therapeutic means; more recently there have been calls for a greater emphasis on mindfulness as a means of developing positive qualities and enhanced functioning (Shapiro, 2009; Shapiro & Carlson, 2009) and the relationships between positive psychology and mindfulness concepts have begun to be explored (Baer & Lykins, 2011; Shapiro, 2009; Shapiro & Carlson, 2009; Styron, 2005; Wallace & Shapiro, 2006).

There are parallels between the broad aims of mindfulness regarded in this way and the aims of positive psychology coaching in terms of a focus on the development of positive qualities, and optimal states of well-being and psychological functioning (for a discussion of positive psychology and coaching, see Biswas-Diener & Dean, 2007; Grant & Spence, 2010; Linley & Harrington, 2007). Despite this broad shared aim, however, these two approaches differ in terms of the ways optimal well-being and functioning are understood and the means employed to attain these outcomes (discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of the present article; see Baer & Lykins, 2011; Brown & Holt, 2011; Ekman et al., 2005; Wallace & Shapiro, 2006).

While the contemporary study of mindfulness can offer coaching psychology models of advanced human well-being and functioning, as well as a range of practices to assist in its development, mindfulness research within a coaching context may be a means whereby the scope of mindfulness theory and research may be expanded beyond a focus on the amelioration of distress and reduction of symptoms to an exploration of positive qualities, and optimal states of well-being and psychological functioning (Shapiro, 2009; Shapiro & Carlson, 2009).

Towards mindfulness-based coaching

Recommendations for future research

The evidence from controlled intervention trials reviewed in the present article indicates that the short-term practice of mindfulness skills (i.e. up to eight weeks) confers a number of benefits for psychological functioning and well-being in both clinical and non-clinical populations. This research provides a strong theoretical and empirical foundation for the development of intervention strategies within a coaching context. Given the growth of interest in the potential benefits to organisations and their employees of psychological mindfulness interventions (Bond 2004; Bond & Hayes, 2002; Flaxman & Bond, 2006, 2010a; Ciarrochi & Blackledge, 2006; Heydenfeldt et al., 2011b; Williams, 2006; Marianetti & Passmore, 2010), there is significant scope for the development of research at the interface of mindfulness and coaching psycho-logy in organisational settings.

At this early stage a full range of research methodologies may be used, including case studies, qualitative designs, and controlled trials. For progress to be made it is essential

that researchers address the theoretical and methodological issues identified in reviews of the mindfulness outcome literature. For example, specificity regarding how the mindfulness construct is conceptualised and operationalised in each research context is an important consideration for future research studies (Davidson, 2010; Dorjee, 2010). Mindfulness coaching studies could attempt to go beyond measures of psychological dysfunction and distress as outcome measures to include validated measures of well-being, development, and effectiveness. In the case of workplace, leadership and executive coaching, studies could include measures of organisationally-relevant outcomes, such as work performance, interpersonal effectiveness and the development of leadership skills and competencies (for a discussion of outcome measures in coaching, see Grant et al., 2010).

Recommendations for coaching practice

Several issues emerge from a consideration of the research that have implications for the use of mindfulness within a coaching context and for the future development of mindfulness-based coaching in general. The first of these pertains to questions of training and competence in the use of mindfulness and related practices (Crane et al., 2012). It is generally recommended that therapists who wish to use mindfulness techniques and processes maintain a personal practice of mindfulness, and this advice would hold for professional coaches as well. For example, the importance of ongoing mindfulness practice has been emphasised as a requirement for the use of MBSR and other MBIs (Kabat-Zinn, 2011; Segal et al., 2002) because in the absence of ongoing experiential engagement with mindfulness practice an adequate understanding and expression of mindfulness is unlikely to emerge (Grossman & Van Dam, 2011; Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2002). Although a similar requirement for formal mindfulness meditation practice has not been advocated for the use of ACT, it is recommended that ACT principles be incorporated into the practitioner's own life (Hayes & Strosahl, 2004) and that the practitioner be thoroughly familiar with all the skills in the ACT treatment protocol (see Luoma, Hayes & Walser, 2007).

Mindfulness psychological approaches also typically require the client to engage in at-home activities to support in-session training. For MBSR this involves 45 minutes at-home meditation practice daily during the course of the eight-week programme (Kabat-Zinn, 1990) and this may limit the applicability of MBSR and other MBIs to the coaching context for many clients, for whom overt activity is valued (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). For ACT there is an expectation that the client undertake a range of exercises and behavioural activities between sessions and this may be more in keeping with standard psychological approaches to coaching.

Whereas ACT was developed as an individual therapy, MBSR and its variants have been designed and evaluated as group-level interventions, and there is little guidance on how these programmes may be best used at the individual level (but see Wahbeh et al., 2012). This issue is further complicated by the lack of clear evidence regarding the relative effectiveness of different components in multi-component programmes (Keng et al., 2011) and the possibility that at least some of the beneficial effects of mindfulness intervention programmes are due to factors related to participating in a group format (Dimidjian & Linehan, 2003). It cannot be assumed that the use of certain mindfulness techniques and strategies in the one-to-one format will result in the same benefits that have been observed in evaluations of group-format interventions. It should be noted, however, that the ACT approach having been developed as an individual therapeutic approach provides considerable guidance for use in a one-to-one format (e.g. Hayes et al., 2012).

As indicated previously, there are now a range of mindfulness approaches available, including traditional forms of mindfulness meditation, MBSR and other MBIs, and

other psychological interventions that incorporate mindfulness and related techniques. These vary in terms of how mindfulness is understood and practiced, and in terms of demonstrated outcomes and putative underlying mechanisms (Baer & Krietemeyer, 2006; Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011). Moreover, mindfulness is not itself a unitary procedure and the practice of mindfulness involves a number of component activities, the specific effects of which are not clearly understood in the scientific literature (Dimidjian & Linehan, 2003; Dorjee, 2010). It is important for the future progress of mindfulness-based coaching that the distinctions between mindfulness approaches, concepts, practices and techniques be maintained (Dorjee, 2010), particularly when disseminating information about the effects of mindfulness in a coaching context.

Integration of mindfulness into coaching practice

To the extent that a mindfulness approach is seen as potentially fruitful for coaching, how might mindfulness be integrated into coaching? Writing on the relationship between psychotherapy and mindfulness, Germer et al. (2005) proposed three main pathways through which mindfulness might be integrated into therapeutic practice. This framework may also be applied to describe how mindfulness may be integrated into the practice of coaching. The first way in which mindfulness may be integrated into coaching practice, termed here the *mindful* coach, is through the enhanced interpersonal qualities, such as presence, attentiveness and openness, that a coach who practices mindfulness can bring to the coaching session, irrespective of the theoretical coaching model used. In the second pathway, *mindfulness-informed coaching*, a coach may use concepts and ideas informed by his or her own mindfulness practice and knowledge of Buddhist psychology and mindfulness research, even though mindfulness practices are not explicitly taught. For example, concepts suggested by Shapiro and Carlson (2009) as being relevant for the therapeutic context, such as impermanence and change, conscious responding as opposed to automatic reacting and acceptance, also readily lend themselves to the issues coaching clients may be addressing. Moreover, such concepts are not unfamiliar in the broader management literature (e.g. Borden & Shekhawat, 2010; Gyatso & Muyzenberg, 2008; Senge et al., 2007) and these may be a helpful resource for integrating mindfulness into workplace and executive coaching. The final pathway, *mindfulness-based coaching*, involves explicitly teaching formal and informal mindfulness skills as the central processes for facilitating learning and change. As the evidence reviewed in the present paper demonstrates, there is now a large and growing literature on specific mindfulness exercises and multicomponent intervention programmes for coaches to draw upon, as well as many avenues for training in these approaches.

Concluding comments

The present paper has reviewed evidence from studies of psychological mindfulness interventions to suggest a number of contributions to, and emerging applications of, mindfulness for coaching psychology. In summary, the contemporary study of psychological mindfulness interventions provides a repertoire of theoretically and empirically grounded techniques and practices for assisting coaches and their clients to better manage difficult emotional and cognitive experience, enhance well-being and improve psychological functioning. Beyond its use as a stress-reduction method, mindfulness may also provide new ways of understanding and facilitating personal change, well-being and optimal psychological functioning. In addition, the study of mindfulness within a coaching context may be a means whereby the paradigm of mindfulness research is expanded to include positive psychological functioning. It is hoped that the ideas contained in the present paper can stimulate research at the interface of mindfulness and coaching psychology and contribute to the

development of an evidence-based and theoretically-grounded mindfulness-based approach to coaching.

Acknowledgements

This paper was completed in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctorate in Psychology (Organisational) at the University of South Australia.

The author would like to thank Dr A.J. McDowell and Ms J.K. Slack for helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper.

Correspondence

Mario Virgili

Private Practice,
PO Box 189,
Prospect 5082,
Adelaide, Australia.
E-mail: mmvirgili@gmail.com

References

Astin, J.A. (1997). Stress reduction through mindfulness meditation. Effects on psychological symptomatology, sense of control, and spiritual experiences. *Psychotherapy & Psychosomatics, 66*, 97–106.

Baer, R.A. (2003). Mindfulness training as clinical intervention: A conceptual and empirical review. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 10*, 125–143.

Baer, R.A. (Ed.) (2006). *Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications*. London: Academic Press.

Baer, R.A. (2011). Measuring mindfulness. *Contemporary Buddhism, 12*(1), 241–261.

Baer, R.A. (Ed.) (2010). *Assessing mindfulness and acceptance processes in clients: Illuminating the theory and practice of change*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Baer, R.A. & Huss, D.B. (2008). Mindfulness- and acceptance-based therapies. In J.L. Lebow (Ed.), *Twenty-first century psychotherapies: Contemporary approaches to theory and practice* (pp.123–166). Chichester: Wiley.

Baer, R.A. & Krietemeyer, J. (2006). Overview of mindfulness- and acceptance-based treatment approaches. In R.A. Baer (Ed.), *Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications* (pp.3–27). London: Academic Press.

Baer, R.A. & Lykins, E.L.B. (2011). Mindfulness and positive psychological functioning. In K.M. Sheldon, T.B. Kashdan & M.F. Steger (Eds., *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward* (pp.335–348). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baer, R.A., Smith, G.T., Hopkins, J., Krietemeyer, J. & Toney, L. (2006). Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. *Assessment, 13*, 27–45.

Baer, R.A., Walsh, E. & Lykins, E.L.B. (2009). Assessment of mindfulness. In F. Didonna (Ed.) *Clinical handbook of mindfulness* (pp.153–168). New York: Springer.

Barraca, J. (2012). Mental control from a third-wave behavior therapy perspective. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology, 12*(1), 109–121.

Beckman, H.B., Wendland, M., Mooney, C., Krasner, M.S., Quill, T.E., Suchman, A.L. et al. (2012). The impact of a programme in mindful communication on primary care physicians. *Academic Medicine, 87*(6), 815–819.

Bishop, S.R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L., Anderson, N.D., Carmody, J.F. et al. (2004). Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 11*, 230–241.

Biswas-Diener, R. & Dean, B. (2007). *Positive psychology coaching: Putting the science of happiness to work for your clients*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Blackledge, J.T., Ciarrochi, J.V. & Deane, F.P. (Eds.) (2009). *Acceptance and commitment therapy: contemporary theory research and practice*. Queensland, Australia: Australian Academic Press.

Blonna, R. (2010). *Maximise your coaching effectiveness with acceptance and commitment therapy*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Bodhi, B. (2011). What does mindfulness really mean? A canonical perspective. *Contemporary Buddhism, 12*(1), 19–39.

Bohlmeijer, E., Prenger, R., Taal, E. & Cuijpers, P. (2010). The effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy on mental health of adults with a chronic medical disease: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 68*, 539–544.

Bond, F.W. & Bunce, D. (2000). Mediators of change in emotion-focused and problem-focused worksite stress management interventions. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5*(1), 156–163.

Bond, F.W. (2004). ACT for stress. In S.C. Hayes & K.D. Strosahl (Eds.), *A practical guide to acceptance and commitment therapy* (pp.275–293). New York: Springer.

Bond, F.W. & Hayes, S.C. (2002). ACT at work. In F. Bond & W. Dryden (Eds.) *Handbook of brief cognitive behaviour therapy* (pp.117–140). Chichester: Wiley.

Borden, M.E. & Shekhawat, P.S. (2010). Buddhist practice and principles and their place in organisations. In S.S. Nandram & M.E. Borden (Eds.), *Spirituality in business* (pp.141–152). Berlin: Springer-Verlag.

Bränström, R., Kvillemo, P., Brandberg, Y. & Moskowitz, J.T. (2010). Self-report mindfulness as a mediator of psychological well-being in a stress reduction intervention for cancer patients: A randomised study. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine, 39*, 151–161.

Brinkborg, H., Michanek, J., Hesser, H. & Berglund, G. (2011). Acceptance and commitment therapy for the treatment of stress among social workers: A randomised controlled trial. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 49*, 389–398.

Brown, K.W. & Holt, M. (2011). Experiential processing and the integration of bright and dark sides of the human psyche. In K.M. Sheldon, T.B. Kashdan & M.F. Steger (Eds.), *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward* (pp.147–159). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brown, K.W. & Ryan, R.M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 822–848.

Brown, K.W., Ryan, R.M. & Creswell, D.J. (2007). Mindfulness: Theoretical foundations and evidence for its salutary effects. *Psychological Inquiry, 18*(4), 211–237.

Bruce, A., Young, L., Turner, L., Vander Wal, R. & Linden, W. (2002). Meditation-based stress reduction: Holistic practice in nursing education. In L.E. Young & V.E. Hayes (Eds.), *Transforming health promotion practice: Concepts, issues, and applications* (pp.241–252). Victoria, British Columbia: Davis.

Cahn, R. & Polich, J. (2006). Meditation states and traits: EEG, ERP, and neuroimaging studies. *Psychological Bulletin, 132*, 180–211.

Carmody, J. & Baer, R.A. (2008). Relationships between mindfulness practice and levels of mindfulness, medical and psychological symptoms and well-being in a mindfulness-based stress reduction programme. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 31*, 23–33.

Carson, J.W., Carson, K.M., Gil, K.M. & Baucom, D.H. (2004). Mindfulness-based relationship enhancement. *Behavior Therapy, 35*, 471–494.

Cavanagh, M.J. & Grant, A.M. (2006). Coaching psychology and the scientist-practitioner model. In S. Corrie & D. Lane (Eds.), *The modern scientist practitioner* (pp.146–157). New York: Routledge.

Chambers, R., Gullone, E. & Allen, N.B. (2009). Mindful emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Clinical Psychology Review, 29*, 560–572.

Chaskalson, M. (2011). *The mindful workplace: Developing resilient individuals and resonant organisations with MBSR*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Chiesa, A., Calati, R. & Serretti, A. (2011). Does mindfulness training improve cognitive abilities? A systematic review of neuropsychological findings. *Clinical Psychology Review, 31*(8), 449–464.

Chiesa, A. & Malinowski, P. (2011). Mindfulness-based approaches: Are they all the same? *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 67*(4), 404–424.

Chiesa, A. & Serretti, A. (2009). Mindfulness-based stress reduction for stress management in healthy people: A review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, 15*(5), 593–600.

Chiesa, A. & Serretti, A. (2011). Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for psychiatric disorders: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychiatry Research, 187*, 441–453.

Crane, R.S., Kuyken, W., Williams, J.M.G., Hastings, R.P., Cooper, L. & Fennell, M.J.V. (2012). Competence in teaching mindfulness-based courses: Concepts, development and assessment. *Mindfulness, 3*, 76–84.

Christopher, J.C., Christopher, S.E., Dunnagan, T. & Schure, M. (2006). Teaching self-care through mindfulness practices: The application of yoga, meditation, and qigong to counselor training. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 46*(4), 494–509.

Ciarrochi, J. & Blackledge, J.T. (2006). Mindfulness-based emotional intelligence training: A new approach to reducing human suffering and promoting effectiveness. In J. Ciarrochi, J.P. Forgas & J.D. Mayer (Eds.), *Emotional intelligence in everyday life* (2nd ed., pp.206–228). New York: Psychology Press.

Cohen, J.S. & Miller, L.J. (2009). Interpersonal mindfulness training for well-being: A pilot study with psychology graduate students. *Teachers College Record, 111*(12), 2760–2774.

Cohen-Katz, J., Wiley, S.D., Capuano, T., Baker, D.M. & Shapiro, S. (2005). The effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction on nurse stress and burnout, part II: A quantitative and qualitative study. *Holistic Nursing Practice, 19*, 26–35.

Collard, P. & Walsh, J. (2008). Sensory awareness mindfulness training in coaching: Accepting life's challenges. *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive-Behavior Therapy, 26*, 30–37.

Crane, R.S., Kuyken, W., Williams, J.M.G., Hastings, R.P., Cooper, L. & Fennell, M.J.V. (2012). Competence in teaching mindfulness-based courses: Concepts, development and assessment. *Mindfulness, 3*(1), 76–84.

Davidson, R.J. (2010). Empirical explorations of mindfulness: Conceptual and methodological conundrums. *Emotion, 10*(1), 8–11.

Davidson, R.J., Kabat-Zinn, J., Schumacher, J., Rosenkranz, M., Muller, D., Santorelli, S.F. et al. (2003). Alterations in brain and immune function produced by mindfulness meditation. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 65*, 564–570.

Didonna, F. (Ed.) (2009). *Clinical handbook of mindfulness*. New York: Springer.

Dimidjian, S. & Linehan, M. (2003). Defining an agenda for future research on the clinical application of mindfulness practice. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 10*(2), 166–171.

Dreyfus, G. (2011). Is mindfulness present-centred and non-judgemental? A discussion of the cognitive dimensions of mindfulness. *Contemporary Buddhism, 12*(1), 41–54.

Dorjee, D. (2010). Kinds and dimensions of mindfulness: Why it is important to distinguish them. *Mindfulness, 1*(3), 152–160.

Eberth, J. & Sedlmeier, P. (2012). The effects of mindfulness meditation: A meta-analysis. *Mindfulness, 3*, 174–189.

