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SGCP 4th European Coaching Psychology Conference

12th and 13th December 2013

Heriot-Watt University

Edinburgh

In the spirit of continuing to bring together the growing coaching psychology community to enable sharing and learning from each other, the SGCP is delighted to announce the **4th European Coaching Psychology Conference**

Details of how to submit abstracts for papers, workshops and posters, and how to register, will be announced soon

Invited Speakers include:

Dr Diana Aguiar Vieira PhD
Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal

Professor Stephen Palmer
Coaching Psychology Unit
City University London, UK

Professor Sarah Corrie
Professional Development Foundation
Middlesex University, London, UK

Dr Matthias Rosenberger
Elements and Constructs, CEO
Leipzig, Germany

Dr Dasha Grajfoner
Centre for Business and Coaching Psychology
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland

Dr Ole Michael Spaten PhD
Coaching Psychology Research Unit
University of Aalborg, Denmark

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For further information visit the SGCP conference website

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All paper & poster abstracts will be subject to review by the Scientific Board and are not guaranteed to be accepted

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Editorial: Research in Coaching Psychology: Qualitative and Practitioner Perspectives

Stephen Palmer & Michael Cavanagh

IT ONLY SEEMS LIKE yesterday when some of us discussed the possibility of setting up of a peer-reviewed international coaching psychology journal to be supported by the BPS Special Group in Coaching Psychology and the APS Interest Group of Coaching Psychology. We and our colleagues at the SGCP and IGCP believed that this journal would help to establish coaching psychology as a new branch of psychology. Almost a decade later after our initial discussions, we are now publishing Volume 8, with papers on a range of topics which are a testimony to the development of the field. The journal has been the conduit that brings the SGCP and IGCP to work closely together, with our representatives attending each other's conferences and also other projects with other professional bodies such as the international congresses of coaching psychology.

In this issue we have a selection of stimulating papers on a range of topics. It is noteworthy that so many of our contributors in this issue have submitted articles that use qualitative research, and which focus on the experience of the client and the implications for practice and research. This focus both complements quantitative research in the field and demonstrates a growing scientist practitioner approach within coaching psychology. The scientist practitioner model has been a goal in psychology since the Boulder Conference of 1949, and it is very welcome in this journal.

The first paper is *Signalling a new trend in executive coaching outcome research* by Erik de Haan and Anna Duckworth in which they argue for a new way of studying executive-coaching outcomes. They suggest that it is time now to be creative and pull together the limited resources for research we have in coaching psychology and as a profession we should make the most of this opportunity to discover how we might improve our service to our clients. Our second paper was a study utilising a qualitative design by Brenda Roche and Kate Hefferon on *The assessment needs to go hand-in-hand with the debriefing': The importance of a structured coaching debriefing in understanding and applying a positive psychology strengths assessment.* Their objective was to test the impact of a structured debriefing following completion of Realise2, an online strengths assessment, in relation to strengths application. The study found that all 20 participants benefited from having a structured debriefing after completing a strengths assessment. The debriefing led to a greater understanding and utilisation of the strengths assessment. They suggest that this pairing has practical implications for those involved in strengths-based coaching and development.

Our third paper by Qing Wang is entitled *Towards a systems model of Coaching for Learning: Empirical lessons from the secondary classroom context.* Wang aimed to investigate how coaching implemented in enquiry-based learning, would make a difference to the knowledge construction process, the development of positive learning dispositions and learning agency in secondary students. Wang concluded that the nature of coaching in learning can be captured in the systems model of Coaching for Learning.

Our fourth paper by Ho Law and Reggie Aquilina is a case study which used an executive coaching programme in order to support nurse managers in achieving organ-

isational objectives. The research was undertaken in Malta. Action Research approach was adopted for this study and the Universal Integrative Framework was used to evaluate the impact of the coaching programme. The authors concluded that the structured coaching programmes had a substantive impact on developing nurse ward managers' leadership skills. In the next paper Kimberly Allen argues that it is time to begin a global discussion on the topic of family life coaching as a unique field of study. She highlights the similarities and differences between family life education and coaching psychology, and creates a framework for professionals to begin a global discussion about how to integrate the two fields in order to create a theory and evidence-based practice in family life coaching.

The last paper is a dual case study focusing on the experience of team coaching. The authors, Catherine Carr and Jacqueline Peters compared the experience of team coaching between their two leadership teams using a qualitative case study methodology that tracked the participants' experiences. They concluded that the participant's descriptions of team coaching offered insight into valuable aspects of team coaching that informed the proposed evidence-based high performance team coaching model. They assert that the model can be used and studied by team coaching practitioners and researchers alike.

In the next section we have a response by Hugh McCredie to a previously published paper by Lesley Martin, Lindsay Oades and Peter Caputi. Their original paper was entitled *What is personality change coaching and why is it important?* McCredie argues that whilst there is support for long-term plasticity of Big 5 personality scores, the case for short-term coaching effects is unconvincing and coaches may be better served by focussing on the achievement of clients' personal goals. Martin, Oades and Caputi respond to his points in their rejoinder.

In the Reports section of this issue, in addition to the usual SGCP and IGCP news, we have a write-up on the BPS Special Group in Coaching Psychology 8th Annual Conference held last December in Birmingham and the concluding article announces the SGCP Research Award Winners 2012.

Last year the APS IGCP held a very successful coaching psychology congress in Sydney. Congresses were also held by coaching psychology groups in other countries too. The next event in the International Congress of Coaching Psychology calendar is being organised by the Society for Coaching Psychology Italy and is being held in Rome on the 16–17 May. It will have speakers and delegates attending from around the world. We look forward to seeing you.

Correspondence

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

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

International Congress of Coaching Psychology website:
http://www.coachingpsychologycongress.org

Paper

Signalling a new trend in executive coaching outcome research

Erik de Haan & Anna Duckworth

Purpose: *This contribution argues for a new way of studying executive-coaching outcome. The argument accepts that we are not likely to get rigorous data on coaching outcome from well-designed clinical trials in the near future, and assumes a degree of effectiveness that is based upon the first indications and the more rigorous studies that have been undertaken in psychotherapy. Assuming a moderate degree of effectiveness has afforded a concerted effort amongst researchers to identify the 'active ingredients' which predict the effectiveness of executive coaching.*

Design/Methodology: *This article contains a detailed overview of the quantitative studies of executive coaching undertaken to date. It covers both the body of evidence which we believe substantiates our key assumption of general effectiveness and some early research findings resulting from using that assumption. It also gives a brief overview of the findings of the more rigorous randomised control trials in psychotherapy outcome. Altogether we believe we have demonstrated that there are sufficient parallels between the new path of coaching outcome research and the well-trodden path of psychotherapy research to enable the exploration of 'active ingredients' research in executive coaching.*

Results: *By combining the early results in coaching research described in this paper and the overview of meta-analysis studies in the parallel field of psychotherapy, we have been able: (1) to show that – although the effect sizes in coaching are generally found to be smaller than in psychotherapy – it is safe to assume that executive coaching is generally an effective intervention, and: (2) to use that assumption as a basis for further coaching research. We have used this assumption ourselves to carry out research into the 'active ingredients' of effective coaching and to design a new research programme on a scale that has not previously been possible.*

Conclusions: *It is time now to be creative and pull together the limited resources for research we have in coaching psychology. As a profession we should make the most of this opportunity to discover how we might improve our service to our clients.*

Keywords: *Executive coaching; outcome research; leadership development; client-coach relationship; self-efficacy; coaching interventions; common factors; active ingredients.*

Introduction: Boundary conditions for coaching outcome research

AS PROFESSIONAL COACHES, we are faced with a challenge: on the one hand, we would like to know how much value we bring to our diverse clients and whether there are any particularly effective 'ingredients' that we can introduce to our sessions, and on the other hand we have little access to time and resources for carrying out the research necessary to address these uncertainties with anything like the statistical rigour typically required in psychology. This paper attempts to address this dichotomy with a new proposal for future coaching research.