Ekman, P., Davidson, R.J., Ricard, M. & Wallace, B.A. (2005). Buddhist and psychological perspectives on emotions and well-being. *Current Directions in Psychological Practice, 14*(2), 59–63.

Escuriex, B.F. & Labbé, E.E. (2011). Health care providers' mindfulness and treatment outcomes: A critical review of the research literature. *Mindfulness, 2*, 242–253.

Falb, M.D. & Pargament, K.I. (2012). Relational mindfulness, spirituality, and the therapeutic bond. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry, 5*, 351–354.

Farb, N., Segal, Z.V., Mayberg, H., Bean, J., McKeon, D., Fatima, Z. et al. (2007). Attending to the present: Mindfulness meditation reveals distinct neural modes of self-reference. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, 2*, 313–322.

Fjorback, L.O., Arendt, M., Ørnbøl, E., Fink, P. & Walach, H. (2011). Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy – a systematic review of randomised controlled trials. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 124*(2), 102–119.

Flaherty, J. (2010). *Coaching: Evoking excellence in others* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Flaxman, P.E. & Bond, F.W. (2006). Acceptance and commitment therapy in the workplace. In R.A. Baer (Ed.), *Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications* (pp.377–402). San Diego, CA: Elsevier.

Flaxman, P.E. & Bond, F.W. (2010a). Acceptance and commitment training: Promoting psychological flexibility in the workplace. In R.A. Baer, (Ed.), *Assessing mindfulness and acceptance processes in clients: Illuminating the theory & practice of change* (pp.281–306). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Flaxman, P.E. & Bond, F.W. (2010b). A randomised worksite comparison of acceptance commitment therapy and stress inoculation training. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 48*(8), 816–820.

Flaxman, P.E. & Bond, F.W. (2010c). Worksite stress management training: Moderated effects and clinical significance. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 15*, 347–358.

Fletcher, L. & Hayes, S.C. (2005). Relational frame theory, acceptance and commitment therapy, and a functional analytic definition of mindfulness. *Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, 23*(4), 315–336.

Forsyth, J. & Eifert, G. (2007). *The mindfulness and acceptance workbook for anxiety: A guide to breaking free from anxiety, phobias, and worry using acceptance and commitment therapy*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Fredrickson, B.L., Cohn, M.A., Coffey, K., Pek, J. & Finkel, S.M. (2008). Open hearts build lives: Positive emotions, induced through meditation, build consequential personal resources. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95*, 1045–1062.

Gallwey, T. (1974). *The inner game of tennis*. New York: Random House.

Gardner, F.L. & Moore, Z.E. (2007). *The psychology of enhancing human performance: The mindfulness-acceptance-commitment (MAC) approach*. New York: Springer.

Gaudiano, B.A. (2011). A review of acceptance and commitment therapy and recommenda-tions for continued scientific advancement. *The Scientific Review of Mental Health Practice, 8*(2), 5–22.

Germer, C.K., Siegel, R.D. & Fulton, P.R. (Eds.) (2005). *Mindfulness and psychotherapy*. New York: Guilford Press.

Gethin, R. (2011). On some definitions of mindfulness. *Contemporary Buddhism, 12*(1), 263–279.

Grant, A.M. (2007). Past, present and future: The evolution of professional coaching and coaching psychology. In S. Palmer & A. Whybrow (Eds.), *Handbook of coaching psychology: A guide for practitioners* (pp.23–39). Hove, East Sussex: Routledge.

Grant, A.M., Cavanagh, M.J., Parker, H.M. & Passmore, J. (2010). The state of play in coaching today: A comprehensive review of the field. In G.P. Hodgkinson & J.K. Ford (Eds.), *International review of industrial and organisational psychology* (pp.125–167). Chichester: Wiley.

Grant, A.M. & Greene, J. (2004). *Coach yourself*. Edinburgh Gate, London: Pearson Education.

Grant, A.M. & Greene, J. (2005). *Coach yourself @ work.* Sydney, NSW: ABC Books.

Grant, A.M. & Spence, G.B. (2010). Using coaching and positive psychology to promote a flourishing workforce: A model of goal-striving and mental health. In P.A. Linley, S. Harrington & N. Garcea (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology and work* (pp.175–188). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Greeson, J.M. (2009). Mindfulness research update: 2008. *Complementary Health Practice Review, 14*, 10–18.

Grepmair, L., Mitterlehner, F., Loew, T., Bachler, E., Rother, W. & Nickel, M. (2007). Promoting mindfulness in psychotherapists in training influences the treatment results of their patients: A randomised, double-blind, controlled study. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, 76*, 332–338.

Grossman, P. (2008). On measuring mindfulness psychosomatic and psychological research. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 64*, 405–408.

Grossman, P. (2010). Mindfulness for psychologists: Paying kind attention to the perceptible. *Mindfulness, 1*, 87–97.

Grossman, P. (2011). Defining mindfulness by how poorly I think I pay attention during everyday awareness and other intractable problems for psychology's (re)invention of mindfulness: Comment on Brown et al. (2011). *Psychological Assessment, 23*(4), 1034–1040.

Grossman, P., Niemann, L., Schmidt, S. & Walach, H. (2004). Mindfulness-based stress reduction and health benefits: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 57*(1), 35–43.

Grossman, P. & Van Dam, N.T. (2011). Mindfulness, by any other name…: Trials and tribulations of sati in Western psychology and science. *Contemporary Buddhism, 12*(1), 219–239.

Gyatso, T. & Muyzenberg, L. (2008). *The leader's way.* Sydney, Australia: Nicholas Brealey Publishing Ltd.

Hayes, S.C., Barnes-Holmes, D. & Roche, B. (2001). *Relational frame theory: A post-Skinnerian account of human language and cognition.* New York: Kluwer.

Hayes, S.C., Bissett, R., Roget, N., Padilla, M., Kohlenberg, B.S., Fisher, U. et al. (2004). The impact of acceptance and commitment training and multicultural training on the stigmatising attitudes and professional burnout of substance abuse counselors. *Behavior Therapy, 35*, 821–835.

Hayes, S.C., Bunting, K., Herbst, S., Bond, F.W. & Barnes-Holmes, D. (2006). Expanding the scope of organisational behavior management: Relational Frame Theory and the experimental analysis of complex human behavior. *Journal of Organisational Behavior Management, 26*(1/2), 1–23.

Hayes, S.C., Follette, V.M. & Linehan, M.M. (Eds.) (2004). *Mindfulness and acceptance: Expanding the cognitive-behavioral tradition.* New York: Guilford Press.

Hayes, S.C., Luoma, J.B., Bond, F.W., Masuda, A. & Lillis, J. (2006). Acceptance and commitment therapy: Model, processes and outcomes. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 44*(1), 1–25.

Hayes, S.C. & Strosahl, K.D. (Eds.) (2004). *A practical guide to acceptance and commitment therapy.* New York: Springer.

Hayes, S.C., Strosahl, K. & Wilson, K.G. (1999). *Acceptance and commitment therapy: An experiential approach to behavior change.* New York: Guilford Press.

Hayes, S.C, Strosahl, K.D. & Wilson, K.G. (2012). *Acceptance and commitment therapy: The process and practice of mindful change* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Hayes, S.C., Villatte, M., Levin, M. & Hildebrandt, M. (2011). Open, aware, and active: Contextual approaches as an emerging trend in the behavioral and cognitive therapies. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 7*, 141–168.

Heydenfeldt, J.A., Herkenhoff, L. & Coe, M. (2011a). Cultivating mind fitness through mindfulness training: Applied neuroscience. *Performance Improvement, 50*(10), 21–27.

Heydenfeldt, J.A., Herkenhoff, L. & Coe, M. (2011b). Mind fitness training: Emerging practices and business applications, applied neuroscience. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 1*(14), 150–158.

Hick, L. & Bien, T. (2008). *Mindfulness and the therapeutic relationship.* New York: Guilford Press.

Hofmann, S.G. & Asmundson, G.J. (2008). Acceptance and mindfulness-based therapy: New wave or old hat? *Clinical Psychology Review, 28*, 1–16.

Hofmann, S.G., Sawyer, A.T., Witt, A.A. & Oh, D. (2010). The effect of mindfulness-based therapy on anxiety and depression: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 78*, 169–183.

Hölzel, B.K., Lazar, S.W., Gard, T., Schuman-Olivier, Z., Vago, D.R. & Ott, U. (2011). How does mindfulness meditation work? Proposing mechanisms of action from a conceptual and neural perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6*(6), 537–559.

Irving, J.A., Dobkin, P.L. & Park, J. (2009). Cultivating mindfulness in health care professionals: A review of empirical studies of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice, 15*(2), 61–66.

Jain, S., Shapiro, S.L., Swanick, S., Roesch, S.C., Mills, P.J., Bell, I. et al. (2007). A randomised controlled trial of mindfulness meditation versus relaxation training: Effects on distress, positive states of mind, rumination, and distraction. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine, 33*, 11–21.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full catastrophe living: Using the wisdom of your body and mind to face stress, pain and illness*. New York: Delacourt.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 10*, 144–156.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2005). *Coming to our senses*. New York: Hyperion.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2011). Some reflections on the origins of MBSR, skillful means, and the trouble with maps. *Contemporary Buddhism, 12*(1), 281–306.

Kang, C. & Whittingham, K. (2010). Mindfulness: A dialogue between Buddhism and clinical psychology. *Mindfulness, 1*, 161–173.

Keng, S.-L., Smoski, M.J. & Robins, C.L. (2011). Effects of mindfulness on psychological health: A review of empirical studies. *Clinical Psychology Review, 31*, 1041–1056.

Keng, S.-L., Smoski, M.J., Robins, C.J., Ekblad, A.G. & Brantley, J.G. (2012). Mechanisms of change in mindfulness-based stress reduction: Self-compassion and mindfulness as mediators of intervention outcomes. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly, 26*(3), 270–280.

Klatt, M.D., Buckworth, J. & Malarkey, W.B. (2009). Effects of a low-dose mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR-ld) on working adults. *Health Education & Behavior, 36*(3), 601–614.

Koerner, K. (2012). *Doing dialectical behavior therapy: A practical guide*. New York: Guilford Press.

Langer, E.J. (1989). *Mindfulness*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

Langer, E.J. (2009). Mindfulness versus positive evaluations. In S.J. Lopez & C.R. Synder (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed., pp.279–293). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Levin, M. & Hayes, S.C. (2009). ACT, RFT, and contextual behavioral science. In J.T. Blackledge, J.V. Ciarrochi & F.P. Deane (Eds.), *Acceptance and commitment therapy: Contemporary theory research and practice* (pp.1–40). Queensland, Australia: Australian Academic Press.

Levin, M.E., Hildebrandt, M.J., Lillis, J. & Hayes, S.C. (2011). The impact of treatment components suggested by the psychological flexibility model: A meta-analysis of laboratory-based component studies. *Behavior Therapy, 43*(4), 741-756.

Linley, P.A. & Harrington, S. (2007). Integrating positive psychology and coaching psychology: Shared assumptions and aspirations. In S. Palmer & A. Whybrow (Eds.), *Handbook of coaching psychology: A guide for practitioners* (pp.40–56). Hove, East Sussex: Routledge.

Luoma, J.B., Hayes, S.C., Twohig, M.P., Roget, N., Fisher, G., Padilla et al. (2007). Augmenting continuing education with psychologically focused group consultation: Effects on adoption of group drug counseling. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 44*(4), 463–469.

Luoma, J.B., Hayes, S.C. & Walser, R.D. (2007). *Learning ACT*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Mackenzie, C.S., Poulin, P.A. & Seidman-Carlson, R. (2006). A brief mindfulness-based stress reduction intervention for nurses and nurse aides. *Applied Nursing Research, 19*, 105–109.

Marianetti, O. & Passmore, J. (2010). Mindfulness at work: Paying attention to enhance well-being and performance. In P.A. Linley, S. Harrington & N. Garcea (Eds.) *Oxford handbook of positive psychology and work* (pp.189–200). Oxford University Press.

Mars, T.S. & Abbey, H. (2010). Mindfulness meditation practice as a healthcare intervention: A systematic review. *International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine, 13*(2), 56–66.

Masuda, A., Hayes, S.C., Fletcher, L.B., Seignourel, P.J., Bunting, K., Herbst, S.A. et al. (2007). The impact of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy versus education on stigma toward people with psychological disorders. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 45*(11), 2764–2772.

McCraken, L.M. (Ed.) (2011). *Mindfulness & acceptance in behavioral medicine: Current theory and practice*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Merkes, M. (2010). Mindfulness-based stress reduction for people with chronic diseases. *Australian Journal of Primary Health, 16*, 200–210.

Mikulas, W.L. (2011). Mindfulness: Significant common confusions. *Contemporary Buddhism, 12*(1), 1–7.

Moran, D.J. (2010). ACT for leadership: Using acceptance and commitment training to develop crisis-resilient change managers. *International Journal of Behavioral Consultation and Therapy, 6*(4), 341–355.

Neff, K. (2011). *Self-compassion: Stop beating yourself up and leave insecurity behind*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Nyanaponika Thera (1962). *The heart of Buddhist meditation: A handbook of mental training based on the Buddha's way of mindfulness*. London: Rider & Company.

Nyklícek, I. & Kuijpers, K. (2008). Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction intervention on psychological well-being and quality of life: Is increased mindfulness indeed the mechanism? *Annals of Behavioral Medicine, 35*, 331–340.

O'Broin, A. & Palmer, S. (2007). Reappraising the coach-client relationship: The unassuming change agent in coaching. In S. Palmer & A. Whybrow (Eds.) *Handbook of coaching psychology: A guide for practitioners* (pp.295–324). London: Routledge.

Öst, L.G. (2008). Efficacy of the third wave of behavioral therapies: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 46*, 296–321.

Palmer, S. & Whybrow, A. (Eds.) (2007). *Handbook of coaching psychology: A guide for practitioners.* Hove, East Sussex: Routledge.

Passmore, J. & Marianetti, O. (2007). The role of mindfulness in coaching. *The Coaching Psychologist, 3*(3), 130–136.

Poulin, P.A., Mackenzie, C.S., Soloway, G. & Karayolas, E. (2008). Mindfulness training as an evidence-based approach to reducing stress and promoting well-being among human service professionals. *International Journal of Health Promotion & Education, 46*, 35–43.

Powers, M.B., Zum Vörde Sive Vörding, M.B. & Emmelkamp, P.M.G. (2009). Acceptance and commitment therapy: A meta-analytic review. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, 78,* 73–80.

Pull, C.B. (2008). Current empirical status of acceptance and commitment therapy. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry, 22*, 55–60.

Rapgay, L. & Bystrisky, A. (2009). Classical mindfulness: An introduction to its theory and practice for clinical application. *Annals of the New York Academy of Science, 1172*, 148–162.

Ricard, M. (2006). *The art of happiness.* London: Atlantic Books.

Roemer, L. & Orsillo, S.M. (Eds.) (2009). *Mindfulness- and acceptance-based behavioral therapies in practice.* New York: Guilford Press.

Rosenzweig, S., Reibel, D.K., Greeson, J.M., Brainard, G.C. & Hojat, M. (2003). Mindfulness-based stress reduction lowers psychological distress in medical students. *Teaching and Learning in Medicine, 15*, 88–92.

Ruiz, F.J. (2010). A review of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy empirical evidence: Correlational, experimental psychopathology, component and outcome studies. International *Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy, 10,* 125–162.

Schure, M.B., Christopher, J. & Christopher, S. (2008). Mind-body medicine and the art of self-care: Teaching mindfulness to counseling students through yoga, meditation, and qigong. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 86*, 47–56.

Segal, Z.V., Williams, M.G. & Teasdale, J.D. (2002). *Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression: A new approach to preventing relapse.* New York: Guilford Press.

Senge, P., Scharmer, C.O., Jaworski, J. & Flowers, B.S. (2005). *Presence: Exploring profound change in people, organisations and society.* London: Nicholas Brealey.

Shapiro, S.L. (2009). Meditation and positive psychology. In S.J. Lopez & C.R. Synder (Eds.) *The Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed., pp.601–610). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shapiro, S.L., Astin, J.A., Bishop, S.R. & Cordova, M. (2005). Mindfulness-based stress reduction for health care professionals: Results from a randomised trial. *International Journal of Stress Management, 12*, 164–176.

Shapiro, S.L., Brown, K.W. & Biegel, G.M. (2007). Teaching self-care to caregivers: Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction on the mental health of therapists in training. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 1*(2), 105–115.

Shapiro, S.L. & Carlson, L.E. (2009). *The art and science of mindfulness: Integrating mindfulness into psychology and the helping professions.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Shapiro, S.L., Carlson, L.E., Astin, J.A. & Freedman, B. (2006). Mechanisms of mindfulness. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 62*, 373–386.

Shapiro, S.L., Schwartz, G.E. & Bonner, G. (1998). Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction on medical and premedical students. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 21*, 581–599.

Shennan, C., Payne, S. & Fenlon, D. (2011). What is the evidence for the use of mindfulness-based interventions in cancer care? A review. *Psycho-Oncology, 20*, 681–697.

Silsbee, D.K. (2008). *Presence-based coaching: Cultivating self-generative leaders through mind, body, and heart.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Silsbee, D. (2010). *The mindful coach: Seven roles for facilitating leadership development.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Singh, N.N., Singh, S.D., Sabaawi, M., Myers, R.E. & Wahler, R.G. (2006). Enhancing treatment team process through mindfulness-based mentoring in an inpatient psychiatric hospital. *Behavior Modification, 30*(4), 423–441.

Singh, N.N., Wahler, R.G., Sabaawi, M., Goza, A.B., Singh, S.D., Molina, E.J. et al. (2002). Mentoring treatment teams to integrate behavioral and psychopharmacological treatments in developmental disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 23*, 379–389.

Slagter, H.A., Davidson, R.J. & Lutz, A. (2011). Mental training as a tool in the neuroscientific study of brain and cognitive plasticity. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, 5*, 1–12.

Spence, G.B., Cavanagh, M.J. & Grant, A.M. (2008). The integration of mindfulness training and health coaching: An exploratory study. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, 1*(2), 1–19.