Executive coaches and their clients are naturally very interested in the answers to the following questions:

- Does our coaching work? Does it help clients with their critical objectives?
- What aspects of coaching work? What are the 'active ingredients'? Under what circumstances do they work best?
- What intervention would work best here and now, with this client at this moment?

These questions about effectiveness and outcome occur frequently in the coaching

literature; however, it is rare to encounter serious attempts at answering them with anything more than a coach's opinion or a few carefully selected case studies. On the basis of our literature search[1] we estimate that there are probably fewer than 20 robust quantitative outcome studies throughout the coaching literature. One reason for this is the costly and cumbersome requirements of a rigorous outcome study. Another is that rather than studying, with detachment, their own effectiveness, a coach's priority is usually to satisfy their clients and meet their coaching commitments. However, if we do not address these questions we may find it difficult to justify our fees; difficult to assert unequivocally that coaching conversations are indeed beneficial and difficult to avoid the potential risks of executive coaching, such as misjudging the situation, aggravating the status quo or abusing our influence (Berglas, 2002). It is for these reasons that in this article we want to give a brief overview of the existing coaching outcome literature, including the three articles that approximate a proper research design with effectiveness ratings not influenced by the client or coach themselves, a control group as part of randomised controlled trials, and *N* large enough to ensure convincing statistical power (Smither et al., 2003; Sue-Chan & Latham, 2004; Evers et al., 2006). We also want to briefly summarise the more extensive and convincing outcome research findings in another area of one-to-one conversations: psychotherapy, where research budgets have traditionally been much higher. The overview of studies in this parallel field will give indicators of what is needed to enable coaching research to continue into the future.

We define executive coaching as a form of leadership development that takes place through a series of contracted one-to-one conversations with a qualified 'coach'. Executive coaching aspires to be a form of organisation and leadership development that results in a high occurrence of relevant, actionable and timely outcomes for clients. Coaching is tailored to individuals so that they learn and develop through a reflective conversation within an exclusive relationship that is trusting, safe and supportive. Coaching is, therefore, much more psychological in nature than the more conventional training and development that is characterised by the imparting of actionable information, instruction and advice. A 2004 survey conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in the UK reported that 64 per cent of organisations surveyed use external coaches, with 92 per cent of survey participants judging coaching to be 'effective' or 'very effective' and 96 per cent saying that coaching is an effective way to promote learning in organisations (Jarvis, 2004). In the same year (November 2004), the *Harvard Business Review* reported that business coaching – including mentoring – was a $1bn industry in the US and $2bn worldwide. The recent 2012 ICF Global Coaching Study (ICF, 2012) reported that the profession still appears to be growing with numbers of professional coaches currently estimated to be 47,500 worldwide.

If we take a step back and look at the nature of this industry there are a few features that are striking. Firstly, the coaching profession is in high flux and is only beginning to be regulated more rigorously, with professionals entering from very diverse backgrounds, such as senior management, organisation development, sports coaching, psychology and counselling. This wide range of backgrounds and the plethora

[1] In our search for original studies into coaching effectiveness we studied all the papers quoted in review articles such as Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001), Feldman and Lankau (2005), Greif (2007), Ely et al. (2010), Peterson (2010), and Grant et al. (2010). We also perused the latest (2009) version of Anthony Grant's annotated bibliography of coaching articles (Grant, 2006). Criteria for selection into the summary in this article were: (1) original quantitative research; (2) into effectiveness; (3) within executive or managerial coaching; and (4) that was peer-reviewed. We also checked all references within the outcome studies to cover the coaching outcome literature as completely as we could. Finally, several of our MSc students who were researching the coaching outcome literature came up with helpful references.

of models and approaches mean that individual professionals are practicing in vastly different ways. Not only is the executive-coaching intervention tailored to the individual client, it is likely to be tailored to the individual coach as well and to that individual's particular background, education and experiences. Overviews of the field have shown a wide range of practitioners, some psychologically or psychotherapeutically trained, some with a sports coaching background (Peltier, 2001) and others with influences as wide apart as the GROW-model, solution-focused brief therapy, psychoanalysis and person-centred counselling (De Haan & Burger, 2005).

Not only are assignments mostly tailored around the needs of the individual client or 'coachee', assignments are also frequently individually commissioned by an organisation or as part of a leadership-development or organisational-change programme. Contrary to other helping professions such as counselling and psychotherapy, executive coaching is commissioned and paid for by a wide range of individual contractors, sometimes at board level, sometimes from within the HR function, and oftentimes also more locally within large corporate organisations. In terms of Porter's well-known 5-forces analysis (Porter, 2008), the bargaining power of customers is, therefore, extremely weak and the bargaining power of suppliers correspondingly strong. This adds to the freedom of executive coaches to approach the coaching sessions as they see fit.

These features of the industry have clear repercussions for research. Whilst in psychotherapy most of the services are centrally commissioned by very large health insurance companies or national health services, this is entirely different in executive coaching. As executive coaches we are finding ourselves in a situation where there is very little pressure on rigorous outcome research and a dearth of funding for this type of research. At the same time we know from psychotherapy outcome research (see the historical overview in Wampold, 2001) that we are likely to need very high *N*, possibly well above 10,000, and a rigorous design with randomised control trials, to demonstrate beyond doubt that executive coaching is effective – with even greater statistical power needed to differentially explore active ingredients in effectiveness. For the same reasons as outlined here – little pressure from customers and little funding for research – there are as yet no rigorous randomised-control-trial studies available in the coaching literature.

In other words, presently *all* coaching outcome studies are weak by the standards of psychology and general medicine and there are good, understandable reasons for this state of affairs. This is a young profession and there is simply no funding for major research programmes. Moreover, there is no likelihood of funding by large and centrally co-ordinated bodies in the foreseeable future. It is, therefore, to be expected that the present situation will continue and that we will keep seeing interesting individual studies of effectiveness, but no firm conclusions.

In our view, the way forward for quantitative researchers in this field is now to assume what in our experience and from early research indications we sense to be true, that the general effectiveness of helping conversations as convincingly demonstrated in psychotherapy (see, for example, Roth & Fonagy, 1996, or Cooper, 2008) will also be true in executive coaching. If we then also assume that client's perceptions of outcome are indeed a meaningful measure of effectiveness (which is supported by research as well – see, for example, Stiles et al., 2008), we can proceed by studying the active ingredients in coaching. Interestingly and significantly for our field, within the much more advanced and rigorous psychotherapy outcome literature there is also a separate place for measuring active ingredients, and this research is done in similar ways (see chapters 4 and 5 of Wampold's 2001 authoritative overview). We are thus following a parallel path to that of our well-funded neighbouring field and using those parallels and that understanding of

method to enable the coaching profession to embark on meaningful studies into coaching's active ingredients with some confidence.

Brief overview of psychotherapy outcome research to date

As also argued by McKenna and Davis (2009), executive coaches can learn from the fact that in the older and more established profession of psychotherapy these same questions of effectiveness have been studied since at least the 1930s (Rosenzweig, 1936). In this tradition, rigorous research findings which seemed initially unclear and contradictory have begun to yield convincing results (starting with Smith & Glass, 1977), so that the demonstration of generally high effectiveness of psychotherapy is now near universally accepted amongst professional practitioners.