Stanley, E.A. & Schaldach, J.M. (2011). *Mindfulness-based Mind Fitness Training (MMFT)*®. Mind Fitness Training Institute. Retrieved 11 August 2011 from: www.mind-fitness-training.org/MMFTOverviewNarrative.pdf

Stanley, E.A., Schaldach, J.M., Kiyonaga, A. & Jha, A.P. (2011). Mindfulness-based mind fitness training: A case study of a high-stress pre-deployment military cohort. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 18*(4), 566–576.

Stober, D.R. & Grant, A.M. (2006). *Evidence based coaching: Putting best practices to work for your clients.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Strosahl, K., Hayes, S.C., Wilson, K.G. & Gifford, E.V. (2004). An ACT primer: Core therapy processes, intervention strategies, and therapist competencies. In S.C. Hayes & K. Strosahl (Eds., *A practical guide to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy* (pp.31–58). New York: Springer.

Styron, C.W. (2005). Positive psychology: Awakening to the fullness of life. In C.K. Germer, R.D. Siegel & P.R. Fulton (Eds.), *Mindfulness and psychotherapy* (pp.262–282). New York: Guilford Press.

Teasdale, J.D. & Chaskalson, M. (Kulananda) (2011). How does mindfulness transform suffering? II: The transformation of dukkha. *Contemporary Buddhism, 12*(1), 103–124.

Teasdale, J.D., Segal, Z.V. & Williams, J.M.G. (2003). Mindfulness training and problem formulation. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 10*, 157–160.

Toneatto, T. & Nguyen, L. (2007). Does mindfulness meditation improve anxiety and mood symptoms? A review of the controlled research. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 52*, 260–266.

Treadway, M.T. & Lazar, S.W. (2010). Meditation and neuroplasticity: Using mindfulness to change the brain. In R.A. Baer, (Ed.), *Assessing mindfulness and acceptance processes in clients: Illuminating the theory and practice of change* (pp.185–205). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Varra, A. A., Hayes, S.C., Roget, N. & Fisher, G. (2008). A randomised control trial examining the effect of acceptance and commitment training on clinician willingness to use evidence-based pharmacotherapy. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 76,* 449–458.

Wahbeh, H., Lane, J.B., Goodrich, E., Miller, M. & Oken, B.S. (2012). One-on-one mindfulness meditation trainings in a research setting. *Mindfulness.* Advance online publication. doi: 10.1007/s12671-012-0155-9

Wallace, B.A. (2005). *Genuine happiness: Meditation as the path to fulfillment.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Wallace, A.A. & Shapiro, S.L. (2006). Mental balance and well-being: Building bridges between Buddhism and Western psychology. *American Psychologist, 61*(7), 690–701.

Williams, J.M.G. & Kabat-Zinn, J. (2011). Mindfulness: Diverse perspectives on its meaning, origins, and multiple applications at the intersection of science and dharma. *Contemporary Buddhism, 12*, 1–18.

Williams, J.M.G., Teasdale, J., Segal, Z. & Kabat-Zinn, J. (2000). *The mindful way through depression: Freeing yourself from chronic unhappiness.* New York: Guilford Press.

Williams, K.A. (2006). Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) in a worksite wellness programme. In R.A. Baer, (Ed.), *Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications* (pp.361–376). San Diego, CA: Elsevier.

Williams, K.A., Kolar, M.M., Reger, B.E. & Pearson, J.C. (2001). Evaluation of a wellness-based mindfulness stress reduction intervention: A controlled trial. *American Journal of Health Promotion, 15*, 422–432.

Paper

At the intersection of performance: Personality and adult development in coaching

Ingo Susing & Michael J Cavanagh

Developmental coaching is increasingly recognised as an important and distinct approach in coaching as it aims to help the coaching client successfully master challenges arising out of the developmental process (Bachkirova, Cox, & Clutterbuck, 2010). Within personality theory – one of the most influential areas of psychology – the Five-Factor Model (FFM or 'Big Five', Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1990) is one of the most widely used and has been researched extensively, including with respect to work-based performance. This paper examines the established research literature to ascertain the impact of personality on adult development in the context of adult development theory, developmental coaching and work-based performance. In particular, it addresses the question to what extent, if at all, personality impacts adult development and whether interventions that address personality and performance can also be helpful and relevant to the developmental coaching process. Major findings suggest that personality changes over time, is heavily influenced by both genetic influences and environmental factors, and is strongly linked to work-based performance. Implications of findings for coaching practice suggest that developmental coaching needs to consider both developmental stage as well as personality traits, not because existing research indicates a strong link between the two – this is an area of suggested future research – but rather because both have clear but distinct empirical links to work-based performance.

Keywords: *Personality; coaching; developmental coaching; performance; self-regulation.*

DEVELOPMENTAL COACHING is increasingly recognised as an important and distinct approach in coaching. It is aimed at helping the coachee develop increasingly complex understandings of the self, others and the systems in which they are involved, to enable the coachee to meet current and future challenges more effectively (Bachkirova et al., 2010, Standards Australia, 2011). Although developmental coaching is not necessarily tied to any one particular developmental theory, an understanding of adult development theory is critical in that it provides insights into how individuals make meaning of how they relate with the world (Berger, 2006; Kegan, 1995; Laske, 2007) and consequently, how this influences behaviour (Bachkirova & Cox, 2008). Additionally, these insights will allow the coach to 'target their coaching intervention more specifically to the meaning making of the client' (Berger, 2006, p.94).

Given this focus on meaning making, one might expect that personality is intimately involved in developmental coaching. Personality theory is one of the most researched areas in psychology (for an overview refer to Boyle, Matthews & Saklofske, 2008) and empirically linked to aspects of performance of individuals (e.g. Hofmann & Jones, 2005; Lim & Ployhart, 2004; Ployhart, Lim & Chan, 2001). As such, personality and developmental coaching both sit at the inter-section of performance, that is, optimal functioning of the individual.

This paper critically examines the role of personality in relation to adult development and developmental coaching. In particular, it addresses the question to what extent, if at all, personality impacts adult development

and how the major findings from specific areas of trait-based personality research are relevant to developmental coaching. Implications of research findings for coaching practice are discussed and areas for future research suggested.

Developmental theory and developmental coaching

Adult developmental theories in psychology trace the development of the person across the lifespan. Beginning with the work of psychologist Jean Piaget (1928), this was later expanded to the development of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1981), psychodynamic lifespan (Erikson, 1959), cognitive complexity (Commons, Demick & Goldberg, 1996; Jaques, 1998; Kitchener & King, 1994; Labouvie-Vief & Schaie, 1974) and ego development (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1979; Loevinger & Blasi, 1976; Torbert, 1991; Wilber, 2000).

One of the most influential adult developmental theories in the coaching context is Kegan's (1982, 1995) constructive development theory. This theory focuses on the person's capacity to generate perspectives that enable the person to adaptively respond to increasingly complex challenges. His theory offers a useful six-stage development framework for tracking this cognitive complexity across the lifespan. The stages (and the point at which they typically emerge) are as follows: (0) Incorporative stage (birth); (1) Impulsive stage (infancy); (2) Imperial stage (childhood); (3) Interpersonal stage (adolescence and beyond); (4) Institutional stage (adulthood); and (5) Inter-individual stage (typically post 40 years of age).

Kegan's theory describes both the way in which meaning making differs at each level of development and the process by which individuals transition from one level to the next. As a person's developmental stage changes, their capacity to take perspectives not only becomes more complex, their whole world view shifts fundamentally. For example, they come to view success and failure differently, their relationship to authority changes and they are able to 'see shades of grey where once [they] saw only black and white' (Berger & Atkins, 2009, p.24). Table 1 (overleaf) sets out a brief description of Kegan's key adult stages (2 to 5) as adapted by Berger (2011).

Although not necessarily tied to any particular adult development theory, developmental coaching refers to a guided process of change that looks at a different way of making meaning of the world – understanding complexity of self, others and the systems they are part of – that is, ideally, more optimal than the previous one (Bachkirova, 2011; Standards Australia, 2011). On the basis that all established theories of adult development incorporate some form of sequential approach, this translates into successfully transitioning into the next stage of development (Bachkirova & Cox, 2008; Berger, 2006). A variant to this argues that the aim of developmental coaching is not merely to achieve a further transitioning of the coachee, but rather a more optimal functioning within the given stage of development or as part of the transitioning process between them (Laske, 1999).

There are currently no published coaching studies that examine the impact of developmental coaching intervention on an individual's stage of development, though such studies are underway (Cavanagh, 2010). Nevertheless, developmental stage has been linked to work-based performance in a number of studies (Harris & Kuhnert, 2008; Leonard-Cross, 2010; McCauley et al., 2006; Rooke & Torbert, 1998; Strang & Kuhnert, 2009). Some of these studies also incorporate longitudinal measurements (Forsythe, 2005; Lewis et al., 2005; Torbert, 2004). For example, Rooke and Torbert (1998) found that the ego development stage of a company's CEO is a key variable in successful organisational transformation. Similarly, Harris and Kuhnert (2008) demonstrated that higher developmental stages are associated with higher multi-rater feedback scores. Notwithstanding these find-

Table 1: Comparison of orientation to authority and perspective-taking across the adult forms of understanding (from Berger, 2011, parenthesis added).

Form	Perspective-taking	Authority
Self-sovereign [Stage 2]	The only perspective a person can take while in the self-sovereign form of mind is his own. All others are mysterious.	Authority is found in rules and regulations. When two external authorities disagree, it is frustrating but not internally problematic.
Socialised [Stage 3]	Looking through the socialised form of mind, a person can take—and become embedded in – the perspectives of other people/theories, etc. When he sees the world, he sees it through these other perspectives, judging right and wrong, good and bad, from the perspectives of others.	Authority is in an internalised value/ principle/role which comes from outside himself. When those important values/principles/roles conflict (as when his religion disagrees with an important value from his partner), he feels an internal tearing, as though parts of himself were pitted against one another.
Self-authored [Stage 4]	Seeing the world through the self-authored form of mind means a person can take multiple perspectives while maintaining his own. He can understand the views and opinions of others and often uses those views or opinions to strengthen his own argument or set of principles.	Authority is found in the self. The self-authored system determines the individual's rules and regulations for himself. When others disagree, it can be inconvenient or unpleasant, but is not internally wrenching. (More wrenching is when one internal value disagrees with another – that can be an internal tearing.)
Self-transforming [Stage 5]	With a self-transforming mind, a person sees and understands the perspectives of others and uses those perspectives to continuously transform his own system, becoming more expansive and more inclusive. He does not use the perspectives of others to fine-tune his own argument or principles as he did when he was self-authoring; rather, he puts the entire system at risk for change with each interaction with others.	Authority is fluid and shared, and is not located in any particular person or job. Rather, authority comes from the combination of the situation and the people in the situation. A new situation (or different players) will be a shift in where authority is located.

ings, this does not necessarily mean that 'higher is always better'. Rather, research suggests that the minimum level of development required for high levels of performance is role-specific (McCauley et al., 2006; Strang & Kuhnert, 2009). For example, Forsythe (2005) states that although 'Stage 4' is desirable for medical professionals, first-year cadets at West Point performed exceptionally well on the basis of a 'Stage 3' approach to meaning making. At their heart, developmental stage theories are models of how people tend to construct or organise their meaning making at different life stages.

One might expect that the process of meaning making would be shaped also by personality. Indeed, personality has been described as the set of characteristics of the person that shape his or her cognitions, motivations and behaviours in response to events (Ryckman, 2007). There are multiple theories of personality, ranging from the psychodynamic to the realist approach (see Sollod & Monte, 2008) and it is beyond the scope of this paper to canvas them all. Rather, we will consider one of the most established models of personality, the Five Factor Model (McCrae & Costa, 2008).

The Five-Factor Model of personality

Developed out of earlier trait-based personality theories and research (Allport & Vernon, 1931; Cattell, 1941; Eysenck, 1947), the 'Five-Factor Model' of personality (FFM or 'Big Five', Goldberg, 1992; John, 1990; McCrae & John, 1992) represents one of the most comprehensive methods for the systematic exploration of global personality and is arguably the best-established and most-frequently-used measure of personality (McCrae & Costa, 2008). Many scholars now agree that the existing personality inventories all measure essentially the same five broad dimensions with varying degrees of efficiency (Hogan, Hogan & Roberts, 1996; McCrae & John, 1992). There are a large number of different psychometric instruments designed to assess the FFM (for an overview, refer to de Raad & Perugini, 2002). One of the most commonly used instruments of the FFM is the NEO PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1995).

The FFM describes five broad dimensions, Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness, descriptions of which are shown in Table 2 (overleaf), along with a description of the Big Five facets, that is, subordinate traits within each of the five factors (from McCrae & John, 1992).

Major findings involving the FFM and their implications for developmental coaching

The following summarises key research findings involving the Big Five dimensions of personality as these are relevant to developmental coaching.

Finding 1: Personality changes over time in predictable ways and independent of gender, non-age demographics or culture (Helson et al., 2002; Kandler et al., 2009; Labouvie-Vief et al., 2000; McCrae, et al., 2000; Soto et al., 2011; Srivastava et al., 2003; Terracciano et al., 2005). For example, a reasonably consistent finding across many of the above studies is that Extraversion, Openness, and Neuroticism decline whereas Conscientiousness and Agreeableness increase during the lifespan. This essentially describes a general tendency for individuals to become less driven by social exigencies, while becoming more harmonious and diligent. This is consistent with a shift away from a more socialised (Level 3) pattern of meaning making toward a more self-authored (Level 4) position.

Implication 1: It is possible that understanding the pattern of a client's scores on the Big Five personality dimensions may be informative for the developmental process. For example, high Extraversion, Openness and Neuroticism in combination with low Conscientiousness and Agreeableness may signal difficulties in the shift to more self-authored meaning making. With only

Table 2: The Big Five Factors of personality and respective facets, along with low scale score and high scale score interpretations from the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (from McCrae & John, 1992).

Facets	Low scale score	High scale score
Neuroticism (emotional stability) – characterised by anxiety, irritability, sadness, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and an inability to cope with stressful situations		
Anxiety	Relaxed and calm	Worrying and uneasy
Anger/hostility	Composed and slow to anger	Quick to anger
Depression	Not easily discouraged	Easily discouraged
Self-consciousness	Hard to embarrass	Easy to embarrass
Impulsiveness	Resists urges easily	Easily tempted, acts on impulse
Vulnerability	Resilient, handles stress easily	Has difficulty coping
Extraversion (interpersonal patterns) – characterised by warmth, sociability, assertiveness, energy, excitement, and optimism		
Warmth	Reserved, formal, distant	Affectionate, friendly, intimate
Gregariousness	Seldom seeks company	Prefers company, enjoys others
Assertiveness	Stays in background	Speaks up, leads (dominates)
Activity	Leisurely pace	Vigorous pace
Excitement seeking	Low need for thrills	Craves excitement
Positive emotions	Less exuberant	Cheerful, optimistic
Openness – characterised by a vivid imagination; an appreciation of art and beauty; mood swings; wanting to try out new activities; intellectual curiosity; and an openness to political, social, and religious beliefs		
Fantasy	Focuses on the here/now, logical	Imaginative, daydreams
Aesthetics	Uninterested in art	Appreciates art and beauty
Feelings	Ignores and discounts feelings	Values all emotions
Actions	Prefers the familiar	Prefers variety, tries new things
Ideas	Narrower intellectual focus	Broad intellectual focus/curiosity
Values	Dogmatic, conservative	Open to re-examining clues
Agreeableness – characterised by a belief that others are well intentioned, frankness and sincerity, a willingness to help others, a preparedness to forgive and forget, modesty, and tender-mindedness		
Trust	Cynical, sceptical	Sees others as honest
Straightforwardness	Guarded, manages info, political	Straightforward, frank, sincere
Altruism	Reluctant to get involved	Willing to help others
Compliance	Aggressive, competitive	Yields under conflict, defers
Modesty	Feels superior to others	Self-effacing, humble
Tender-mindedness	Hard, tough-minded, rational	Tender, easily moved, sympathetic
Conscientiousness (work ethic) – characterised by a sense of capability, good organisation, self-government by conscience, a drive to achieve, self-discipline, and deliberation		
Competence	Often feels unprepared	Feels capable and effective
Order	Unorganised, unmethodical	Well-organised, neat, tidy
Dutifulness	Causal about obligations	Governed by conscience, reliable
Achievement striving	Low need for achievement	Driven to achieve success/results
Self-discipline	Procrastinates, distracted	Focuses on completing tasks
Deliberation	Spontaneous, hasty	Thinks carefully before acting

limited research being considered at present (Parker, 2012), substantial further research is needed to verify the validity and reliability of these patterns.

Finding 2: Personality is significantly influenced by both genetic and environmental factors (Blonigen et al., 2006; Costa & McCrae, 1988; Helson, et al., 2002; Kandler, et al., 2009; McCrae, 2002; McCrae, et al., 2000; Roberts, Walton & Viechtbauer, 2006; Terracciano et al., 2005). Kandler and colleagues (2009) in their 10-year longitudinal study of 168 twins concluded that material changes in personality, estimated between 40 to 60 per cent, occur along a 'functional' level, that is, to optimise desirable outcomes, in response to major environmental factors (p.152). These changes include material increases in socially desirable domains such as Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and decreases in socially undesirable domains such Neuroticism. With respect to which factors are more changeable than others, their work showed that Neuroticism, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness showed relatively strong genetic effects, whereas Extraversion and Openness was 'almost completely environmentally induced' (p.153).

Implication 2: These findings may help coaches more sensitively target problematic behaviours that load on different personality traits. For example, behaviours driven by Neuroticism, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, while changeable, may require relatively more self-regulatory effort than the development of extraverted and open behaviours, which are better supported via environmental mechanisms (e.g. Hagger et al., 2010). Indeed, the finding that environmental factors have a significant impact on personality, suggests that coaching may do much more than merely assist clients to behaviourally self-regulate. Developmental coaching has the potential to influence personality itself, and thereby reduce the decisional load associated with deliberate self-regulation (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996). (In saying this, it is recognised that self-regulation remains a fundamental concept underlying coaching (Grant, 2003).)