In summary the answers to our initial questions, when applied to psychotherapy, are as follows:

- **Does psychotherapy work?** Yes, in fact, it has been demonstrated that the average psychotherapy client achieves a higher effect on the relevant scales than 80 per cent of the people in the control group (Smith & Glass, 1977; Wampold, 2001). This is considered a large effect size in both psychology and medicine.
- **What aspects of psychotherapy work?** Different interventions, approaches, models and protocols don't appear to make any difference in effectiveness. The aspects that dominate are *common* to all approaches, for example, client context (what happens outside the therapeutic relationship); therapist characteristics (including empathy, understanding, respect, warmth and authenticity; being attractive; inspiring confidence and appearing confident; the therapist's own mental health and the ability to tailor the therapy to the patient), and the relationship between client and therapist during the session (Cooper, 2008; Norcross, 2011). Common factors[2] are, therefore, central to effectiveness in psychotherapy.
- **Under what circumstances do we find differential effects?** Not a lot is known yet but there are strong indications that motivational factors such as the therapist's *allegiance* to their approach and the client's *expectations* are more important than was previously thought (Wampold, 2001). These are also common factors.

For a more detailed appreciation of psychotherapy outcome research and its relevance in the executive-coaching profession, see De Haan (2008) and McKenna and Davis (2009).

One can always argue that these intriguing and convincing findings from psychotherapy are not relevant for coaching, because the investigations were conducted with professional therapists working clinically with clients suffering from mental health problems such as depression and anxiety, which is markedly different from the needs and issues typically addressed in executive coaching. On the other hand, these are convincing results based on meta-analysis of multiple rigorous studies.

Overview of executive-coaching outcome research I: Evaluation studies

Most empirical research into executive coaching is concerned with the value of coaching from the perspective of the client, with the research taking the form of an extensive evaluation of 'customer satisfaction'. On some occasions clients are asked to estimate how much their coaching has contributed financially to the bottom line of their organisation (e.g. McGovern et al.,

[2] The idea of *common factors* was already introduced by Rosenzweig (1936). He argues that if all professional therapies are equally effective, there is a good chance that the ingredients they have in common will determine the effectiveness of therapy – and not the specific interventions of an individual school of therapy. The active ingredients of therapy must, therefore, be common to all approaches. Examples are the relationship, the setting, the expectations, the personalities of coach and client, the presence of an ideology or approach, etc.

2001). Levenson (2009) provides detailed information demonstrating the positive business impact of coaching in 12 case studies. Wasylyshyn et al. (2006) and Kombarakaran et al. (2008) both show high outcome ratings for in-company coaching programmes. Wasylyshyn et al (2006) provides ratings for N=28 clients and N=17 'others' (direct colleagues of clients) in a pharmaceutical company. Kombarakaran et al (2008) provides ratings for N=104 clients and N=29 coaches. In both of these studies the majority of those surveyed report high value or 'sustainability of learning' from coaching. Schlosser et al. (2006) measured the outcome of executive coaching across a range of variables and industries and from the perspectives of manager/sponsor (N=14), client (N=56), and coach (N=70). Whilst a significant positive outcome was reported for all subjects, a significantly lower rating for the managers, in terms of return on investment, was reported.

In a different approach, taken by Grant and Cavanagh (2007), the results of a self-report measure of coaching skill (scored by N=218 coaches) was correlated with N=38 clients' assessment regarding outcome. This correlation was significantly positive (r=0.58; p<0.001) thus providing a good indication that coaching skill can be inter-subjectively established.

Overview of executive-coaching outcome research II: Incorporating independent outcome variables

The following studies explore the effectiveness of coaching by looking at independent variables over and above client, coach or manager satisfaction, but with no control group. Peterson (1993) studied N=370 leaders from various organisations at three points in time (pre-coaching, post-coaching and follow-up) with outcome defined by their own coaching objectives and five standard 'control' items, rated by at least themselves, their manager and their coach (multi-source ratings). The coaching programme was intensive and long-term, with typically 50+ hours of individual coaching with a professional coach over at least a year. Peterson found that clients, on average, achieved significant improvement on all measures of outcome related to coaching objectives (effect sizes d>1.5). Olivero et al. (1997) studied managers who had taken part in a three-day educational training course followed by eight weeks of coaching. They found that both the training and the coaching increased productivity considerably, with most of the increase attributable to the coaching (increase of 22.4 per cent with training alone and of 88.0 per cent with training and coaching, that is, almost fourfold; a difference which was significant at the p<0.05 level). In another study by Thach (2002), N=281 managers participated in four one-hour sessions of coaching over five months with a 360º (multisource) feedback process before and after the coaching. They found an average increase in 'leadership effectiveness' both as rated by the coaches and their co-workers (average increase 60 per cent but no significance reported). Bowles et al. (2007) looked at effectiveness in terms of increased productivity in army recruitment managers (N=30) and executives (N=29) who received coaching as compared to productivity changes in a non-random group of experienced recruitment managers over a similar, but not contemporaneous, time interval. The individuals who were coached showed greater productivity gains (d=0.43 with p<0.05 for the middle managers and d=0.75 with p<0.01 for the executives). Finally, Perkins (2009) studied the effectiveness of executive coaching on improving leadership behaviours in meetings, as rated by the coach. Using quantitative and qualitative methods with a small sample (N=21), pre- and post-measurement of meeting behaviours were scored by the coach and author, with a clear improvement of behaviours reported (effect sizes d>0.95 for nine out of 11 behaviours measured, and p<0.01). There may, of course, have been researcher bias in these scores as coaches

might understandably want their clients to do well.

There is also substantial work that has been done in the area of 'leadership coaching', that is, coaching as an aspect of management practice. This is coaching within a direct-report relationship, done by untrained managers. Two studies are worth mentioning because they have a rigorous, large-*N* design. Ellinger et al. (2003) have measured employee perceptions of the coaching skills of their supervisors in an industrial setting (on the shop floors of US warehouses). When these perceptions were correlated with their performance ratings as marked by their supervisors, a significant small effect was found (11 per cent of variance or $d \approx 0.2$; $N=458$). Similarly, Gregory and Levy (2011) looked at employee or leadership coaching at front-line management level in Fortune-500 companies, and found that supervisors' self-scored 'individual consideration for their employees' actually correlates with employees' ratings of the coaching relationship (50 per cent of variance or $d \approx 0.5$; $N=702$).

Overview of executive-coaching outcome research III: Employing control groups

A significant impact of executive coaching when compared with a control group has been found by Smither et al. (2003), Sue-Chan and Latham (2004), and Evers et al. (2006). Sue-Chan and Latham (2004) compared the impact of internal and external coaches with a wide difference in reputation in terms of (perceived) expertise and credibility. This outcome study involved MBA students in two countries (total $N=53$) and compared the performance in terms of team playing and exam grades and found small but statistically significant differences at $p<0.05$, between faculty, peer and self-coaching with the first the most impactful. As in Perkins (2009) above, this study may suffer from researcher-bias as the external coaches/tutors did the scoring of performance.

Evers et al. (2006) measured self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies, on each of three dimensions. Their study compared a pre-intervention and post-intervention measurement and also involved a (non-randomised) control group. The intervention was short with an average of only four coaching sessions. Although the sample was not very large (30 managers in both the experimental and the control group) they did find some objective evidence for a positive outcome of the coaching intervention. There was a significant increment for the coached group over the control group for one of the three dimensions in both self-efficacy beliefs ('setting one's own goals') and outcome expectancies ('acting in a balanced way') [$d \approx 0.5$ with $p<0.05$].

One of the most thorough studies on the impact of executive coaching was undertaken by Smither et al. (2003). This study worked with a (non-randomised) control group and conclusions were based on more objective criteria than evaluations by the clients. Smither et al. (2003) included evaluations by independent researchers together with clients' superiors, colleagues and staff (multisource feedback). This research involved 1202 senior managers in one multinational organisation with two consecutive years of 360º feedback. However, there were no more than 'two or three' coaching sessions per client (Smither et al., 2003; p.29). The researchers found that managers who worked with an executive coach were significantly more likely than other managers to: (1) set specific goals ($d=0.16$; $p<0.01$); (2) solicit ideas for improvements from their superiors ($d=0.36$; $p<0.01$); and (3) obtain higher ratings from direct-reports and superiors in the second year ($d=0.17$; $p<0.05$).

Brief overview of mentoring outcome research

The above findings are further supported in the more extensive *mentoring* outcome literature reviewed by Allen et al. (2004), through

a meta-analysis comprising 43 outcome studies of mentoring in the organisational/workplace domain. Taking only the studies with control groups they found generally small, but significant effect sizes (e.g. 10 per cent explained proportion of variance for the mentoring effect on number of promotions and four per cent explained proportion of variance for the mentoring effect on career satisfaction; that is, $d<0.2$). They also found the criterion measuring the mentoring relationship ('satisfaction with mentor') to be the best predictor of career outcomes (14 per cent explained proportion of variance or $d\approx0.2$ for career mentoring and 38 per cent explained proportion of variance or $d\approx0.4$ for supportive or 'psychosocial' mentoring).

One thorough study of mentoring outcomes included by Allen et al. (2004), is Ragins et al. (2000) who studied a group of 1162 professionals from a wide variety of organisations and looked at the effect of formal/informal mentoring relationships on a range of work and career attitudes. Forty-four per cent of the respondents had an informal mentor, nine per cent a formal mentor as part of a mentoring programme and 47 per cent had no mentor. This last group was used as the control, which was, therefore, not randomised. Their results show that the crucial factor in effectiveness is the client's satisfaction with the mentoring relationship. In the absence of that factor, there were no demonstrable differences between professionals who were mentored and those who were not. If client satisfaction with the relationship is present, however, professionals clearly demonstrate more positive attitudes towards themselves (self-confidence), their work, promotion prospects, their organisation and their career. The authors of Allen et al. (2004) later confirmed the results summarised above in a much larger meta-analysis, with $N>10{,}000$ and including workplace, youth and academic domains (Eby et al., 2008).

Conclusions from coaching and mentoring outcome research

In summary, we note that outcome research in coaching is still in its infancy and that the holy grail of executive coaching – 'Is executive coaching an effective intervention?' – is still there to be sought. In fact, no clear and agreed sense of what 'outcomes' should be or how outcome should be measured has yet emerged. There is no agreed research standard like the randomised controlled trials used in psychotherapy outcome research (Norcross, 2011). Also, the studies include a variety of processes which might themselves affect outcomes, such as explicit goal-setting, written development objectives, 360º feedback and other assessment tools, manager involvement, and even training programmes and a presentation to senior executives to summarise achievements (e.g. Olivero et al., 1997). Treating this body of research as equivalent is too simplistic. That said, what is striking is that the first five research papers above (Peterson, 1993; Olivero et al., 1997; Thach, 2002, Bowles et al., 2007; Perkins, 2009), which did not make use of a contemporary control group, found large effects ($d>0.75$), generally larger than those found in psychotherapy. On the other hand, the more rigorous studies involving control groups (such as Allen et al., 2004; Smither et al., 2003; and Evers et al., 2006) only found small effects, generally smaller than those found in psychotherapy ($d<0.5$; compare with average $d\approx0.8$ in psychotherapy – see Wampold, 2001). However, these are studies with mentors and internal coaches whilst many of the studies without control groups involve more significant coaching programmes with qualified professional coaches, and this is also a possible factor in the higher effects. It appears that if the client alone is the focus of the study, the outcome tends to be very positive. However, when such common-methods bias is controlled for, the effect is much smaller, although still positive.

Overview of executive-coaching outcome research which compares conditions

The overview of effectiveness studies in coaching above has shown that there are some indications that executive coaching is an effective intervention. However, there is also another body of coaching research, to which our own most recent research study (De Haan et al., 2013) belongs. This newer body of research in coaching outcome assumes general effectiveness of coaching and then compares conditions to determine the degree to which various aspects of coaching, coach or client impact on outcome. If one accepts the assumption of general effectiveness (e.g. as demonstrated by the studies quoted above) the experimental conditions of this type of research can be a lot less stringent. In particular, client, coach or sponsor satisfaction can be used as the outcome variable, and one does not need to employ randomised controlled groups, because the various conditions create proper comparison samples within the study.

We have found the following eight studies which explore the question of what sort of coaching is effective; in other words, *which* coaching models, personality matches, or coaching behaviours make a significant difference to clients?

Scoular and Linley (2006) looked at how both: (1) a 'goal-setting' intervention at the beginning of the conversation; and (2) personality (dis-)similarities between coach and client as measured by MBTI, impact on perceived effectiveness. The sample size was N=117 clients and N=14 coaches. No statistically significant difference resulted for outcome measurements at two and eight weeks after the session between 'goal-setting' and 'no goal-setting'; but when the coach and client differed on particular aspects of the personality instrument (the MBTI 'temperaments') the outcome scores were significantly higher.

Stewart et al. (2008) looked at how both client personality and client self-efficacy correlate with coaching outcome. They measured so-called 'big-five' personality factors (Digman, 1990) and general self-efficacy (see Schwarzer et al., 1999) for 110 clients and correlated these with coaching outcome. They found moderate positive effects for conscientiousness, openness, emotional stability and general self-efficacy, but warned that other factors are likely to play a role as well.

Boyce et al. (2010) studied 74 coach-client relationships in a US military academy where clients were cadets and coaches were senior military leaders who had had some training in executive coaching. The study analysed the impact of relational aspects (rapport, trust and commitment) and matching criteria (demographic commonality, behavioural compatibility, and coach credibility), on coaching outcome. Their main findings were that matching had no significant impact on outcome, whilst relationship, as assessed by both client (explained proportion of variance around 50 per cent) and coach (explained proportion of variance around 25 per cent), affected outcomes significantly.

With a sample of internal coaches working alongside a leadership development programme within a manufacturing company involving 30 coach-client pairs, Baron and Morin (2009 and 2012) were able to show that coaching clients' rating of the *working alliance*[3] as a measure of the coaching relationship correlated with coaching outcomes (measured in terms of changes in client self-efficacy, explained proportion of variance around 25 per cent) whilst coaches' ratings of the working

[3] Working alliance, as originally defined by Greenson (1965), is a measure for the strength of the coaching relationship. Bordin (1979) suggested that the working alliance can be thought of as a combination of agreement on tasks, agreement on goals and strength of bonds. Based on Bordin's (1979) model, Horvath and Greenberg (1986) designed the Working Alliance Inventory with three sub-variables: tasks, goals and bonds; which is now the most widely used of many well-validated tools to measure working alliance.

alliance did not correlate with outcomes significantly.

De Haan et al. (2011) examine how various executive coaching interventions make a difference to clients. Seventy-one coaching clients, from as many organisations, reported on the various interventions of their coaches and these ratings were compared with their evaluations. In that work, De Haan et al. found no distinction among specific coach interventions, leading to the conclusion that effectiveness is much less correlated with technique or intervention than by factors common to all coaching, such as the relationship, empathic understanding, positive expectations, etc.

De Haan et al. (2013) build on the previous study to research the relative impact and importance of various common factors for 156 new executive coaching clients and 34 experienced coaches. The purpose of this research was to look at various elements common to all coaching approaches (the 'common factors') and to measure which of these are likely to have the highest positive impact on clients. The study showed that client perceptions of the outcome of coaching were significantly related to their perceptions of the working alliance, client self-efficacy and perceptions of coaching interventions ('generalised techniques') of the coach. The client-coach relationship strongly mediated the impact of self-efficacy and the majority of techniques on coaching outcomes (except for perceived explicit focus on goals and helping the client to make discoveries), suggesting that the relationship is the key factor in coaching outcome.