Finding 3: Personality traits are related to performance (Barrick & Mount, 1993; Bono & Judge, 2004; Hogan & Holland, 2003; Judge et al., 2002; Mount, Barrick & Stewart, 1998; Tett, Jackson & Rothstein, 1991). In addition to research that identifies the positive personality attributes associated with work-based performance, there is also significant research that identifies problematic personality traits associated with negative impacts on work performance (Hogan, Raskin & Fazzini, 1990; Khoo & St. Burch, 2008; Lombardo, Ruderman & McCauley, 1988). One consistent finding from these studies is that most successful individuals show higher-than-average Extraversion and Openness, and lower levels of Neuroticism.

Implication 3: In light of the above two findings, developmental coaching should look beyond a single-theory approach to include interventions and strategies informed by knowledge of relevant personality factors. For example, Neuroticism appears to be ameliorated by developmental progress, and given its negative correlation with leadership success, decreasing Neuroticism through developmentally active interventions such as widening perspective-taking, and mindfulness based interventions would arguably be of benefit (see Cavanagh & Spence, 2012).

Finding 4: Developmental stage is a significant factor of performance over and above that determined by personality (Kandler, et al., 2009; Strang & Kuhnert, 2009). For example, in a study involving 67 senior executives, Strang and Kuhnert (2009) showed that the level of development is a significant predictor of feedback which could not be explained simply by reference to the Big Five traits. The study interestingly did not establish meaningful correlations between

personality dimensions and developmental stages (possibly due to the small sample size). In a similar, currently unpublished study, Parker (2012) considered 95 participants of a longitudinal coaching study and compared their NEO PI-R scores with their longitudinal changes in Kegan S/O levels using the 'Subject-Object Interview' method (Lahey et al., 1988). Results of this research indicate that developmental stage is positively related to Extraversion and Openness and negatively related to Neuroticism.

Implication 4: An understanding of a client's personality profile alone is not a sufficient basis upon which to predict behaviour or to develop interventions. An understanding of the developmental stage of the individual has something important to offer, over and above personality factors alone. For example, a person's personality profile might indicate potential areas of reactivity, while the person's developmental profile may shape how the person is likely to structure their understanding of, and response to, that event or situation.

Finding 5: Individual facets underlying the Big Five personality dimensions offer important information that can impact performance and which have the potential to be masked when only considering the major Big Five dimensions on their own (Costa & McCrae, 1995; Mroczek et al., 2006; Roberts, et al., 2006; Soto, et al., 2011). For example, Soto and colleagues' (2011) internet-based study involving a very large population of 1,267,218 subjects showed distinct age trends between related but distinguishable facet traits within each broad Big Five dimension. Similar findings with respect to other facet traits were supported by Mroczek et al. (2006) and this potentially limits the validity of other existing research that did not consider individual facets as part of their findings.

Implication 5: Merely considering Big Five dimensions is unlikely to be sufficient, and any consideration should include assessment of underlying facets. This is also an important consideration for suggested further research – discussed further below – that considers the potential linkages between developmental stage and personality traits more formally.

Summary of implications for developmental coaching

On the basis of the above major findings, developmental coaching may have application in both shorter and longer term change programmes, depending on the pattern of personality traits in the client, and challenges presented by the client's context. For example, where behaviours associated with Extraversion and/or Openness are particularly relevant to goal attainment, environmentally focussed developmental interventions may be most useful, as these traits appear to be more environmentally sensitive (Kandler et al., 2009). New, situationally and developmentally appropriate ways of expressing Extraversion and Openness may need to be developed to counteract natural decline in these traits during the adult life span (Helson et al., 2002).

While the research suggests aspects of personality are clearly changeable, the greater stability associated with Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism may reflect relatively greater reciprocal influence between these traits and developmental patterns of meaning making. In other words, meaning making and these more genetically determined traits may be self-reinforcing, and hence require relatively longer, more cognitively and emotionally challenging interventions to shift. Hence, developmental coaching should not completely disregard focusing on other personality traits simply because they are considered more stable and less easily influenced. Indeed, Nelson and Hogan (2009) point to three ways in which knowledge of personality can inform coaching; firstly, to explain the coachee's

behaviour in the work-environment as well as within the coaching relationship; secondly, to increase the coachee's awareness and thereby enable that person to self-regulate more effectively; and thirdly, to guide the coach in his/her intervention strategy. The malleability of personality in this context is supported by empirical research.

Existing evidence suggests that targeted coaching interventions can successfully focus on various aspects of personality traits indicating that an individual has the ability to self-regulate successfully to overcome the potential performance inhibitions presented by particular traits (Christiansen & Tett, 2008; Hogan & Holland, 2003; McCormick & Burch, 2008; Nelson & Hogan, 2009; Stewart et al., 2008; Tett & Burnett, 2003). For example, Stewart et al. (2008) used the FFM to test the impact of coaching on personality traits. They found changes in performance following coaching were positively correlated with greater conscientiousness, openness to experiences, emotional stability and general self-efficacy.

The above research suggests that combining an understanding of the dimensions of personality with stage-specific theories such as Kegan's (1982, 1995) may lead to more effective change in clients compared to approaches based on the Big Five personality dimensions alone.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

The above theoretical hypotheses are derived from a small empirical base. Much greater research is needed to support them. The current research base includes longitudinal studies, however, many of these studies are of limited duration and limited sample size (Strang & Kuhnert, 2009). Recognising that it is practically challenging to conduct large-scale longitudinal studies, at this stage, any high quality further research will benefit the empirical knowledge base and eventually enable researchers to conduct meta-analyses to further increase the reliability of findings.

In reviewing the literature for this paper, perhaps most surprising is the fact that with the exception of Strang and Kuhnert (2009) and Parker (2012), none of the existing research focusing on the combination of personality and adult development conducted correlational analyses between developmental stages and personality traits (Berry & Jobe, 2002; Helson et al., 2002; Hooker, 2002; McCrae, 2002; Smith & Spiro, 2002; Widiger & Seidlitz, 2002). Although outside of the scope of this paper, in a related area involving cognitive development, Labouvie-Vief (2006) identified differences in temperament with differences in cognitive-affective complexity. Her research found, for example, that greater neuroticism is associated with greater cognitive complexity but also with greater levels of depression. This would suggest that further longitudinal research involving the Big Five personality dimensions including their underlying facets and relationship to developmental stages is likely to be a worthwhile endeavour. Given the limited variance often found between differences of the Big Five personality dimensions (e.g. Morgeson et al., 2007; Murphy & Dzieweczynski, 2005), future focus on movements in underlying facets (Kandler et al., 2009; Mroczek, et al., 2006; Soto et al., 2011) is important. This may yield a more fine grained understanding of the relationship between developmental stage and changes in personality.

Conclusion

In summary, it seems reasonable to assume that, as effective developmental coaching supports the functional efforts of the coachee in the shorter term, it may also contribute positively to changes in personality traits in the longer term. Typically, the movement from one developmental stage to the next involves significant periods of time (Berger, 2006; Kegan, 1995). Whether the two areas are merely complementary or potentially have more explicit interrelationships is not clear on the basis of existing, limited research. However, the above consid-

eration of these two literatures suggests it might be a potentially important area for further research. It is possible that coaching interventions based on knowledge and application of both areas have the potential to inform our understanding of performance related change in complex environments. Research which considers both personality and developmental stage in the light of the coachee's situational requirements and targeted outcomes may open new frontiers for both coaching and leadership.

The Authors

Ingo Susing
Doctoral Research Student,
Sydney Business School,
University of Wollongong,
Sydney, Australia, NSW 2000.

Michael J. Cavanagh
Coaching Psychology Unit,
School of Psychology,
University of Sydney,
Sydney, Australia NSW 2006.

Correspondence

Michael J. Cavanagh
Email: michael.cavanagh@sydney.edu.au

References

Allport, G.W. & Vernon, P.E. (1931). *A study of values. (score sheet; manual).* Oxford: Houghton Mifflin; GB.

Bachkirova, T. (2011). *Developmental coaching: Working with the self* (1st ed.). Milton Keynes: Open University Press; GB.

Bachkirova, T. & Cox, E. (2008). A cognitive-developmental approach for coach development. In S. Palmer & A. Whybrow, A. (Eds.), *Handbook of coaching psychology: A guide for practitioners.* New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group; US.

Bachkirova, T., Cox, E. & Clutterbuck, D. (2010). *The complete handbook of coaching.* Los Angeles: Sage; US.

Barrick, M.R. & Mount, M.K. (1993). Autonomy as a moderator of the relationships between the Big Five personality dimensions and job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*(1), 111–118.

Baumeister, R. & Heatherton, T.F. (1996) Self-regulation failure: An overview. *Psychological Inquiry, 7*, 1–15

Berger, J.G. (2006). Adult development theory and executive coaching practice. In D.R. Stober & A.M. Grant, *Evidence based coaching handbook: Putting best practices to work for your clients* (pp.77–102). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc,; US.

Berger, J.G. (2011). *Changing on the job: Growing the leaders our organisations need.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; US.

Berger, J.G. & Atkins, P.W. (2009). Mapping complexity of mind: Using the subject-object interview in coaching. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, 2*(1), 23–36.

Berry, J.M. & Jobe, J.B. (2002). At the intersection of personality and adult development. *Journal of Research in Personality, 36*(4), 283–286.

Blonigen, D.M., Hicks, B.M., Krueger, R.F., Patrick, C.J. & Iacono, W.G. (2006). Continuity and change in psychopathic traits as measured via normal-range personality: A longitudinal-biometric study. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 115*(1), 85–95.

Bono, J.E. & Judge, T.A. (2004). Personality and transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 89*(5), 901–910.

Boyle, G.J., Matthews, G. & Saklofske, D.H. (2008). *The Sage handbook of personality theory and assessment, Vol 1: Personality theories and models.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; US.

Cattell, R.B. (1941). Temperament and types of constitution. In R.B. Cattell, *General psychology* (pp.275–303). Cambridge, MA: Sci-Art Publishers; US.

Cavanagh, M.J. (2010). *Leadership development: Beyond transformational leadership. Preliminary findings from ARC Leadership in high stress workplaces project.* Paper presented at the Fourth Australian Conference on Evidence-Based Coaching 2010, Sydney, Australia.

Cavanagh, M.J. & Spence, G. (2012). Mindfulness in coaching: philosophy, psychology or just a useful skill? In J. Passmore, D. Peterson, T. Freire (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of psychology of coaching and mentoring* (pp.112–134). London: Wiley-Blackwell; GB.

Christiansen, N.D. & Tett, R.P. (2008). Toward a better understanding of the role of situations in linking personality, work behavior, and job performance. [Comment/Reply]. *Industrial and Organisational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice, 1*(3), 312–316.

Commons, M.L., Demick, J. & Goldberg, C. (1996). *Clinical approaches to adult development.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishers; US.

Cook-Greuter, S.R. (1999). *Post-autonomous ego development: A study of its nature and measurement.* Unpublished Dissertation/Thesis.

Costa, P.T. & McCrae, R.R. (1988). Personality in adulthood: A six-year longitudinal study of self-reports and spouse ratings on the NEO Personality Inventory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*(5), 853–863.

Costa, P.T. & McCrae, R.R. (1995). Domains and facets: Hierarchical personality assessment using the Revised NEO Personality Inventory. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 64*(1), 21–50.

de Raad, B. & Perugini, M. (2002). *Big five assessment.* Ashland, OH: Hogrefe & Huber Publishers; US.

Erikson, E.H. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle: Selected papers.* New York: International Universities Press; US.

Eysenck, H. (1947). *Dimensions of personality.* Oxford: Kegan Paul; GB.

Forsythe, G.B. (2005). Identity development in professional education. *Academic Medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges, 80* (10 Suppl), 7.

Goldberg, L.R. (1990). An alternative 'description of personality': The Big-Five factor structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59*(6), 1216–1229.

Goldberg, L.R. (1992). The development of markers for the Big-Five factor structure. *Psychological Assessment, 4*(1), 26–42.

Grant, A.M. (2003). The impact of life coaching on goal attainment, metacognition and mental health. *Social Behavior & Personality, 31*(3), 253–264.

Hagger, M.S., Wood, C., Stiff, C. & Chatzisarantis, N.L. (2010). Ego depletion and the strength model of self-control: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 136*(4), 495–525.

Harris, L.S. & Kuhnert, K.W. (2008). Looking through the lens of leadership: A constructive developmental approach. *Leadership & Organisation Development Journal, 29*(1), 47–67.

Helson, R., Kwan, V.S., John, O.P. & Jones, C. (2002). The growing evidence for personality change in adulthood: Findings from research with personality inventories. *Journal of Research in Personality, 36*(4), 287–306.

Hofmann, D.A. & Jones, L.M. (2005). Leadership, collective personality, and performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*(3), 509–522.

Hogan, J. & Holland, B. (2003). Using theory to evaluate personality and job-performance relations: A socioanalytic perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(1), 100–112.

Hogan, R., Hogan, J. & Roberts, B.W. (1996). Personality measurement and employment decisions: Questions and answers. *American Psychologist, 51*(5), 469–477.

Hogan, R., Raskin, R. & Fazzini, D. (1990). The dark side of charisma. In K.E. Clark & M.B. Clark (Eds.), *Measures of leadership* (pp.343–354). West Orange, NJ: Leadership Library of America; US.

Hooker, K. (2002). New directions for research in personality and aging: A comprehensive model for linking level, structures, and processes. *Journal of Research in Personality, 36*(4), 318–334.

Jaques, E. (1998). *Requisite organisation: A total system for effective managerial organisation and managerial leadership for the 21st century.* Arlington, VA: Cason Hall; US.

John, O.P. (1990). The 'Big Five' factor taxonomy: Dimensions of personality in the natural language and in questionnaires. In O.P. John, R.W. Robins & L.A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality psychology: Theory and research* (pp.66–100). New York: Guilford Press; US.

Judge, T.A., Bono, J.E., Ilies, R. & Gerhardt, M.W. (2002). Personality and leadership: A qualitative and quantitative review. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*(4), 765–780.

Kandler, C., Bleidorn, W., Angleitner, A., Riemann, R. & Spinath, F.M. (2009). Patterns and sources of adult personality development: Growth curve analyses of the NEO PI-R scales in a longitudinal twin study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97*(1), 142–155.

Kegan, R. (1979). The evolving self: A process conception for ego psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist, 8*(2), 5–34.

Kegan, R. (1982). *The evolving self: Problem and process in human development.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; US.

Kegan, R. (1995). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; US.

Khoo, H.S. & St. Burch, G.J. (2008). The 'dark side' of leadership personality and transformational leadership: An exploratory study. *Personality and Individual Differences, 44*(1), 86–97.

Kitchener, K.S. & King, P.M. (1994). *Developing reflective judgement: Understanding and promoting intellectual growth and critical thinking in adolescents and adults.* Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series and Jossey-Bass Social and Behavioral Science Series. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; US.

Kohlberg, L. (1981). *The philosophy of moral development: Moral stages and the idea of justice.* San Francisco: Harper & Row; US.

Labouvie-Vief, G. (2006). *Emerging structures of thought emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association; US.

Labouvie-Vief, G., Diehl, M., Tarnowski, A. & Shen, J. (2000). Age differences in adult personality: Findings from the United States and China. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences, 55B*(1), 4–17.

Labouvie-Vief, G. & Schaie, K.W. (1974). Generational versus ontogenetic components of change in adult cognitive behaviour: A 14-year cross-sequential study. *Developmental Psychology, 10*(3), 305–320.

Lahey, L., Souvaine, E., Kegan, R., Goodman, R. & Felix, S. 1988. *A guide to the subject-object interview: Its administration and interpretation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education; US.

Laske, O. (1999). An integrated model of developmental coaching. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 51*(3), 139–159.

Laske, O. (2007). An integrated model of developmental coaching. In R.R. Kilburg & R.C. Diedrich (Eds.), *The wisdom of coaching: Essential papers in consulting psychology for a world of change* (pp.217–235). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association; US.

Leonard-Cross, E. (2010). Developmental coaching: Business benefit – fact or fad? An evaluative study to explore the impact of coaching in the workplace. *International Coaching Psychology Review, 5*(1), 36–47.

Lewis, P., Forsythe, G.B., Sweeney, P., Bartone, P., Bullis, C. & Snook, S. (2005). Identity development during the college years: Findings from the West Point Longitudinal Study. *Journal of College Student Development, 46*(4), 357–373.

Lim, B.-C. & Ployhart, R.E. (2004). Transformational leadership: Relations to the Five-Factor Model and team performance in typical and maximum contexts. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 89*(4), 610–621.

Loevinger, J. & Blasi, A. (1976). *Ego development: Conceptions and theories*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; US.

Lombardo, M.M., Ruderman, M.N. & McCauley, C.D. (1988). Explanations of success and derailment in upper-level management positions. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 2*(3), 199–216.

McCauley, C.D., Drath, W.H., Palus, C.J., O'Connor, P.M. & Baker, B.A. (2006). The use of constructive-developmental theory to advance the understanding of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 17*(6), 634–653.

McCormick, I. & Burch, G.S. (2008). Personality-focused coaching for leadership development. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 60*(3), 267–278.

McCrae, R.R. (2002). The maturation of personality psychology: Adult personality development and psychological well-being. *Journal of Research in Personality, 36*(4), 307–317.

McCrae, R.R. & Costa, P.T., Jr. (1990). *Personality in adulthood*. New York: Guilford Press; US.

McCrae, R.R. & Costa, P.T., Jr. (2008). The Five-Factor theory of personality. In O.P. John, R.W. Robins & L.A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality psychology: Theory and research* (3rd ed., pp.159–181). New York: Guilford Press; US.

McCrae, R.R., Costa, P.T., Jr., Ostendorf, F., Angleitner, A., Hrebickova, M., Avia, M.D. et al. (2000). Nature over nurture: Temperament, personality, and life span development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*(1), 173–186.

McCrae, R.R. & John, O.P. (1992). An introduction to the Five-Factor Model and its applications. *Journal of Personality, 60*(2), 175–215.

Morgeson, F.P., Campion, M.A., Dipboye, R.L., Hollenbeck, J.R., Murphy, K. & Schmitt, N. (2007). Are we getting fooled again? Coming to terms with limitations in the use of personality tests for personnel selection. [Comment/Reply]. *Personnel Psychology, 60*(4), 1029–1049.