One final article stands out in particular as it is the only quantitative study we have found analysing executive coaching outcome on the basis of genuine interaction data from videotaping initial coaching sessions (Ianiro et al., 2012). Ianiro et al. analysed the full interchange within 33 first coaching sessions with trainee psychologists as coaches and young professionals as clients, in terms of both the client's and the coach's interpersonal behaviour, over two basic dimensions: affiliation and dominance. Findings suggest that both: (1) the coach's dominance behaviour; and (2) similarity of dominance and affiliation behaviour between coach and client predict positive client ratings of goal-attainment after five sessions; whilst (2) also predicts positive client ratings of the relationship quality after five sessions.

The above studies constitute an emerging trend pointing at the importance of common factors as manifested through the coaching relationship. There are various helpful taxonomies of 'common factors' (e.g. Grencavage & Norcross, 1990; De Haan, 2008), focusing on relationship-, client-, coach-, change- and structure-related factors. The factors that have been studied so far include coach personality, client personality, generalised technique, relationship and self-efficacy. There are others of relevance, such as coach allegiance, client expectancy ('hope' or placebo-related factors) and 'client's life circumstances' that could be relevant as well.

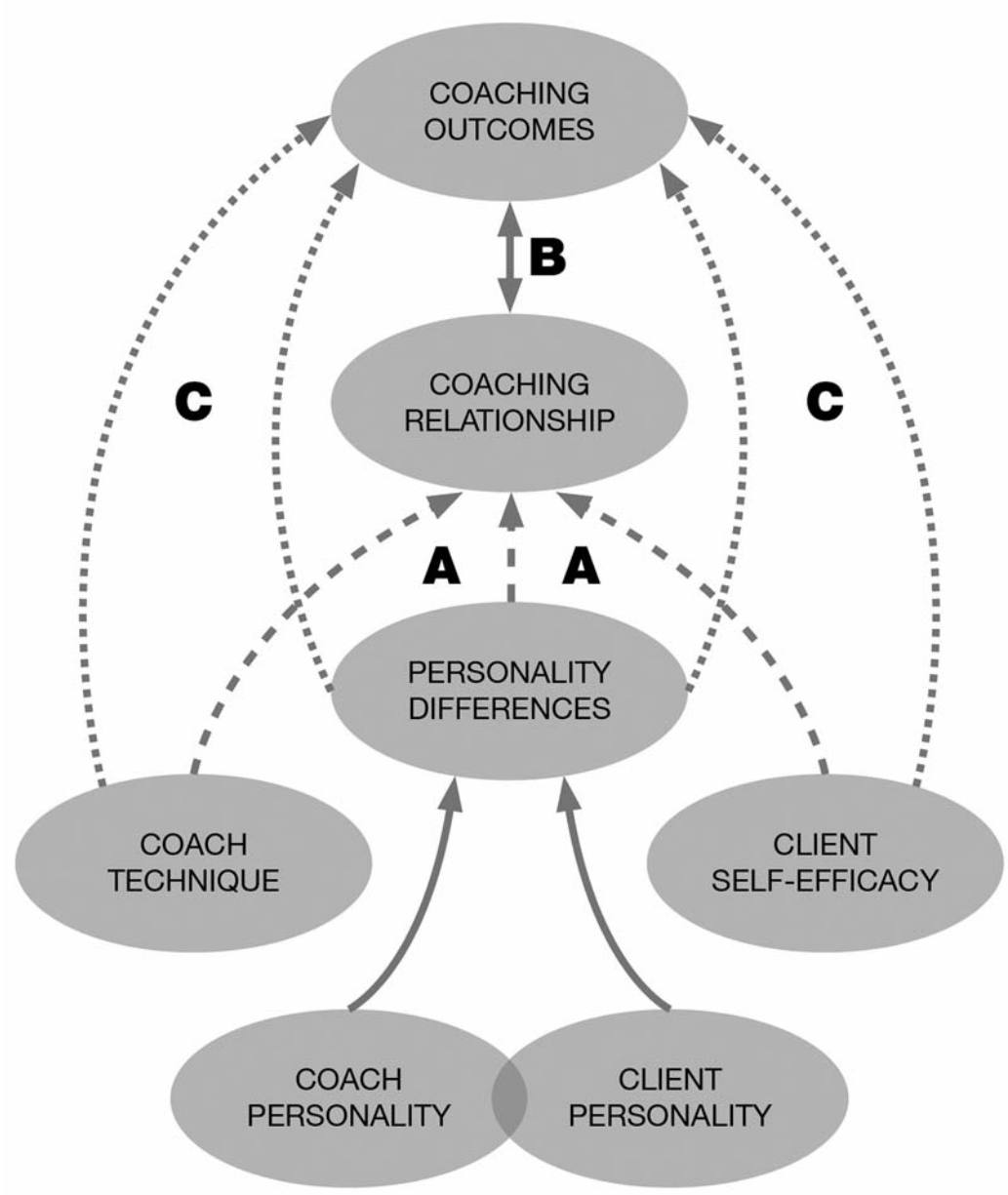
Figure 1 shows the various common factors hypothesised to have a positive impact on the outcome of coaching conversations. This figure also demonstrates how the impact of these common factors maybe mediated through the relationship, as some of the studies (Boyce et al., 2010; and De Haan et al., 2013) have indicated.

Discussion

All indications we have from quantitative coaching outcome research described above support the conjecture that coaching is generally an effective intervention even if some effect sizes are small. Also, some first indications have been found as to some of the active ingredients in executive coaching: client self-efficacy, the generalised techniques of the coach, client personality factors characterised by looking at the 'big five', and the quality of the coaching relationship.

The gold standard in outcome research is still beyond our reach as a profession and we argue that at this stage we will have to be

Figure 1: A graphical depiction of the various common factors that have been studied as independent variables: Coach technique, Personality differences and Client self-efficacy. With additional analysis one can investigate both direct influence of the independent variables on coaching outcomes (dependencies B and C), and the probability of mediation of this influence through the strongest dependency, which in the literature so far has been the coaching relationship (dependency A plus B as compared to C).



pragmatic with the resources we have until such a time that coaching psychology and centralised regulation have grown such that we can aspire to proper randomised control trials of a sufficient scale. It is important to note that there is now valid justification for continuing with research into active ingredients by examining and drawing on methods from a parallel field of helping conversations, psychotherapy. In this field the argument for effectiveness was demonstrated rigorously over many years and tens of thousands of participants. Rather than give up on proper coaching research because we don't have the funding, we argue that the early indications from research into effectiveness combined with the rigorous results from the closely related field of psychotherapy are sufficient to allow us to continue with research into active ingredients by comparing conditions as in the studies of Scoular and Linley, 2006; Stewart et al., 2008; Boyce et al., 2010; Baron and Morin, 2009 and 2012; and De Haan et al., 2011 and 2013, cited above.

Moreover, as Stiles et al. (2008) argue, effectiveness research comparing conditions within real-life coaching assignments balances the risks of standard randomised controlled trials (such as control-groups selection biases associated with lack of randomisation and the lack of assurance that coaching assignments were delivered in a standard way), by a greater realism and external validity of the research.

Having said this, we still need to pull together resources if we want to achieve statistical significance and make the research results meaningful. In De Haan et al. (2013) which looked at what makes coaching most effective for the client, the diversity of personality types and number of variables being examined meant that in many areas the sample size of N=156 was too small for results to be conclusive. We need much higher N, probably an order of magnitude larger than we have seen in previous studies. In our current work spanning 2012 which is based on an open-source approach where executive coaches around the world can become co-authors (www.ashridge.org.uk/centreforcoaching), it looks likely that such a target will be reached.