Mount, M.K., Barrick, M.R. & Stewart, G.L. (1998). Five-Factor model of personality and performance in jobs involving interpersonal interactions. *Human Performance, 11*(2–3), 145–165.

Mroczek, D.K., Almeida, D.M., Spiro, A. & Pafford, C. (2006). Modelling intraindividual stability and change in personality. *Handbook of personality development* (pp.163–180). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; US.

Murphy, K.R. & Dzieweczynski, J.L. (2005). Why don't measures of broad dimensions of personality perform better as predictors of job performance? *Human Performance, 18*(4), 343–357.

Nelson, E. & Hogan, R. (2009). Coaching on the dark side. *International Coaching Psychology Review, 4*(1), 9–21.

Parker, H. (2012). *Exploring the relationships between Five-Factor Model of personality and Kegan's Subject/Object stage score in a cohort of Australian workplace leaders*. Research prepared as part of a doctoral thesis, currently unpublished.

Piaget, J. (1928). *Judgement and reasoning in the child*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; GB.

Ployhart, R.E., Lim, B.-C. & Chan, K.-Y. (2001). Exploring relations between typical and maximum performance ratings and the Five-Factor model of personality. *Personnel Psychology, 54*(4), 809–843.

Roberts, B.W., Walton, K.E. & Viechtbauer, W. (2006). Patterns of mean-level change in personality traits across the life course: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Psychological Bulletin, 132*(1), 1–25.

Rooke, D. & Torbert, W.R. (1998). Organisational transformation as a function of CEO's developmental stage. *Organisation Development Journal, 16*(1), 11–28.

Ryckman, R.M. (2007). *Theories of personality* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning/Wadsworth; US.

Smith, T.W. & Spiro, A., III (2002). Personality, health, and aging: Prolegomenon for the next generation. *Journal of Research in Personality, 36*(4), 363–394.

Sollod, R.N. & Monte, C.F. (2008). *Beneath the mask: An introduction to theories of personality* (8th ed.). New York: Wiley; US.

Soto, C.J., John, O.P., Gosling, S.D. & Potter, J. (2011). Age differences in personality traits from 10 to 65: Big Five domains and facets in a large cross-sectional sample. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100*(2), 330–348.

Srivastava, S., John, O.P., Gosling, S.D. & Potter, J. (2003). Development of personality in early and middle adulthood: Set like plaster or persistent change? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(5), 1041–1053.

Standards Australia (2011). *Guidelines for coaching in organisations*. Standards Australia.

Stewart, L.J., Palmer, S., Wilkin, H. & Kerrin, M. (2008). The influence of character: Does personality impact coaching success? *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 6*(1), 32–42.

Strang, S.E. & Kuhnert, K.W. (2009). Personality and leadership developmental levels as predictors of leader performance. *The Leadership Quarterly, 20*(3), 421–433.

Terracciano, A., McCrae, R.R., Brant, L.J. & Costa, P.T., Jr. (2005). Hierarchical linear modeling analyses of the NEO PI-R scales in the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging. *Psychology and Aging, 20*(3), 493–506.

Tett, R.P. & Burnett, D.D. (2003). A personality trait-based interactionist model of job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(3), 500–517.

Tett, R.P., Jackson, D.N. & Rothstein, M. (1991). Personality measures as predictors of job performance: A meta-analytic review. *Personnel Psychology, 44*(4), 703–742.

Torbert, W.R. (1991). *The power of balance: Transforming self, society, and scientific inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; US.

Torbert, W.R. (2004). *Action inquiry: The secret of timely and transforming leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Kohler; US.

Widiger, T.A. & Seidlitz, L. (2002). Personality, psychopathology, and aging. *Journal of Research in Personality, 36*(4), 335–362.

Wilber, K. (2000). *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications; US.

Paper

Decision-making and the coaching context

Sarah Corrie & David Lane

As coaching psychologists we take pride in our decision-making skills. In offering our services to clients we make the implicit (or explicit) claim that we can support them in achieving results that they would not be able to achieve by themselves. Indeed, our claims to a professional status are predicated in part on the quality of the decisions we make in relation to the knowledge and evidence of our discipline. However, the available evidence-base for the effectiveness of our decision-making does not necessarily support our assertions. Additionally, there is a paucity of guidance on how to acquire effective decision-making skills. This paper provides a brief review of the literature on practitioners' decision-making prowess and examines some of the specific decision-making skills that coaching psychologists need to equip themselves for the demands of today's work place. The case for coaching psychologists receiving formal guidance in the development of decision-making skills is presented and a framework offered that has the potential to enhance their capability for critical and creative decision-making in the current climate.

Keywords: *Decision-making; reasoning skills; rationality; linearity; propositional meanings; implicational meanings.*

WORKING effectively as a coaching psychologist entails the ability to navigate a constant stream of decisions and choices. Whether the task is one of deciding whether to work with a coachee, determining the primary focus of the work that is to follow, devising an intervention plan or problem-solving when the contract does not go according to plan, decision-making is crucial to all stages. As such, making decisions is a central feature of a coaching psychologist's work and arguably, an area of competence in its own right.

Despite this, relatively little appears to be known about how coaching psychologists actually make decisions with, and about, their coachees. A review of the coaching psychology literature highlights a dearth of studies devoted to this topic, which is problematic for a variety of reasons. First, the broader professional practice literature increasingly highlights effective decision-making as complementary to, but distinct from, subject matter expertise (Gambrill, 2005; Lane & Corrie, 2012). Second, practitioners are known to be prone to numerous sources of decision-making error (see Kahneman, 2011, for a review). Third, critical thinking skills – including the ability to evaluate and revise our decisions – are increasingly recognised as essential for navigating a rapidly changing world (Paul & Elder, 2002). Moreover, whilst the training programmes that confer qualifications and the professional bodies which govern our practice can provide recommendations, there is little in the way of substantive guidance on how to approach decision-making in an effective, systematic yet creative way. This gives rise to a number of critical questions, including:

- How do practitioners make decisions in the context of their engagements with coachees? To what extent do they rely on specific, systematic decision-making principles, guidelines or frameworks drawn from the literature, or develop idiosyncratic methods and procedures?
- To what extent are practitioners able to articulate the decision-making rules by which they operate? To what extent are they aware of the factors that influence their decision-making with, and about, their coachees – for good or ill?

- What decision-making skills do coaching psychologists need to work effectively with coachees?

The aim of this paper is to challenge the commonly held belief that effective decision-making is automatically acquired through experience in the workplace, and to make the case that decision-making is best understood as a domain of competence in its own right. In the service of this argument, the article begins with a brief summary of the literature on decision-making. It is argued that the strong emphasis on ascertaining accuracy that has dominated much of the literature has prevented an exploration of the full range of reasoning skills that professional practice requires. The additional decision-making and reasoning skills practitioners need to guide their practice are then considered. Finally, a heuristic framework for approaching decision-making in 'real world' contexts is presented. Although yet to be empirically validated, this framework has practical value in providing a vehicle through which practitioners can systematically evaluate, and where necessary, refine their individual approaches.

The case for becoming effective decision-makers

Educators across all disciplines believe that it is vital to equip their students with the requisite decision-making and problem-solving skills that will enable them to function effectively in the workplace. Nonetheless, as Gambrill (2005) observes, 'Surprisingly little attention is devoted in professional training programmes to many sources of error that can lead (practitioners) astray' (p.ix). Although writing specifically about decision-making in the clinical field, the extent to which coaching training programmes provide explicit training in the acquisition and refinement of these skills is also unclear and certainly this domain of competence is yet to feature significantly in the emergent coaching psychology literature.

In their examination of why such an important skill has been neglected, Lane and Corrie (2012) propose that this may in part be due to an implicit, widely held assumption that decision-making expertise is automatically acquired through discipline-specific knowledge and professional experience; that is, the more experience and subject matter expertise we acquire, the more effective our decisions become. However, this is problematic for a number of reasons. First, experts do not necessarily have a good understanding of their own thinking skills (Kassirer et al., 1982). Second, expertise is internalised over time and therefore not readily accessible to conscious reflection or articulation (Polyani, 1967; Schön, 1987) or, by extension, teaching to others.

This omission in the literature has the potential to disadvantage coaching psychologists in the development of their skills. In an economic and professional climate characterised by unprecedented levels of uncertainty and unpredictability (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012; Kahane, 2007; Lane & Down, 2010), coaching psychologists face considerable challenges in devising novel and creative solutions for increasingly complex situations. Additionally, the rapid pace of change makes it difficult to predict what type of knowledge will be required in the future (Stice, 1987). Indeed, Becher and Chassin (2001) go so far as proposing that 'the only surety is that today's knowledge is obsolete tomorrow' (p.74). Such a prediction may, on first reading, seem unduly pessimistic. Nonetheless, it highlights that discipline-specific knowledge alone is unlikely to prove sufficient for the decisions that coaching psychologists need to be able to make, in order to provide optimum services to their coachees. As such, there are compelling reasons to equip coaching psychologists with the distinct mental operations that will enable them to refine their decision-making capabilities with individual coachees, whilst remaining responsive to the evolving evidence-base of coaching psychology.

Given the central role that decision-making plays in professional practice what, then, is known about the effectiveness with which practitioners make decisions?

Decision-making in professional practice: How accurate are we?

A review of the existing literature suggests that there is not, as yet, a substantive body of knowledge on the decision-making capabilities of those delivering coaching interventions. In consequence, it is arguably legitimate – and indeed necessary – to draw upon information derived from other, related literatures – most specifically, the fields of clinical psychology and psychotherapy, where this domain of competence has been more systematically studied.

The decisions of professional practitioners have been a subject of academic interest since the 1950s. Although a range of approaches have been used (see Lane & Corrie, 2012, for an overview) historically, much of the literature has been organised around notions of accuracy – in particular, how practitioners' judgements fare against statistical predictions. This in turn appears to be underpinned by an assumption that accuracy equates to responsibility. O'Donohue and Henderson (1999), for example, argue that being able to make decisions accurately represents an ethical and epistemic duty that professionals have to their clients. Hence, coachees are justified in expecting us to have *accurate* knowledge, to be able to apply this knowledge in ways that *accurately* reflect current notions of best practice, to be able to *accurately* assess coachees' needs and to retain an *accurate* sense of the limits of our competence.

It is unfortunate, then, that the results of numerous studies make for uncomfortable reading. For example, an early study conducted by Goldberg (1959) found that the professional judgement of clinicians was no superior to their secretaries when it came to accurate diagnosis. Oskamp (1965) found no relationship between judgement accuracy and training. Comparisons between experienced and inexperienced therapists also found little benefit from experience on a number of measures (Carkhuf & Berenson, 1967).

Professional psychology has clearly evolved since some of these early studies were conducted and not all studies have yielded such disappointing results (see for example, Bieling & Kuyken's, 2003, studies of decision-making in the context of cognitive case formulation, and Luborsky & Crits-Cristoph's, 1990, use of a structured process of eliciting core conflictual relationship themes). However, it would seem that many practitioners fail to use any systematic decision-making procedures when it comes to selecting methods of assessment, planning goals or choosing intervention strategies. In their investigation of decision-making in a sample of 25 therapists, for example, O'Donohue et al. (1990) found that in 96 per cent of cases, practitioners had not used, or were not able to describe using, a systematic decision-making process when choosing methods of assessment. This pattern of results would appear to be consistent with the finding that many practitioners continue to rely more on personal experience than the decision-making literature, of which a significant number are not aware (Hollon & Kris, 1984; Rock, 1994). More recently, it has been noted that negative attitudes towards research have persisted, with practitioners tending to underestimate the importance of specific protocols and overestimate the influence of the therapeutic relationship in determining outcomes (Shafran et al., 2009). This pattern of results echoes Meehl's (1997) earlier, highly critical account of professional decision-making as comprising a series of '…truths, half-truths and falsehoods' (p.91). In the service of the need to practice in ways that are consistent with the evidence-base, Waller (2009) has identified a range of problematic cognitions, emotions and behavioural reactions to clients and to change work that characterise practitioners' decision-making, arguing that supervision is essential for ensuring that interventions remain 'on track'.

Taken as a whole, the literature does not generate confidence in the accuracy of practitioners' judgements. Although, as noted earlier, this literature is not specific to coaching psychology, it would be difficult to

conclude that the decision-making prowess of those in the fields of coaching is superior to that demonstrated by the other psychologically-informed disciplines upon which the literature is based.

What reasoning abilities do coaching psychologists need?

A number of explanations for the apparent failures in practitioners' decision accuracy have been proposed including heuristics (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973, 1974); attribution theory (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967) and information-processing biases (both perceptual and interpretive; see Corrie, 2009, for a summary), an awareness of which can be useful for improving the accuracy of our decision-making in practice. However, others (e.g. Dowie & Elstein, 1988; Hogarth, 1981; Lane & Corrie, 2012) have argued that equating effectiveness with accuracy may have provided a misleading picture of the cognitive abilities that typify skilful decision-making in the professional arena. In particular, accuracy – whilst vital in certain situations – is only one aspect of decision-making and arguably, not always what is needed to work most effectively with coachees.

In professional practice, decisions often need to be made in situations involving significant amounts of uncertainty. As noted by Hogarth (1981), the individuals and organisations to whom we offer our services are more appropriately seen as constantly evolving systems rather than static entities. Indeed, Schön (1987) has argued that practitioners are primarily interested in, and required to work with, changing contexts rather than situations that can be understood in linear, cause-and-effect terms. The decisions that we need to make, then, often relate to issues that are ill-defined and require nuanced, context-sensitive and innovative approaches to identify potentially productive courses of action. Equally, there are invariably many decisions to make and multiple courses of action that may be beneficial; psychological practice is a complex arena, taking place in a stream of interpersonal exchanges that require the ability to navigate the often conflicting agendas of multiple stakeholders. In consequence, the notion that our decisions can be meaningfully understood as isolated cognitive 'outputs' which can be objectively evaluated as correct or incorrect (accurate or inaccurate) poses the risk of providing a distorted picture of professional judgement in the workplace. Rather, our decisions are context-dependent, informed by the purpose of the work that is agreed with the coachee. This implies that effective decision-making relies upon a broader range of reasoning skills than the existing literature has considered.

How might it be possible to understand this broader range of reasoning skills? In his work on thinking skills, de Bono (1995) has differentiated what he terms 'shooting' and 'fishing' styles of reasoning. Using a hunting metaphor he describes 'shooting questions' as those that have a distinct target in sight. Here accuracy is central to the quality of the decision that is ultimately made. Shooting questions rely on rational and analytical skills, make greater use of closed questions and aim to arrive at a clear understanding that can be determined as correct or incorrect in a particular instance. In contrast, 'fishing questions' are those that are concerned with exploring, expanding and uncovering. The latter requires use of open and exploratory questions, attention to what might be left unsaid by a coachee and a willingness to tolerate ambiguity. The latter might also entail use of metaphor, imagination and intuition to help coachees move forward.

De Bono uses the terms 'shooting' and 'fishing' as metaphors for qualitatively distinct mental operations. In information-processing theory, these distinctions have been defined in terms of propositional and implications levels of meaning (see Teasdale & Barnard, 1993). The propositional level refers to knowledge that can be expressed linguistically and can be evaluated, in a relatively straightforward fashion, in terms of its

accuracy against some external criterion. (Examples of propositional statements might include, 'Today is Friday' or 'this article is written in English'.) In contrast, the implicational level refers to more holistic, intuitive and 'felt sense' forms of knowing that are intrinsic to the experience of being human and which do not lend themselves well to literal verbal translation. (The statements, 'my heart is broken' and 'I was frozen to the spot' would be examples of this type of meaning.) The implicational level of meaning features particularly frequently in the language of poetry, fiction and folk tales, as well as the language our coachees sometimes use in the service of sharing their stories with us. (Indeed, it has been proposed that narration is the principal way in which people make sense of their experience; see Hillman, 1983; McLeod, 2000.)

Clearly, these are only two of the many emerging responses aimed at elucidating and informing the development of practitioners' critical reasoning and problem solving skills (see Gambrill, 2005, for an exhaustive account of methods for improving the quality of our judgements and decisions, as well as Kahane's, 2007, work on solving tough problems, and Paul & Elder's, 2002, work on how to become a 'critical thinker'. Lane & Corrie, 2012, have also contributed methods for achieving what they term the need to take a 'different, wider, deeper and more complex perspective'). However, taken as a whole, the literature highlights that there are occasions in practice where assumptions about rationality and linearity cannot be sustained, that we often find ourselves having to cope with complexity, confusion and conflicting perspectives, and that we are likely to have to accept anomalies in the data available to us. Additionally, we may find ourselves in situations where the only option is to take risks – such as when we cannot know for sure that a given course of action will work (Stice, 1987). In such circumstances, what are our choices? How might it be possible to achieve a systematic approach to decision-making whilst taking account of the complex arena in which we provide our services?

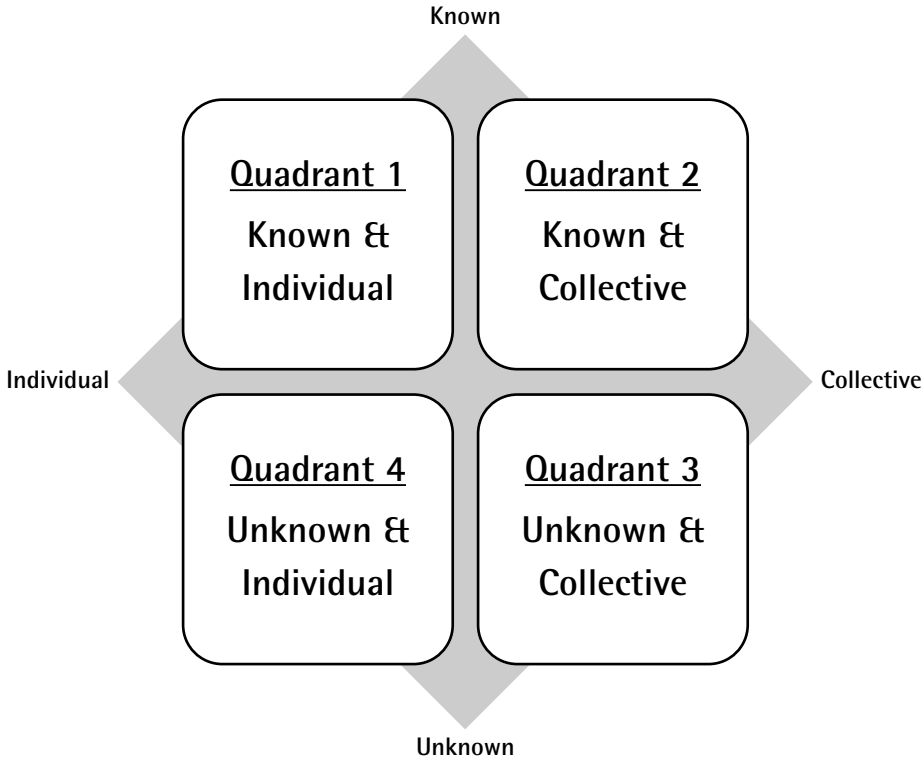
Working in different decision quadrants

Drake (2009) has highlighted how, when attempting to understand and respond to complex coachee issues, practitioners benefit from having a 'road map' that supports them in navigating and synthesising multiple theories, types of knowledge and forms of evidence. One such 'road map' is provided in Figure 1. In this model, any professional decision that confronts a practitioner is understood as being located in one of four quadrants. These quadrants sit along two dimensions: the known-unknown and the individual-collective (see Figure 1, below). This model provides a broad framework that can help practitioners identify more easily the decision-making task in hand (for example, being able to identify when the nature of the decision-making task is concerned with accuracy and when it might be concerned with more complex processes such as negotiating conflicting perspectives or having to operate in the context of non-linearity). It can also provide a framework for mapping the decision-making territory, and so assist us in the process of reflecting upon, critiquing and refining our decision-making capabilities in any particular situation. In this section, a brief description of this model with an example is provided to illustrate how this approach can be applied in practice.

Quadrant 1: Known and Individual

In quadrant 1, we are seekers after an individual truth to decide what will work for this coachee in this context. We can define goals for our work together based on an individual case formulation using existing hypothesis testing models; that is, we know how to seek the 'truth' but do not know what that truth may look like until we have undertaken our analysis with the coachee. Here, the practitioner is concerned with the accuracy and relevance of a decision. The types of decision tools most useful in this quadrant include

Figure 1: The Decision Quadrants Model.



individualised case formulation, hypothesis generation and intervention planning unique to the needs of the individual coachee, inviting the coachee to engage in tasks outside the session as experiments in behaviour and personalised goal setting.

Example: Working with a senior manager who started a coaching assignment following attendance at a development centre. The centre identified from a 360 feedback certain areas for development. What was not clear was how the manager's behaviour was seen in the different contexts in which he operated. It was agreed in discussion between sponsor, coachee and coach to explore examples of behaviour in different settings. A methodology for collecting and evaluating those examples was agreed. Data were collected, analysed and then an individual case formulation co-created. On the basis of this an intervention was planned.

Quadrant 2: Known and Collective

In quadrant 2, we can draw upon a collective understanding of the coachee's issues; there is an available evidence-base to help structure our thinking that can inform our decisions about what works best for a coachee presenting with a particular need. Here, the practitioner draws upon the collective evidence and tries to match the coachee's goals to the evidence-base. The concern is one of ensuring the congruence of our intervention with the collective guidelines for the issues faced. The types of decision tools most useful in this quadrant include evidence-based guidelines, protocols, structured decision tools and manualised approaches.

Example: Working with a senior market analyst who was becoming increasingly anxious when faced with high-pressure decision-making. In discussion with the coach the coachee described

a pattern of generalised anxiety which, while originating in a specific decision-making context, was increasingly triggered in any situation of perceived threat. The description was very close to that available in the CBT literature which offers evidence-based interventions for anxiety disorders. Using that evidence-base a coaching programme was introduced to address the coachee's pattern of cognitive biases and cognitive processing that increased anxiety when faced with decisions.

Quadrant 3: Unknown and Collective

We are faced with a collective need or competing needs in a social system with no agreed understanding or knowledge base on which to draw; we cannot agree what to do for the best. In such a context practitioners become seekers of a shared understanding that can be used as a framework for decision-making in the absence of collective knowledge that can provide substantive guidance. The types of decision tools most useful in this quadrant include co-constructing narratives across competing groups or teams to seek a shared account, reflective and generative process rather than use of prescribed public guidelines (as would be the case in quadrant 2), divergent rather than convergent thinking tools, and implicational rather than propositional knowledge.

Example: Working with a coachee following the attacks on the World Trade Center (9/11), the coaching psychologist was asked to help in the immediate aftermath of the attacks as attempts were made to set up services to support the organisation and individuals affected by the event. The literature on response to disasters at that time was confusing as there were emerging doubts about the impact of critical incident debriefing and also some doubts over the point at which individual counselling should be offered and in what form. Various parties in the organisation also held markedly contrasting views on what was needed. The group involved in setting up the service could not draw upon evidenced-based guidelines since they were disputed and the complexity of the unfolding situation made planning difficult. A series of conversations took place in which a story gradually emerged that enabled the conflicting points of view to be reconciled into an agreed approach – with built-in daily reviews to adapt the programme as needed. This included group sessions, counselling and coaching specifically to help key managers make decisions in the unfolding situation.

Quadrant 4: Unknown and Individual

In quadrant 4, practitioners are faced with an individual journey into the unknown; neither coachee nor coach knows what might be appropriate, how to generate change or indeed if change is needed. Here we are seekers after truthfulness; that is, a sense of meaning that can be held with a sense of integrity, or a personal truth rather than a truth tested by experimentation in the world. The types of decision framework most useful in this quadrant include lateral thinking skills, intuitive understanding, content analysis and individual narrative analysis.

Example: In the context of the case reported above, the attacks on the World Trade Center, a coaching programme on decision-making was established with a key manager. It was unclear what options were available for supporting the key managers in decision-making in a rapidly changing situation. However, there was a decision model for response, recovery and mitigation phases in disaster situations (Taylor & Lane, 1991), which offered a starting point. Working with one key manager it was clear that the impact on him was very strong and he felt very keenly the loss of certain colleagues. It was uncertain if he was able to make decisions, if he needed counselling support, or if he could be coached to work with the decisions that needed to be made. Coach and coachee explored various personal narratives around his response to the situation and agreed to set up an emergent decision-making model to respond to rapidly changing circumstances. The coach met with the manager daily to review his decision priorities and the decision process that might be used.

Towards becoming effective decision-makers: Some final thoughts and recommendations

It is important to note that the Decision Quadrants Model is yet to be empirically validated. As such, it is offered as a heuristic device rather than an evidence-based approach. Nonetheless, as a means of enabling practitioners to consider and categorise the decisions they face in specific contexts, it has the potential to assist the development of a systematic approach.

As Lane and Corrie (2012) observe, decision-making in the 'real world' makes multiple cognitive demands of those who provide coaching services and is influenced by a far wider range of factors than we might wish to acknowledge or might even be aware. The ability to make decisions accurately is vital in certain situations. However, a 'quality decision' is typically an outcome of a process of reasoning that is more sophisticated and nuanced than the extent to which it is accurate. The dominance of an early research paradigm that focused on how practitioners' decision-making fares against actuarial data has prevented adequate research into the range of decision-making and reasoning skills that practitioners need to guide their service offers, and equally a lack of substantive professional guidelines on how to refine this area of competence.

Without the opportunity to acquire these skills practitioners will be disadvantaged as, by extension, will their coachees. Arguably, more is being demanded of the coaching psychologist's 'cognitive equipment' than ever before. As the demands of the workplace become increasingly complex there are compelling reasons to identify and equip practitioners with those distinct mental operations that will enable them to refine their methods of working with individual coachees, whilst also remaining responsive to the evolving evidence-base of coaching psychology. It is, therefore, critical that coaching psychologists are provided with the means to reflect upon, critique and refine their decision-making skills, both during initial training and through subsequent opportunities for continuing professional development.

This paper has presented the case for seeing decision-making as a distinct domain of competence that is separate from discipline-specific knowledge and acquired professional experience. Through reflecting on the limitations of the literature, it has been argued that there is benefit in thinking more broadly about the range of cognitive abilities that practitioners need to work effectively. This article has outlined a model which might support this endeavour through classifying decisions according to one of four quadrants along two dimensions (known-unknown; individual-collective). It is hoped that this model might enable those involved in providing coaching interventions to develop a more robust and systematic approach, even when the decisions confronting them involve taking risks in the face of many unknown factors. This model might also provide a road map for those who train coaching psychologists, enabling students to consider the different decision-making tools relevant to each of the quadrants identified in Figure 1.

For practitioners wishing to take immediate steps towards evaluating and refining their approach, the literature would appear to point to the necessity of: (1) raising awareness of common obstacles to effective decision-making (e.g. heuristics, attribution theory, cognitive biases); (2) reflecting upon and auditing our practice-based decision-making; and (3) evaluating the range of decision-making tools and frameworks available (in particular, whether we have sufficient methods for making effective decisions for the contexts in which we work, or whether we need to elaborate our repertoire). Nonetheless, this is clearly a starting point. To extend our individual and collective understanding of the decision-making skills that are both needed and employed by those delivering coaching interventions, the field needs to consider how to systematically support the development of critical thinking

skills amongst a highly divergent work force. The following questions are offered as a useful starting point for practitioners to audit and refine their skills, and for researchers and trainers to consider:

1. What does a good quality, or 'effective' decision look like? Can we identify criteria that are central?
2. How do we define criteria for effective decision-making that are context sensitive?
3. What are the competences required to deliver consistently effective decisions in practice?
4. What are the mental operations that coaching psychologists need to be able to deliver their services effectively? (We would anticipate that given the diversity of the professionals who call themselves coaches and coaching psychologists, these will legitimately vary from context to context.)
5. How can we best train coaching psychologists in attaining an effective repertoire of decision-making skills?

Through engaging with questions such as these, it is hoped that individual coaching psychologists, coaching psychology bodies and the wider coaching community might direct their attention to what is currently a neglected area of scientific and professional enquiry.

The Authors

Professor Sarah Corrie
Professional Development Foundation,
Middlesex University.

Professor David Lane
Professional Development Foundation.

Correspondence

Sarah Corrie
Professional Development Foundation,
21 Limehouse Cut, 46 Morris Road,
London E14 6NQ.
Email: Sarah.corrie@pdf.net

References

Becher, E.C. & Chassin, M.R. (2001) Improving quality, minimising error: Making it happen, *Health Affairs, 20*(3), 68–81.

Bieling, P.J. & Kuyken, W. (2003). Is cognitive formulation science or science fiction? *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 10*(1), 52–69.

Carkhuf, R.R. & Berenson, B.G. (1967). *Beyond counselling and therapy.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Cavanagh, M.J. & Lane, D. (2012). Coaching psychology coming of age: The challenges we face in the messy world of complexity. *International Coaching Psychology Review, 7*(1), 75–90.

Corrie, S. (2009). *The art of inspired living.* London: Karnac Books.

De Bono, E. (1995). *Parallel thinking.* London: Penguin.

Dowie, J.A. & Elstein, A.S. (1988). *Professional judgement. A reader in clinical decision-making.* Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge University Press.

Drake, D.B. (2009). Evidence is a verb: A relational approach to knowledge and mastery in coaching. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 7*(1), 1–12.

Gambrill, E. (2005). *Critical thinking in clinical practice* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Goldberg, L. (1959). The effectiveness of clinicians' judgments: The diagnosis of organic brain damage from the Bender-Gestalt test. *Journal of Consulting Psychology, 23*, 25–33.

Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations.* New York: Wiley.

Hillman, J. (1983). *Healing fiction.* Woodstock: Spring.

Hogarth, R. (1981). Beyond discrete biases: Functional and dysfunctional aspect of judgemental heuristics. *Psychological Bulletin, 90*, 197–217.

Hollon, S.D. & Kris, M.R. (1984). Cognitive factors in clinical research and practices. *Clinical Psychology Review, 4*, 35–76.

Kahane, A. (2007). *Solving tough problems: An open way of listening and creating new realities.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking fast and slow.* London: Penguin.

Kassirer, J.P., Kuipers, B.J. & Gorry, G.A. (1982). Towards a theory of clinical expertise. *American Journal of Medicine, 73*(2), 251–259.

Kelley, H.H. (1967). Attribution theory in social psychology. In D. Levine (Ed.), *Nebraska symposium on motivation* (vol. 15, pp.192–238). Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press.

Lane, D.A. & Corrie, S. (2012). *Making effective decisions in counselling and psychotherapy: A practical guide.* Maidenhead, Berkshire: Oxford University Press.

Lane, D.A. & Down, M. (2010). The art of managing for the future: Leadership of turbulence. *Management Decision, 48*(4), 512–527.

Luborsky, L. & Crits-Cristoph, P. (1990). *Understanding transference: The core conflictual relationship themes method.* New York: Basic Books.

McLeod, J. (2000) Guest editorial: The development of narrative-informed theory, research and practice in counselling and psychotherapy: European perspectives. *European Journal of Psychotherapy, Counselling & Health, 3*(3), 331–333.

Meehl, P.E (1997). Credentialed persons, credentialed knowledge. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 4*(2), 91–98.

O'Donohue, W., Fisher, J.E., Plaud, J.J. & Curtis, S.D. (1990) Treatment decisions: Their nature and their justification. *Psychotherapy, 27*(3), 421–427.

O'Donohue, W. & Henderson, D. (1999). Epistemic and ethical duties in clinical decision-making. *Behaviour Change, 16*(1), 10–19.

Oskamp, S. (1965). Overconfidence in case-study judgements. *Journal of Consulting Psychology, 29*, 261–265.

Paul, R.W. & Elder, L. (2002). *Critical thinking: Tools for taking charge of your professional and personal life.* New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Polyani, M. (1967). *The tacit dimension.* New York: Doubleday.

Rock, D.L. (1994). Clinical judgment survey of mental health professionals: I. An assessment of opinions, ratings, and knowledge. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 50*(6), 941–950.

Schön, D.A. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Shafran, R., Clark, D.M., Fairburn, C.G., Arntz, A., Barlow, D.H., Ehlers, A., Freeston, M., Garety, P.A., Hollon, S.D., Ost, L.G., Salkovskis, P.M., Williams, J.M.G. & Wilson, G.T. (2009) Mind the gap: Improving the dissemination of CBT. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 47*, 902–909.

Stice, J.E. (1987). *Developing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Taylor, A.J.W. & Lane, D.A. (1991). Psychological aspects of disaster: Issues for the 1990s. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling, Special Issue, 19*, 1.

Teasdale, J.D. & Barnard, P.J. (1993). *Affect, cognition and change: Re-modelling depressive thought.* Hove, East Sussex: Erlbaum.

Tversky, A. & Kahneman, D. (1973). Availability: A heuristic for judging frequency and probability. *Cognitive Psychology, 5*, 207–232.

Tversky, A. & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science, 185*, 1124–1131.

Waller, G. (2009). Evidence-based treatment and therapist drift. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 47*, 119–127.

Paper

The development of diagnostic skills by management coaching

W. David Rees & Christine Porter

In this paper the authors consider how psychological coaching can help those with managerial responsibility develop crucial managerial diagnostic skills. The paper refers to three organisational models that coaching psychologists could find helpful as they seek to help managers accurately diagnose the causes of organisational problems. These organisational models can be labelled as follows: (1) Systems approach; (2) Unitary and Pluralist Perspectives; and (3) Role Behaviours versus Personality Behaviours.

The paper also explains how lack of effective diagnosis can lead those with managerial responsibilities to get involved in a range of activities better left to others. Given that organisations operate as systems (Millett, 1998) faulty diagnosis can arise because of a lack of understanding that problems which emerge in one function of an organisation may be caused by actions in other parts of an organisation. Managers need to anticipate the 'knock-on' effect that their decisions can have on other areas of organisational activity. Further causes of defective diagnosis explored include a failure of managers to distinguish between role and personality behaviour and the adoption by managers of a unitary as opposed to a pluralist frame of reference, leading to an inability to recognise conflicts of interest and deal with these in a constructive way. Practical advice is given on the development by coaching psychologists of managers' diagnostic skills related to these models with reference to case studies.

Keywords: *Coaching psychology; conflicts of interest; delegation; diagnosis; disciplinary pyramid; holistic approach; knock-on effect; managerial escalator; managerial hybrids; personality behaviour; pluralist frame of reference; role behaviour; silo mentality; unitary frame of reference.*

THE ABILITY to accurately diagnose organisational problems and issues is crucial to management. Effective diagnosis of problems and issues is akin to good medicine – it may be highly counter-productive to embark on solutions before an accurate diagnosis has been made. The approaches to problem diagnosis undertaken by medics may be well known to coaching psychologists, (see, for example, Johnson et al., 1981; Langlois, 2002; Treasure, 2011). Coaching psychologists will also be very familiar with the interpersonal skills that managers need to use for example use of exploratory questions, active listening technique or joint problem solving (Hayes, 2002; Neville, 2009; Hasson, 2011). However, there are additionally certain organisational models that it may be helpful for the coaching psychologist to be aware of. This paper seeks to explain three of these models and the use that can be made of these to help managers accurately diagnose the causes of problems. These organisational models can be labelled as follows: (1) Systems approach; (2) Unitary and Pluralist Perspectives; and (3) Role Behaviours versus Personality Behaviours. The approach that we are adopting in this paper is an alternative approach to that taken, for example, by Tichy et al. (1977), which seeks to assess the health of the whole organisation with a view to organisation development. Instead we focus on what we see as a need to help the individual manager to diagnose the causes of the problems with which he or she is faced on a day-to-day basis. The paper starts off by explaining another important issue relevant to problem diagnosis: the failure to distinguish between symptoms and causes of problems.