Active ingredients, and in particular the so-called common factors, seem a promising avenue to a better understanding of coaching. There are clear findings, clear controversies to be resolved (e.g. the influence of personality matching where Scoular & Linley, 2006, and De Haan, 2013, have found contradictory results), and clear indications of mediation by the strongest common factors. It would be helpful to have more findings to achieve greater statistical power on the impact of the relationship or working alliance, so that we can look more closely into key aspects of that coaching relationship, such as 'agreement on task', 'agreement on goals' and 'bond', as seen by clients and coaches.

We believe that we can now assume a degree of overall effectiveness, however, we also need to be wary of accepting only client satisfaction as an outcome variable (Mabe & West, 1982). Client perspectives need to be completed with the perspectives of coaches, peers, bosses and sponsors, or with the findings of validated psychometric instruments, as much as possible.

There is still a huge amount of work to be done in terms of investigating the 'real' client of executive coaching: the organisation of the client. We need to become more creative in understanding, mapping and exploring (potential) organisational impact of executive coaching interventions, and also, for that matter, study the more general organisational consulting interventions in quantitative ways. But above all, we need to pull all the available resources together to create more global studies, with larger N, and with agreement on how to define and measure coaching outcome. We hope that this overview can help to set the general direction for quantitative research in executive coaching.

In summary, executive coaching outcome research has now arrived at a critical and

exciting juncture where two decades of empirical studies have created some consensus that executive coaching may well be an effective intervention. First indications are that executive coaching may turn out to be less effective than psychotherapy which would be understandable as it is a less intensive intervention as well (with generally lower frequency and number of sessions). At this juncture we can safely assume that more of the same empirical studies will scarcely tell us more about effectiveness of coaching. More similar studies will only yield more of the same indications, whilst to move beyond the present level of understanding much more rigour would be needed in terms of control groups, randomisation and statistical power. We have argued here that there are ways to move beyond this juncture into new and uncharted territory, ways to achieve more confidence in terms of the factors that impact on coaching effectiveness. These new ways can only be found in our view by means of:

1. Broad agreement amongst professional coaches and researchers in terms of research design and choice of independent variables across studies, such as has already been achieved for, for example, self-efficacy, personality and working-alliance instruments, which have all been used by several research teams.
2. A pooling together of resources in order to increase the *N* or statistical power. This is what we have done in our own global coaching effectiveness study that has recently been launched through the Ashridge Centre for Coaching, the Coaching Psychology Unit of the University of Sydney and the Department of Management & Organisation of the VU University in Amsterdam. By 'going global' with effectiveness research we will have a much better chance to pick up relatively small and yet important correlations.

We are looking forward to what appears to be a very bright coaching outcome research future beyond this juncture.

The Authors

Dr Erik de Haan is Director of Ashridge Centre for Coaching and Professor of Organisation Development and Coaching at the VU University of Amsterdam.

Dr Anna Duckworth is Director of Duckworth Coaching Associates, an Associate Faculty member of the Ashridge Centre for Coaching and a Coach Mentor Supervisor with The OCM Group.

Correspondence

Dr Erik de Haan
Ashridge Centre for Coaching,
Ashridge Business School,
Berkhamsted,
Hertfordshire HP4 1NS, UK.
Email: erik.dehaan@ashridge.org.uk
www.ashridge.org.uk/erikdehaan

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Paper

'The assessment needs to go hand-in-hand with the debriefing': The importance of a structured coaching debriefing in understanding and applying a positive psychology strengths assessment

Brenda Roche & Kate Hefferon

Objectives: *Despite extensive empirical evidence supporting the use of strengths, minimal research has been conducted on the practical application of strengths tools. The objective of this study was to test the impact of a structured debriefing following completion of Realise2, an online strengths assessment, in relation to strengths application (Linley, Willars & Biswas-Diener, 2010).*

Design: *The study utilised a qualitative design. Semi-structured interviews were employed and thematic analysis was used to identify themes representing the participant's experience (Braun & Clarke, 2006).*

Method: *The 20 participants were a mixture of middle and senior managers from a global travel organisation. All participants completed the Realise2 strengths assessment and a structured debriefing with a qualified coach. Following the debriefing, each participant completed a semi-structured interview to determine how the debriefing impacted their understanding and utilisation of the assessment findings.*

Results: *The results show that the debriefing was associated with engendering action, enhancing self-efficacy and stimulating psychological development.*

Conclusions: *The study found that all 20 participants benefited from having a structured debriefing after completing a strengths assessment. The debriefing led to a greater understanding and utilisation of the strengths assessment. This pairing has practical implications for those involved in strengths-based coaching and development. In addition, limitations of the study are discussed and areas for future research suggested.*

Keywords: *Strengths debriefing; coaching; action; self-efficacy; positive psychology.*

STRENGTHS are defined as *'a pre-existing capacity for a particular way of behaving, thinking or feeling that is authentic and energising to the user and enables optimal functioning, development and performance'* (Linley, 2008, p.9). The case for strengths has gained momentum in the past decade, linked heavily to the positive psychology movement (Sheldon & King, 2001). Positive psychology (described as the scientific study of human strengths and virtues) has amassed a large amount of quantitative data in relation to strengths use, linking it to subjective and psychological well-being (Govindji & Linley, 2007). For example, Minhas (2010) found that strengths use is associated with higher levels of self-esteem. Other benefits of using strengths include: increased profitability, engagement (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002), better performance at work (Clifton & Harter, 2003) and various business benefits (Corporate Leadership Council, 2002).

Research has found that a strengths focus is a valuable endeavour and yet approximately two thirds of people when asked cannot name their strengths (Hill, 2001; Arnold, 1997). Strengths assessments fill this

void. To date, over four million people have taken one of the three strengths assessments associated with positive psychology, the VIA strengths inventory (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), Clifton StrengthsFinder 2.0 (Rath, 2008) and Realise2. However, there is little data demonstrating the individual's understanding and utilisation of their strengths profiles. This study aims to bridge this gap.

Positive psychology is an applied science and a growing number of coaches and consultants are using a strengths-based approach to their practice (Biswas-Diener, 2009). Coaching, with its positive focus, is an ideal arena for strengths development. Clifton and Harter (2003) describe three stages of strengths-based development. The initial stage is the identification of strengths by completing a strengths assessments. The second stage involves an increase of self-awareness as the individual integrates the results of their profile report into their own self-assessment. The final stage involves behavioural change. The purpose of completing a structured debriefing is to facilitate stages two and three of this process by coaching, supporting and challenging the individual in relation to their strengths.

Govindji and Linley (2007) suggest that strengths knowledge is not a significant independent predictor of well-being but that strengths use is associated with higher levels of subjective well-being. Therefore, using strengths may be more important than just knowing them. Strengths coaching and coaching psychology are complementary partners, as both focus on improvement of performance and well-being. Linley and Harrington (2006) propose that a strengths-based approach adds significant value to coaching psychology and compliments coaching's overall aim of 'enhancing well-being and performance in both personal and professional life using evidence based coaching models' (Palmer & Whybrow, 2005, p.7, as cited in Grant & Palmer, 2002). Executive coaches, who are increasingly called on to show a return on investment, are adopting a strengths-based approach.

Aim

The aim of this qualitative research was to analyse the experience of 20 participants on completion of a structured debriefing of their strengths profile report. The research sought to establish whether the debriefing impacted the participants understanding and use of their report. This study aimed to get to the heart of the contributing factors that led to successful strengths development. To achieve this aim, participant's data relating to their experience of the debriefing process was analysed. In particular, this research sought to determine whether the debriefing facilitated the practical application of strengths assessments. This study aims to balance the significant amount of quantitative strengths research by capturing and reporting the qualitative perspective of people's experience of strengths development. Linley (2008) suggests that there is a need to explore the pragmatic application of strengths theory to inform practitioners.