As well as previously published examples, case studies are used in this paper that have been acquired by the authors over a number of years in the course of undertaking consultancy work in a variety of organisations. Our views of the usefulness of the models referred to above have been validated by the frequency with which we have observed similar problems occurring in organisations in many different sectors of the economy. Examples of organisations where the problems identified in this paper have been observed include: public sector organisations including local government and the UK national health service; not-for-profit organisations, for example, several universities and a children's charity; private sector organisations such as banks and building societies, hotels, and manufacturing particularly brewing and soft drinks. We have observed the same problems whilst working both in the UK and overseas, for example, China, France, Guyana, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, and Romania. It should also be explained that the cases cited in this paper have been chosen because they are seen as representative. The cases have been used in management teaching in a wide variety of situations and could also be used by the practising coaching psychologist in facilitating client reappraisal of their own situation and to develop diagnostic skills. Because of client confidentiality, however, unfortunately it has not always been possible to identify the actual players in the cases cited here.

Case 1: Failure to differentiate between symptoms and causes

The first case illustrates the failure of managers to identify the real issue and to distinguish between symptoms and causes. The case is that of a supervisor asking their manager for help with an apparent disciplinary problem. Frequently management training groups, when given this problem situation to diagnose and suggest solutions to, respond by deciding that the manager in the case should be taking over the problem instead of responding that the manager should check first whether or not the supervisor in the case should be encouraged to deal with it themselves. The case study is short but raises key issues and is as follows:

> Mr Jones, a stores labourer, has been employed in the Building Stores Department of a local authority for nine months. His supervisor, who reports to the stores manager, goes to see his boss. The supervisor tells the stores manager that he had told Mr Jones three hours ago to load a vehicle with materials that were needed at one of the Council sites.
>
> The supervisor explains to the stores manager that when he asked Mr Jones why he had not started loading the vehicle he replied that he had been busy on other jobs and had not appreciated the urgency of the request. The supervisor explains that this was the second time that he had been let down by Mr Jones in this way and that he was not satisfied with the reply he had had from Mr Jones.
>
> The previous occasion when Mr Jones had not attended to an urgent job had been six weeks ago and had resulted in the late arrival of materials that were needed on site where the employees were waiting to start a job.

When asked how they would handle this situation if they were the stores manager, the response of most managerial groups is to mis-diagnose the primary problem, which actually relates to the skill set of the supervisor. Instead of asking themselves why the supervisor has come to the manager with the problem without dealing with it themselves, management training groups usually concentrate on the behaviour of the employee referred to in the case who has failed to carry out instructions. Managers often opt to intervene directly, for example, by arranging a disciplinary interview chaired by themselves. The managers do not always see the consequences of taking such action. The result of tackling the situation in this way can be, however, to take authority away from the supervisor, who will then feel encouraged, or even obliged, to take further

such cases to the stores manager. The impact of taking the decision to intervene could, therefore, result in the stores manager taking on more and more of the supervisor's responsibilities, thus neglecting some of the work that the managers are actually being paid to undertake. A more appropriate response would be for the manager to diagnose why the supervisor cannot deal with the situation themselves and, if necessary, counsel the supervisor about how to handle such situations for themselves. Our suggested approach here is in line with the classic approach in social work to see if a person can be helped to help himself or herself rather than take the responsibility away from them.

In coaching managers to understand their role and that of others in their role set, coaching psychologists may, therefore, have to help the manager explore why they feel it necessary to intervene. Sometimes managers are unhappy with carrying out the actual work to which they have been allocated and would rather 'act down' since lower level tasks are usually easier to execute. In other situations managers do not have confidence in their subordinates and would rather intervene directly than take the rather more difficult route of coaching their subordinates to carry out the role for which they have been paid. The coaching psychologist may be able to help the manager see the importance of counselling the supervisor into taking appropriate action so that he or she is able to deal on their own with further incidents of a similar nature.

Other outcomes that may emerge from this case are that there may simply have been a breakdown in communications between the employee and the supervisor, or that the supervisor is unaware of their disciplinary responsibilities and what sanctions he can apply. The coaching psychologist needs to help the manager identify his or her objectives to be sure that there is an adequate case for them to be directly involved before doing so.

The above example may be part of a far wider problem - that of the effectiveness of the management skills of the jobholder – in this case the supervisor – as well as possibly that of the manager. Symptoms such as overwork and/or stress may reveal basic management weaknesses (Colligan & Higgins, 2006). Those with management and supervisory responsibility are likely to have a specialist background (Rees & Porter, 2008). This was found to be the case in 47 out of 50 managers surveyed (Rees & Porter, 2005). The corollary of this is that managers and supervisors do not necessarily possess the desire to carry out the managerial role, or the experience or training to do it effectively. As has previously been suggested (Porter & Rees, 2012), the coaching psychologist may need to help the manager identify their role as well as needing to support them in accurate problem diagnosis. In summary, it emerges from this case that accurate diagnosis of the causes of problems is crucial to ensure that managers deal with the root of the problem: in this case the root cause of the problem could easily be ineffective delegation and disciplinary handling is a secondary issue. The key to managers responding appropriately is for them to more accurately diagnose the causes of problems that are presented to them and not to respond precipitously.

Impact of organisations as systems

A more complicated but important diagnostic issue arises when decisions taken in one part of an organisation have a 'knock-on effect' in other departments, particularly if the connection is not realised, or not realised in time. Problems that emerge in one functional area of an organisation may have their causes elsewhere in the same organisation (Rees & Porter, 2008, pp.53–54). However, many managers may not always be aware of the organisational connections or may be predisposed to ignore these. Other departments in the same organisation may be reluctant to accept that their actions may be causing problems in

other parts of the organisation. They may also be reluctant to change behaviour especially if they perceive that this would hinder the achievement of their departmental objectives. A holistic approach is often needed. Because organisations operate as systems (Millett, 1998), solutions to problems may need to be in a different area of the organisation from where the problem has manifested itself. This is because of the 'knock-on' effect that decisions in one functional area can have on another functional area. The cases below illustrate a systems approach to organisations:

> A sugar producer in Guyana placed an order with a sack manufacturer for a large quantity of sacks. Unfortunately the company purchasing officer did not press the sales team of the sack manufacturer sufficiently on that company's production capacity. It turned out that the order was due to be met at a time of peak demand for sacks and there was, in reality, no possibility that the order could be fulfilled. The sugar manufacturer cancelled the order when this situation became clear leading to redundancies at the sack manufacturer and a three-week strike by employees in support of those who had been made redundant.

An even more dramatic example concerns the impact of bonus schemes in the banking industry:

> Bank employees were increasingly paid according to the volume of their sales. This encouraged bank staff to authorise loans regardless of their viability from a customer perspective. An instance of this led the New York Attorney General to comment in an investigative report that 'compensation for bank employees [has] become unmoored from the banks' financial performance' (Cuomo, 2009). The impact of making such loans has caused problems for the banks themselves when customers have been unable to make the repayments. Unfortunately this has led to many disastrous consequences for customers, banks and governments. Banks have collapsed due to management not thinking through the consequences of introducing such payment systems.

The above cases are illustrative only. Other examples exist, though organisations may not be keen to publicise them, or may not always understand the deleterious effects of decisions taken in one function can have on another functional area elsewhere in the same organisation. Other examples include how a switch from small to long batch production undermined a production incentive scheme in the fashion industry. The change in production methods meant that employees lost pay because no account was taken of employees on a payment by results scheme needing to learn the new system, therefore being less productive and earning less money while they were getting to grips with the new system. Another example involves losses incurred in a soft drinks company when small orders were accepted for remote customers: unfortunately the extra revenue was not sufficient to cover the extra transport costs (Rees & Porter, 2008, pp.73 & 342).

Developing an integrative approach

A coaching psychologist may have to help the manager understand the importance of adopting the systems approach identified above and the implications of this for problem diagnosis. The coaching psychologist might also have to help managers understand the many reasons why those with managerial responsibility may have difficulty in integrating their activity with those in other departments. As explained above, people rarely proceed directly into management but instead have an escalator type progression, gradually acquiring managerial responsibilities, initially in a specialist area. Most may remain as managerial hybrids, combining specialist and managerial work. Orientation around a person's specialism may be re-inforced by professional boundaries, for example, as in the UK National Health Service. The focus of professional training may have re-inforced the specialist

orientation but unfortunately this can lead to the development of a 'silo' mentality. This may mean that the activities of other departments are not well understood and not enough time and thought given about the necessary integration of different departments.

Conflicts of interest

A complicating but potentially hugely important obstacle to the accurate diagnosis of managerial problems can be the failure to diagnose legitimate and rational conflicts of interests between the parties involved. Fox (1965) differentiates between unitary and pluralistic frames of reference or perspectives. A unitary perspective assumes that the players in organisations have complementary areas of interest. In taking a unitary approach it may wrongly be assumed that the objectives and interests of all the parties involved are held in common. Any conflict that exists is seen as the work of agitators and not as a rational response to a particular set of circumstances. Unfortunately in change situations, for example, there may be winners and losers. Some parties may gain in importance, power, influence, remuneration and job security. However, this may be at the expense of others involved. People may be very quick to see threats to their own position whilst potential winners may not perceive the threats to others and take these into account. When identifying the causes of resistance to change the manager may overlook these threats and problem diagnosis may consequently be faulty.

In contrast, a pluralistic approach assumes that organisations are made up of many interest groups. Managers who are pluralists will embrace consideration of conflicts of interest and this will inform their problem diagnosis. Identification of potential conflicts can indicate a way for resolving issues that arise, for example, in change situations. Effective solutions are more likely if conflicts of interest are diagnosed accurately. If such conflicts are anticipated rather than initially being ignored, passions and suspicions are less likely to be aroused. Having accurately identified the causes of the conflict the manager could then be better prepared to tackle the situation often to the benefit of both the organisation and the employees; this may be by way of persuasion, negotiation or even the imposition of solutions where the power realities and organisational priorities permit. The following case is an example of a conflict situation that could easily arise in an organisation:

> A decision was made in a pharmaceutical company to merge two research departments, one larger department with 120 staff dealing with long-term research and development and the other smaller department of about 80 staff which dealt with research informed commercial product development. The purpose behind this was to foster co-operation and to increase emphasis on the commercial application of new products. The research director believed that moving both departments into a new purpose built research building would facilitate these objectives. The new building was on the outskirts of the city and about two miles away from the current premises occupied by the small department and four miles from the larger department.
>
> The research director arranged for the staff to visit the new building and expected them to be enthusiastic about the new facilities and future prospects. To help ensure that the move went smoothly the research director commissioned an employee survey. However, he was rather disappointed with the results of the survey, which indicated that despite his many attempts to spell out the exciting prospects for the future the research staff seem more preoccupied with the practical aspects of the move and how it would affect them.

An analysis of the above case from a pluralist perspective would help the manager to diagnose the possible causes of the employees' dissatisfaction. This could include concern about job security, the procedures for

appointing people into restructured jobs, logistics and travel arrangements to the new site, concern about the disruption of existing social networks, and a possible culture clash between the long-term and applied research departments. Initially the research director seems to have relied on downward communication and appears not to have involved the managers who might have been able to explain the views of the staff to him. Taking a pluralist perspective he would, however, have been able to analyse the situation more accurately and even might have been able to diagnose for himself the issues that were likely to concern the staff. This could have informed his approach and resulted in introducing change more effectively into the organisation.

Role behaviours versus personality behaviours

A further issue which coaching psychologists may need to make managers aware of is that faulty diagnosis and consequent inappropriate 'remedies' can also arise because of a failure of managers to distinguish between role and personality behaviour. The concept of organisational roles was established in the first part of the 20th century (Barnard, 1938). Organisations decide what formal roles need fulfilling in order to meet organisation objectives. These roles become institutionalised and 'persevere' over time, while role holders or job occupants do not (Ashforth, 2008). In the 20th century the social scientific concept of role became firmly established in its own right as being different from concept of the person or self (Oatley, 1990). It seems reasonable, therefore, to extrapolate from this to look at role behaviour as being something quite distinct from personality behaviour.

The need, on occasions, to help managers distinguish between role and personality behaviour can be related to the above case study of a pharmaceutical company. It may be necessary to establish whether a person's apparently unco-operative behaviour is because of the demands of their job or because of their personality. For example, a manager may assume that a staff representative is behaving in an awkward fashion and resisting attempts to introduce changes because of their personality. The manager might attempt to get the staff representative replaced in the mistaken assumption that someone with a more acquiescent personality would be easier to deal with. However, first of all the manager may have to be helped to realise that a staff representative will have been elected precisely to represent the views of their fellow employees. Secondly, the manager may encounter similar resistance even with a replacement representative because it is the demands of the situation and the role behaviour associated with it that is dictating the employee's responses.

There are other examples of how easy it is to mistake role behaviour for personality behaviour that can lead to quite inappropriate diagnosis and, therefore, inappropriate 'remedies'. The essence of some jobs is to monitor the behaviour of others, for example, jobs involving a significant amount of inspection of the work of others. A certain amount of tension may be indicative of a person doing their job effectively. Lack of tension may even be an indication that they are lacking in vigilance. A manager may assume that the aggravation caused by an employee undertaking such a role may be indicative of the need to replace them. It may, however, be quite counter-productive to remove a person from an inspection job and replace them with someone with a softer approach. A familiar example of role behaviour changing when a person is in work concerns that of parking attendants. You meet someone at a party without knowing their job, and you find them likeable. When you meet the same person out in the street in their role as parking attendant, writing out a ticket for a car parking offence, they would seem instantly less affable.

A recent example of mistaking personality for role behaviour came in the form of a disagreement between certain Members of

Parliament (MPs) in the current UK government and the Speaker of the House of Commons. The Speaker was heavily criticised by MPs from the government benches who are members of the same political party as he is. They accused him of disloyalty to the party when he extended the number of questions during Prime Minister's question time and reintroduced the option of MPs calling ministers to the House to answer questions on an urgent topic. The Speaker said: 'I was particularly concerned that ministers should be accountable first and foremost to parliament… the Prime Minister's job is to captain his team, his party, his government; my job is to referee. [I wanted] parliament to recognise that it isn't just there as a rubber stamping operation for the government of the day. [It] is necessary and appropriate to contradict and expose the government…'. (Jowitt writing in *The Guardian*, 15/8/2012). MPs in the government may have felt that as the Speaker came from the same political party, that he would chair parliament in their favour. Some blamed the Speaker's personality 'puffed up with his own performance' rather than recognising the actual nature of the Speaker's role.

Role of coaching psychologists

In the light of the above discussion, the coaching psychologist may find that they need to help managers resist pressures to take action before the actual causes of organisational problems have been accurately identified. Pressure could be placed on managers due to the impatience of colleagues and other, more senior, managers. An individual manager may lack diagnostic ability and often the too ready availability of prescriptive solutions from consultants and others, which may not match the actual problems, may precipitate action without adequate diagnosis (Rees & Porter, 2002).

A key part of the coaching psychologist's role may be to encourage those with managerial responsibilities to not only identify their managerial role but to do so in the context of the organisation as a whole. The problem of the over-specialised orientation of managers can be exacerbated by those with managerial responsibility not being sufficiently involved in the discharge of such responsibility because of the attractions of their specialist work. This can be reinforced by the specialist culture that may exist within a department or even a whole organisation. This has selection implications as some would-be managers may have greater potential to identify and accept the managerial role more than others. This may be particularly the case in many Western countries given common career progression patterns – loyalty and attachment may be to the specialism rather than the organisation. Career progression may involve many moves from one organisation to another and is in contrast to career patterns in Japan, for example, where staff, including managers, are much more likely to stay with the same organisation (Storey, Edwards & Sisson, 1997). A way in which one British-based petrochemical company sought to deal with this problem was to distinguish in their selection between staff with the appropriate specialist skills and those with a more generic, if broadly specialist, background with a view to the latter following a broader career path.

A holistic approach can enable symptoms not to be confused with basic causes. However, there are many factors within organisations that can encourage 'tunnel-vision' within departments. These include organisational structure, professional and personal loyalties, career structures and departmental rivalries. Other ways in which coaching psychologists can help those with managerial responsibilities develop a more integrative approach is to encourage them to develop their links with appropriate colleagues in other departments, get involved in project teams and undertake appreciation training in other specialist areas when necessary. In coaching managers to understand their role and that of others in their role set, coaching psychologists may have to help the

manager explore why they feel it necessary to intervene. Skills needed by the manager in such instances could include differentiating between cause and effect.

Conclusions

A key managerial skill is problem diagnosis. Unfortunately there can be many factors that prevent accurate diagnosis. These include poor selection and development of those with managerial responsibilities. This in turn may need to lead to an examination of key management skills which will enable managers to identify the cause of a problem and to differentiate between cause and effect. Coaching can be a useful way of developing this key skill – whether it be done formally or informally, internally or externally.

Coaching psychologists can help managers take a systems approach that will enable a holistic approach to be taken to organisational problems, just as is often needed with medical diagnosis. Problems that arise in other department may have their causes elsewhere. Coaching managers to take a pluralist perspective could enable managers to understand situations from the employee's point of view and thus aid better planning for the effective solution of problems. It is also important that managers distinguish between role and personality behaviour. It is all too easy, for example, to take a dislike to someone, who because of the demands of their job, is thrown into conflict with you. Ignoring or seeking to replace the person may be the opposite of what is needed. If managers are helped to distinguish between role and personality behaviour they may more correctly diagnose the cause of an individual employee's behaviour.

This paper has sought to put emphasis on the role that individuals play in organisations and to draw attention to this as an alternative explanation for a person's behaviour when diagnosing the cause(s) of the problem. Coaching can be a way of enabling those with managerial responsibility to take a broader perspective to problems and desist from knee-jerk responses – to the benefit of those with managerial responsibilities, their colleagues, the organisation and their clients.

The Authors

W. David Rees
External Consultant and former Principal Lecturer, Westminster Business School, University of Westminster.

Christine Porter
Head of Department, Human Resource Management, Westminster Business School, University of Westminster.

Correspondence

Dr Christine Porter
Westminster Business School,
University of Westminster,
35 Marylebone Road,
London NW1 5LS.
Email: porterc1@westminster.ac.uk

References

Ashforth, B.E. (2008). *Role transitions in organisational life: An identity-based perspective*. London: Taylor & Francis e-library.

Barnard, C.J. (1938). *The functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Colligan, T.T. & Higgins, E.M. (2006). Workplace stress – etiology and consequences. *Journal of Workplace Behavioural Health, 21*(2) 89–97.