The assessment is a good starting point for strengths exploration; however, the debriefing process allows a more in-depth exploration and development of strengths. It provides an opportunity for participants to ask questions about their profile report and to explore and express their response to their results. The Centre of Applied Positive Psychology (CAPP, 2010) has developed a structured debriefing which encourages stretch goals and action planning. These are important considerations as Latham and Locke (2007) suggest that each are integral to positive change. The goal orientated focus of the debriefing is also important as the desired result of strengths development is behavioural change (Clifton & Harter, 2003). The debriefing process provides knowledge, challenge, feedback, an objective sounding board and a supportive environment to facilitate this change. In essence, it is a structured coaching conversation focusing on strengths. To maximise this process, the skills profile of the person leading the debriefing is important. Ideally, a strengths coach will have successfully

completed a relevant strengths practitioner programme and have demonstrated a level of skill and competence in the use of the strengths in a coaching context.

Method

Methodological paradigm

Thematic analysis was used for this study as this method does not require linking to specific theoretical frameworks. This method was adopted to identify themes embedded throughout the interviews. An inductive 'bottom up' approach was used for identification of themes (e.g. Frith & Gleeson, 2004, as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006). This flexible approach allowed themes to emerge that were strongly data-driven and assumed the position of the participants being the expert of their experience. The process of qualitative analysis is subjective and thus different researchers will reach different conclusions (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2006). The researcher's here acknowledge that themes are not selected in an epistemological vacuum and reflexivity is considered in the analysis. Therefore, the researcher's framework relevant to this research is stated as a pragmatic and constructivist one. In this study, the researcher's interpretative framework was influenced by training and practice in counselling, executive coaching and applied positive psychology. The first author was also the strengths coach for the debriefing process of this study having trained and practiced as a strengths practitioner. In this context, the coach worked from a person-centred, integrative approach, assuming that the client is the expert in their own life. A solution-focused approach, ensuring solutions were gleaned from the participant not the researcher and an emphasis on the participant's strengths and resources complimented this theoretical stance.

Participants

The research was conducted in a large multinational travel company which provides various hospitality products and services. The participant sample was a mixed gender, multicultural group from nine different countries including: 10 from Ireland, three from England and one each from Australia, Belgium, Argentina, Spain, Hungary, South Africa and Italy. All participants spoke English fluently. The six men and 14 women comprised of two company directors, eight managers, 10 team leaders and one personal assistant. The age range was from 30 to 42 years.

Ethical issues

Provision was made as per University of East London and British Psychological Society ethical guidelines. Participants were allocated pseudonyms and these were used throughout this study to protect anonymity.

Procedure

Realise2 was deemed to be the most appropriate fit of the three strengths assessments for this study as its dynamic model fits well with the dynamic nature of coaching. Realise2 is an integrated model of 60 strengths which are rated according to energy, performance and use. This model distinguishes between strengths you use and don't use; realised and unrealised strengths and the strengths that you do well but find draining (learned behaviours). This model, unlike the other two, also addresses weaknesses which need to be overcome in the workplace when they are performance critical. Together the four characteristics of realised strengths, unrealised strengths, learned behaviours and weaknesses make up the four quadrants of the Realise2, 4M model. The 4 'Ms' refer to the advice that follows from the model output. Realised strengths are characterised by high energy, performance and use and the model suggests marshalling these by using them appropriately for the situation or context. Learned behaviours refer to activities that we are good at; however, they are generally draining, posing a risk to our psychological health and well-being. The model advises moderating their use. Weaknesses are dealt with head on

Table 1: Participant characteristics.

Name	Sex	Age	Nationality	Position
Fred	M	38	Irish	Director
Diane	F	40	Irish	Director
Damien	M	35	Australian	Manager
Alex	M	30	British	Team Leader
Margaret	F	40	Irish	Manager
Yvette	F	36	Irish	Manager
Olwen	F	40	Irish	Manager
Mariene	F	36	Irish	Team Leader
Sarah	F	34	Irish	Manager
Christine	F	39	Italian	Team Leader
Niamh	F	33	Irish	Manager
Sandra	F	42	Irish	Manager
Allison	F	37	Hungarian	Team leader
Rachel	F	38	British	Personal assistant
Gabriella	F	37	British	Team leader
Dennis	M	34	Belgium	Team Leader
Martina	F	35	Argentinean	Team Leader
Martin	M	33	Irish	Team leader
Molly	F	36	Spanish	Manager
Kevin	M	38	South African	Team Leader

in this model through frank discussion, open acceptance and ownership (Linley, Woolston & Biswas-Diener, 2009). According to the model, their use needs to be minimised. Finally, unrealised strengths are our strengths that energise us but are underused. The model advocates maximising these by finding more opportunities for their use (Linley, Willars & Biswas-Diener, 2010). This study determines people's experience of being debriefed through this model and provides valuable information for best practice for coaches working with strengths.

Participants were invited to enrol in the study by the Director of Operations within their organisation. Each participant received an email from the first author containing details of the study, an attached consent form and an information sheet outlining the aim of the study, confidentiality and general information regarding the research. The right to withdraw at any time without explanation was clearly documented. Once all signed consent forms were returned, participants were requested to complete the online Realise2 assessment. Their profile report was available immediately on completion of the assessment. Within a timeframe of one week to one month, each participant had a one hour long debriefing of their profile report with the main researcher. The debriefing followed a structured format including: highlighting confidentiality, establishing aims and context, explanation of the 4M model, debriefing of strengths, establishing priorities and agreeing goals and actions.

Data collection

Inductive semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with each participant to get to the heart of their experience of the assessment and debriefing process. Specific open questions were asked to determine the participants' experience of the assessment and the debriefing and their understanding of their profiles after completing each one. They were asked if they had set any goals or taken any action after the assessment or after the debriefing. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed.

Data analysis

Each transcript was read several times and significant features of the data were noted. Prevalence and significance of the data was recorded during this process. These notes were then coded in a systemic fashion. As this was an under-researched area, the researchers looked for the predominant and important themes that captured the participant's views. Prevalence across the transcripts was considered when selecting themes to accurately reflect the content of the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Emerging themes were listed and sub-themes recorded. The data was then collated for each emerging theme. The data set was independently audited to check the credibility of the codes and themes. The frequency of each of the themes discussed is mapped in Table 2. These were then ordered and a table of themes and sub-themes was produced (see Table 3).

Reflexivity

The debriefing conversation appeared to be more in depth and detailed than would be normally found in an initial coaching session. As participants gave examples of their strengths at play, they provided rich information relevant to their life. There was also a noticeable surge in positive emotions and energy and as a result this increased the level of engagement and narrative. This is an important finding for coaching, as coaching is often time limited, so a strengths-based focus potentially increases the amount of useful information gleaned in one session. The positive focus of these potential-guided debriefings seemed to generate ideas and creativity within the session.

The first author also observed that trust and rapport was established quickly with participants which is an important determinant for effective semi-structured interviews (Willig, 2001). There may be a number of reasons for this. For example, whilst the coach had not met with any of the participants previously, she had worked in the organisation on a number of occasions as a coach and trainer and had established a trusting relationship with the Operations Director who invited participants to enrol for the research. Also confidentiality was established at the outset. Furthermore, the fact that the coach was external to the organisation meant that she provided an objective sounding board free from any organisational agenda. The first author completed both the debriefing and the semi-structured interview. As a result there was potential for interviewees to be reticent to share negative views. That said, the first author found the participants to be frank and relaxed during the process and did not get a sense of any discomfort during the interview.