Cuomo, A. (2009). Troubled Asset Relief Scheme. Referred to in: Report damns huge bonuses at bailed-out US banks. Robert Jebb, *The Times*, 31 July.

Fox, A. (1965). *Industrial sociology and industrial relations. Research Paper No. 3 Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations*. London: HMSO.

Hasson, G. (2011). *Brilliant communication*. London: Person Life.

Hayes, J. (2002). *Interpersonal skills at work*. London: Routledge.

Johnson, P.E., Duran, A.S., Hassebrock, F., Moller, J., Prietula, M., Feltovich, P.J. & Swanson, D.B. (1981). Expertise and error in diagnostic reasoning. *Cognitive Science, 5*(3), 235–283.

Jowitt, J. (2012). *John Bercow defends his record as Commons Speaker*. Accessed 18 August 2012, from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/aug/14/john-bercow-defends-record-speaker?INTCMP=SRCH

Langlois, J.P. (2002). Making a diagnosis. In M.B. Mengel, W.L. Holleman & S.A. Fields (Eds.), *Fundamentals of clinical practice* (2nd ed., pp.197–219). London: Klewer Academic Publishers.

Millett, B. (1998). Understanding organisations: The dominance of systems theory. *International Journal of Organisational Behaviour, 1*(1) 1–12.

Neville, L. (2009). *Interpersonal skills for the people professions: Learning from practice*. London: Reflect Press Ltd.

Oatley, K. (1990). Role transitions and emotional structure of everyday life. In S. Fisher & C.L. Cooper (Eds.), *On the move: The psychology of change and transition* (pp.67–81). Chichester, England: Wiley.

Porter, C. & Rees, W.D. (2012), The managerial gap and how coaching can help. *International Coaching Psychology Review, 7*(1), 64–71.

Rees, W.D. & Porter C. (2008). *Skills of management*. London: Cengage Learning.

Rees, W.D. & Porter, C. (2005). Results of a survey into how people become managers and the management development implication. *Industrial and Commercial Training, 37*(5), 252–258.

Rees, W.D. & Porter, C. (2002). Management by panacea – the training implications. *Industrial and Commercial Training, 34*(6), 229–232.

Storey, J., Edwards, P. & Sisson, K. (1997). *Managers in the making. Careers, development and control in corporate Britain and Japan*. London, UK, Thousand Oaks, US and New Delhi, India: Sage.

Tichy, N.M., Hornstein, H.A. & Nisberg, J.N. (1977). Organisation diagnosis and intervention strategies: Developing emergent pragmatic theories of change. In W.W. Burke (Ed.), *Current issue and strategies in organisation development* (pp.361–383). New York: Human Sciences Press.

Treasure, W. (2011). Diagnosis. In *Diagnosis and risk management in primary care: words that count, numbers that speak*. Oxford: Radcliffe.

Brief Report

Communities of coaching practice: Developing a new approach

Manfusa Shams

The collaborative learning approach and negotiated professional activities of peer practice groups can provide excellent opportunities to develop 'Communities of coaching practice', with an aim to foster the growth of practical application of coaching psychology. This paper aims to open up discussion on this issue.
Keywords: *Communities of coaching practice; peer practice group; coaching psychology; collaborative learning; coaching approach.*

IN THIS BRIEF REPORT, I would like to argue for the development of communities of coaching practice, based on my experience of being a host for the regional peer practice group in Cambridgeshire, England. I will focus on the critical discussion about the feasibility of developing coaching practice at a group level, in which collaborative learning and collective practitioner's skills and experience can be invested to develop good communities of coaching practice.

To foster the growth of coaching psychology and to provide effective learning environment for practitioners to share and develop ideas, skills and practice related issues, the Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP), The British Psychological Society (BPS) has initiated the formation of 'Peer Practice Groups' at various regions across the UK in 2009. The aim was to offer a trusted intellectual platform for peers to share, develop and challenge ideas, experiences and practices in coaching and related areas in coaching psychology.

Implementing new ideas in practice is a challenging task (Kitson, 2008), and context plays an important part to put new ideas into practice (Dopson & Fitzgerald 2005). It is thus a challenge for peers to accept views and ideas that are in contradictions to their existing practices and knowledge repertoire. However, the knowledge gained from peer practice can help to develop communities of coaching practice, similar to the notion of group coaching. The increasing value of group coaching has been justified by Brown and Grant (2010) in their practical model of GROUP. The coaching approach in the peer practice group context is offering a rewarding collective learning experience because the coaches learn from their interactions. Collective learning refers to 'groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interaction on an ongoing basis' (Wenger et al., 2002). The coach is expected to learn from sharing of knowledge and experiences (Culver et al., 2009) in peer practice group sessions through various professional development activities.

Coaches from a peer practice group have the opportunity to develop a common framework of knowledge about good coaching practice through critical discussion and collaborative learning. The collective effort to offer good and ethical coaching practice to benefit the coaches can be achieved from deep engagement in learning from peers' coaching experiences, coaching literature and from practicing coaching techniques in a group setting. This opportunity can be seen as a natural outcome of the interaction between coaches with or without any intentional motivation to develop coaching practice related issues, techniques

and tools for wide consultation within the coaching practitioner's groups.

The notion of 'situated learning' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) is relevant to discuss the learning from peer practice group discussions. The social interaction in peer practice session can help to challenge issues, and to identify appropriate interventions for addressing the challenging issues. If any group discussion on coaching practice is so powerful to make a change in coaching approach and practice, then, we can apply the outcome of the group discussions to develop communities of coaching practice approach, in which both formal and informal aspects of the group discussions can be embedded in the delivery of the practice. For example, coaches are continuously learning from their interactions with others in peer practice group sessions, and also from their participation in coaching practice development activities, critiquing and challenging selected professional issues.

To formalise and capture the knowledge gained, and shared understanding of good practice in coaching, we need to identify the learning processes of coaches in peer practice groups' meetings with an aim to develop a collective approach in coaching practice. The knowledge gained from group discussions, and the learning activities drawn to facilitate the discussion can provide excellent resources to develop further insights in coaching practice at a group level. For example, coaches tend to highlight an issue in coaching practice for seeking constructive feedback and suggestions, and this leads to further knowledge seeking behaviour, similar to a spiral loop (Shams & Law, 2012). The peer practice group offers relevant resources, skill building activities and professional engagement with formal events. Although there is no formal technique to capture the level of knowledge gained and skills developed in a peer practice session for coaching psychologists, however, the level of engagement can indicate the acceptance of shared learning and acknowledgment of the importance of group practice in coaching.

The collaborative learning approach in this context is related to both acquisition and participation metaphors for learning (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006), in which coaches can gain formal learning from various professional activities in peer practice sessions (acquisition metaphor). The participation metaphor is gained through participation in the discussion and delivering relevant ideas, thoughts and critical appraisal of the existing coaching practices. To drive these learning metaphors to reach a common goal of developing ethical and effective communities of coaching practice may require strong leadership and an environment to foster the growth of professional practice in coaching. The learning can be negotiated as is evident from the selection of activities during peer practice group meetings. The shared intellectual discussion and ongoing social interaction can ensure the smooth operation of a collective vision to foster the growth of coaching psychology practice. For example, we had a productive discussion on leadership and coaching in which coaches from our peer practice group were able to challenge the existing coaching practice, and to offer alternative pathways for coaching leaders, thus facilitating discussion on shared understanding of leadership behaviour from a coaching psychology perspective. I hope this brief report will spark further debate on, ideas of, and challenging issues in communities of coaching practice.

The Author

Dr Manfusa Shams, C.Psychol
Host – Cambridge Peer Practice Group,
Cambridge,
England, UK.

References

Brown, W.S. & Grant, M. A. (2010). From GROW to GROUP: Theoretical issues and a practical model for group coaching in organisations. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, 3*(1), 30–45.

Culver, M.D, Trudel, P. & Werthner, P. (2009). A sport leader's attempt to foster a coaches' community of practice. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching, 4*(3), 365–383.

Dopson, S. & Fitzgerald, L. (2005). *Knowledge to action? Evidence-based health care in context.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kitson, L.A. (2009). The need for systems change: Reflections on knowledge translation and organisational change. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 65*(1), 217–228.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shams, M. & Law, H. (2012). Peer coaching framework: An exploratory technique. *The Coaching Psychologist, 8*(1), 46–49.

Trudel, P. & Gilbert, W. (2006). Coaching and coach education. In D. Kirk, D. MacDonald & S. O'Sullivan (Eds.), *The handbook of physical education* (pp.516-539). London: Sage.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R. & Snyder, W.M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Report

Special Group in Coaching Psychology News

Sarah Corrie

AT THE TIME OF WRITING my second Chair's Letter for the *International Coaching Psychology Review*, the Wimbledon Tennis Championships are in full swing. Watching one of the matches, I have witnessed what appears to be the full spectrum of psychological states – from tension through to determination, anxiety to elation and disappointment to pain. As the tournament gradually sifts through the players, sorting them into the victorious and the defeated, a number of players have already withdrawn due to injury – a reminder that the pursuit of exceptional standards of performance sometimes comes at a cost and does not always sit comfortably with enhanced well-being.

I am very much hoping that these kinds of issues will feature strongly in our 4th European Congress in December. The theme – *Enhancing Well-Being and Performance* – seems critically well-timed and it is hard to think of a professional group for whom this topic wouldn't be essential CPD. Now is the time when the Scientific Affairs Board, in conjunction with the Conference Team, are pulling together the keynotes, presentations and skills workshops that will comprise the content of the event and I confess to being excited about seeing the final programme! There is an eagerness also for new contributions. So if this theme appeals to you, and you have ideas you would like to share with your professional community, please do submit an application (details of how to do so can be found by following the links on the website at: http://www.sgcp.org.uk).

It is not just the SGCP for whom conferences have been a priority of late. In May, I had the opportunity to attend the 3rd International Congress of Coaching Psychology in Rome where, jointly with Stephen Palmer, I had been invited to deliver a keynote. The Society for Coaching Psychology (SCP) Italy were gracious and generous hosts, welcoming their international colleagues with a warmth and enthusiasm that was consistent with their stated intention for the event to be a critical milestone for the field.

The SGCP is clearly held in high regard, such that at the start of the second day we were invited to 'take the stage' in order to promote our own European Congress. My assurance that, amongst the other benefits of attendance, 'A British winter was not to be missed' was perhaps asking the delegates to extend their disbelief a little too far! Nonetheless, expressions of interest and intention to attend were subsequently forthcoming. The free publicity was, of course, welcome. But more than this was the spirit of generosity and interest that underpinned the invitation which was a personal reminder of why it matters to me to be a part of this community. The very genuine desire for engagement, sharing and respect for one

another's work was one that I found refreshing and, frankly, rather moving. At a time of economic, political and professional pressure it is all too easy for disciplines to seek security through differentiation and division. Ours is one that remains steadfastly committed to diversity and inclusivity and I believe that these are qualities we should strive to maintain.

The keynote Stephen and I delivered, which we entitled, 'An international perspective on the development of coaching psychology as a profession and evidence-based discipline' introduced the audience to some fascinating data (collected by both Stephen Palmer and Alison Whybrow) on the contexts, practices, and sense of identity of coaching psychologists in the UK. Studies such as this are critical in enabling us to better understand and profile the activities, needs and contribution of our professional community. Additionally, a consideration of the evidence-base that underpins our discipline, and how we understand, interpret and use that evidence, provided a welcome opportunity to debate what we do and do not know about the impact of coaching interventions and what might reasonably be expected of a discipline and a profession that is in many ways still emerging.

The International Congress in Rome had attracted delegates from a wide variety of sectors – academic and professional – with an interest in coaching interventions and it was a joy to see how many individuals, at all stages of their careers, had considered attending to be a worthy investment. However, there is clearly much work still to be done. I was struck by the number of people who approached me with questions not just about the work of the SGCP but about the identity and scope of coaching psychology itself. In order to publicise the contributions that coaching psychologists can and do make we need to consider how best to promote our field, and to be perhaps more vocal about our contribution than we have been in the past.

Promoting the work of coaching psychologists can, of course, take multiple forms. Since my last letter, three developments are perhaps particularly worth highlighting. The first is that the SGCP has tasked a small subgroup of its members to undertake a review of the market and consider ways in which it might be possible to increase the visibility of coaching psychology in the market place.

Second, is the continued work on the Post-Qualification Coaching Psychology Register, currently led by Mary Watts in her capacity as Past Chair. There is considerable flexibility in terms of routes to joining the Register, but with flexibility comes uncertainty. The SGCP wishes to remain flexible, embracing psychologists from various backgrounds whilst recognising the need for clear guidance regarding routes to professional development and registration. To help facilitate clarity additional documentation is currently being prepared and the intention is to provide a seminar at the European Congress in December that will 'walk' individuals through both general aspects and the detail of routes available to them. Particular attention will be paid to individual academic and professional history and circumstances, demonstrating an approach to registration that is both rigorous and flexible.

A third development is one that promises to increase our links and broaden our community. I was recently approached by the International Society of Coaching Psychology (ISCP) who has issued an invitation to the SGCP to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with them. The SGCP Committee identified a number of benefits to members of such a relationship including free affiliate membership of the ISCP and access to their website and journal, *Coaching Psychology International*. More strategically, a common purpose and set of values allow for a new partnership in the pursuit of developing the work and standing of coaching psychology in the international community. I shall be progressing this with

the Society in the weeks ahead and will provide an update at the AGM in December.

As always, my thanks to my colleagues on the main Committee who work so diligently and tirelessly, and from whom I continue to learn so much. Without their on-going support my role as Chair would be neither pleasurable nor possible. We are, however, in a stage of transition. A number of Committee members are moving on after years of dedicated service. With increasing work-related pressures, individuals find themselves needing to reassess their priorities and make difficult choices about the various calls on their time. Yet this remains a time for building relationships and networks. We need to expand our community and ensuring new faces on the Committee is one important way of taking forward the work of the SGCP and its numerous projects in furthering the credibility, reputation and standing of coaching psychology. So there will shortly be a call for nominations for various roles. Please do give serious thought to putting yourself forward and contact me if you would like any further information. Your Committee needs you!

I look forward to seeing you at the Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh on 12 and 13 December for what I know is going to be a wonderful European Conference!

With my very best wishes.

Sarah Corrie
Chair, Special Group in Coaching Psychology.

Report

Interest Group in Coaching Psychology News

David Heap

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE of the Interest Group in Coaching Psychology recently held a strategic planning workshop in Adelaide.

The main outcomes of the meeting were:

- Our Vision statement for the group is 'Excellence in Coaching'. We felt this best expressed the simple essence of our promise as psychologists to our clients and the coaching industry. It will be the theme of our activities over the next year and for our next conference in 2014.
- We will maintain our focus on our traditional audience of coaching psychologists and increase our attention on clients and buyers of coaching services. Our rationale is that we should build on our strengths of strong evidence-based intervention skills and techniques and address our consistent relative weakness of marketing and promoting what we do.
- We will increase our collaboration with colleagues from the College of Sport and Performance Psychologists and College of Organisational Psychologists. This is underway and whilst we have always had close connections with other psychologists and APS Groups, this partnership will become more evident over the coming months.

One event where this will be put into practice will be our next conference, which will be held in Melbourne over the weekend of 16–18 October 2014. Please block out this time in your diary now. The theme will reflect our new vision of 'Excellence in Coaching'. We've starting planning early for this conference to make sure that we outdo the fabulous 2012 Manly conference in every respect.

We have maintained a busy programme of State-based events over the past few months, with very successful tours by Donna Karlin and Sunny Stout-Roston as well as workshops by a range of local presenters such as Kieran White in Victoria, Pauline Willis in Western Australia, and Tony Grant and Michael Cavanagh in Queensland.

An exciting initiative in NSW is for the IGCP to offer pro-bono coaching services to not-for-profit organisations. Inspired by Lew Stern's keynote address at the 2012 International Congress of Coaching Psychology at Manly, we aimed to identify opportunities for our members to contribute to society by using their coaching skills to support and develop leaders on the frontline of delivering sorely needed services to the community. IGCP NSW recently sought expressions of interest from coaching psychologists to be involved in a pilot leadership development project aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of leaders and emerging leaders in Relation-

ships Australia. We had an overwhelming response with more than 40 highly qualified and experienced responses. We are currently in the process of briefing participants with coaching commencing in September. We would like to encourage anyone who is interested in participating in a similar programme and we are more than happy to pass on our experience. Similarly, if you have already been involved in such a programme please let us know. Contact me on david@insightmc.com.au and lets build our community of expertise in this very worthwhile activity.

David Heap
Convenor,
APS Interest Group in Coaching Psychology.

International Coaching Psychology Review – Volume index 2013

Volume 8, No. 1, March 2013

Volume 8, No. 2, September 2013

4. Online submission process

(1) All manuscripts must be submitted to a Co-ordinating Editor by email to:
Stephen Palmer (UK): dr.palmer@btinternet.com
Michael Cavanagh (Australia): michaelc@psych.usyd.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

Supplementary data too extensive for publication may be deposited with the British Library Document Supply Centre. Such material includes numerical data, computer programs, fuller details of case studies and experimental techniques. The material should be submitted to the Editor together with the article, for simultaneous refereeing.

9. Post acceptance

PDF page proofs are sent to authors via email for correction of print but not for rewriting or the introduction of new material.

10. Copyright

To protect authors and publications against unauthorised reproduction of articles, The British Psychological Society requires copyright to be assigned to itself as publisher, on the express condition that authors may use their own material at any time without permission. On acceptance of a paper, authors will be requested to sign an appropriate assignment of copyright form.

11. Checklist of requirements

- Abstract (100–200 words).
- Title page (include title, authors' names, affiliations, full contact details).
- Full article text (double-spaced with numbered pages and anonymised).
- References (see above). Authors are responsible for bibliographic accuracy and must check every reference in the manuscript and proofread again in the page proofs.
- Tables, figures, captions placed at the end of the article or attached as separate files.

Contents

St Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7DR, UK
Tel 0116 254 9568 Fax 0116 227 1314 E-mail mail@bps.org.uk www.bps.org.uk

9 771750 276007 02
ISSN 1750-2764