Results

The overarching finding was that the debriefing conversation was instrumental in instigating the participants to act. Another significant finding was that the debriefing increased the participants understanding of their strengths and how to harness them. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the process are outlined in Table 3.

1. Engendering action

Analysis of the data showed that there was dissociation between completing a strengths assessment and taking action. The participants related that the debriefing engendered action in a number of ways which are captured under the sub themes of: setting the stage, understanding the profile and

Table 2: Frequency of themes across participants.

Participant	Importance of debrief	Engendering action	Setting the stage	Understanding profile	Goal clarity	Positive emotions	Strengths acknowledged	Self-awareness and insight	Strength development and use	Coaching relationship	Coaching context
Fred	x	x	x		x			x			x
Diane	x	x		x	x		x		x		x
Dave	x	x	x		x	x	x			x	x
Alex	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	
Margaret	x	x		x	x			x	x		x
Yvette	x	x		x	x	x		x	x		x
Olwen	x	x	x		x		x			x	
Marlene	x		x			x	x		x		
Sara	x	x		x	x				x		x
Christine	x	x	x	x		x				x	
Niamh	x	x	x	x		x					
Sandra	x		x		x			x	x		x
Alison	x	x		x	x						
Rachel	x	x	x	x	x			x			
Gabriella	x	x		x	x		x	x	x		x
Denis	x	x	x		x	x		x		x	x
Martina	x	x	x			x	x		x		
Martin	X		x	x		x					x
Molly	x	x		x	x		x	x		x	
Kevin	x	x			x			x	x		x

Table 3: Main themes and sub-themes.

Main theme	Sub-theme
1. Engendering action	1.1. Setting the stage
	1.2. Understanding the profile
	1.3. Goal clarity
2. Enhancing self-efficacy	2.1. Positive emotions
	2.2. Strengths acknowledgement
3. Stimulating psychological development	3.1. Self-awareness and insight
	3.2. Strengths development and use
4. The coaching component	4.1. Coaching relationship
	4.2. Coaching context

goal clarity. While the majority of participants found the assessment very accurate and interesting, only three participants took specific action. The remaining simply read and reflected on their results. One might suggest that they were waiting for the debriefing to act, however, this did not seem to be the reason for inaction. Prior to the debriefing, the majority of participants reported that once the assessment was completed, it was put to one side in place of other priorities.

> *'Having the opportunity to discuss the results makes a huge difference. I think that without the debriefing afterwards, it would lose a lot of its usefulness.'* (Dave)

The specific action that participants took in relation to the debriefing ranged from setting specific goals, committing to discussing their profile report with their manger or significant other and committing to completing the online development plan that accompanies Realise2.

1.1. Setting the stage

Feedback from the participants suggested that the debriefing 'set the stage' by providing time and space for reflection and focus. Furthermore, it allowed participants to explore in more depth the finer detail of their profile report.

> *'It would probably go as another little exercise I did on myself. I think the debrief is important because you can sit down and you give yourself the time to go through it properly.'* (Sarah)

Without the debriefing, participants reported that their profile report may not have received sufficient attention to engender action. It seems that the discussion ignited their interest and engagement. Setting time aside for a discussion with the coach transformed the assessment from an interesting exercise to an opportunity for development. One typical example of this was Margaret who left the debriefing with enthusiasm and a clear written plan of action.

> *'I didn't take any action when I completed the assessment. I stapled it, put it in the back of my agenda, and had a quick look at it again.'* (Margaret)

Overall, the debriefing generated energy and interest. One-hundred per cent of the participants reported that the debriefing was a positive experience and used words like 'energised, enthusiastic, excited, focused and confident' to describe how they felt after completing it. One referred to it as a potentially life changing experience:

> *'It addressed both business and personal goals. I think there is life changing stuff in here broader than just business. There are very specific things to work with.'* (Olwen)

The debriefing's positive focus on strengths was novel for many who are used to a deficit approach more commonly found in the workplace.

> *'I loved it, loved it, yeah really enjoyed this. It's like a breath of fresh air honestly.'* (Niamh)

This encouraged further open and engaging dialogue with participants, who were inspired to explore and share stories and examples of strengths use.

1.2 Understanding the profile report

The data showed that one significant reason for inaction following the assessment may be the lack of understanding of some of the strengths terminology detailed in the report. Eighty per cent of participants asked questions seeking clarification of at least one strengths label or how to apply the 4M model.

> *'I didn't do any development planning after the assessment. I thought that I would need some explanation. It was the terminology. I needed this to know what some of the terms meant.'* (Allison)
>
> *'I definitely think the debriefing is what really made it for me. I think without the debriefing it's a whole lot of words that don't necessarily point to anything.'* (Martin)

Participants found that the debriefing facilitated their understanding of the profile report in the context of their own situation, thus identifying how strengths impact their life.

> *'I definitely didn't have the greater understanding until we discussed this. Particularly the incubator I did not understand that at all and it makes huge, huge sense to me now.'* (Marlene)

They also became aware of the dynamics of their strengths and how they complement each other. Some recognised how they overplayed some of their strengths and explored the consequences of this, as in Molly's case:

> *'I see how my strong connecting skills and my empathy can sometimes work against me and take the energy out.'* (Molly)
>
> *'Having a chance to talk with you, that was different. And I found by describing how I felt and coming up with examples, I found connections that I wouldn't have if I was only reading it myself.'* (Christine)

As the participant provided examples of their strengths at play, they began to understand and appreciate which activities energised and de-energised them. Many of the participants reported shifts in energy during the debriefing just talking about their strengths

> *'I would get quite scared by looking at the words as to what they mean but having gone into it and trying to put them into context with the situation has been really energising.'* (Gabriella)

The majority stated that they also found the energy aspect of Realise2 interesting and beneficial for deciding future goals.

The debriefing helped the participants understand and address any negative responses to their profile report. Three of the participants were disappointed with a number of their strengths as listed in their profile. Another four participants reported being more concerned with their weaknesses than strengths when they read their profile report. The debriefing provided a holistic, integrated perspective and helped to balance the tendency to pay attention to the negative aspects of life (Baumeister et al., 2001).

> *'My first reaction is that I think it paints a very tough picture of me but now that we've spoken about this and we've put it into context I realised that it isn't such a tough picture but more of a realistic picture of a very real situation I've had.'* (Rachel)

According to the data, the debriefing also allowed participants to take ownership of their report. Four participants used the debriefing as an opportunity to add additional strengths to their profile or deselect strengths they did not agree with. The researcher took care not to judge strengths so as not to influence this process.

1.3 Goal clarity

According to feedback, the debriefing also provided goal clarification. Participants reported that the debriefing acted as a platform for exploration of goals. This clarity was evident in goal identification and planning. Participants reported that having a structured debriefing helped to simplify the application of the profile by prioritising important areas and strengths to work on. This study found that there was a relationship between the debriefing and goal choice. The debriefing influenced the goal choice by enabling participants to choose goals they may not have thought of prior to examining their strengths.

> *'When I saw persistence, I joked that that's what I do when I want something done, my husband would say. I wouldn't have realised that I can do it at work too. It's a useful tool to rebuild my confidence.'* (Yvette)

The debriefing was structured in such a way that goals and actions were identified and agreed during the session. Participants were encouraged to choose the most important and meaningful areas to work on, therefore prompting the selection of intrinsic goals.

> *'That can actually give me better life balance, better success at work and better success in general so I wouldn't have realised the importance of my unrealised strengths. I can see how they fit into the entire model now.'* (Margaret)

Finally, participants either chose to write their goals at the session or elected to complete a development plan immediately afterwards. Writing down goals increases the

likelihood that they will be attained (Locke & Latham, 2007). Here, the strengths coach enabled the participants to set specific and challenging goals.

> *'There are very specific things to work with. I always struggle to complete a development plan but I think this is very structured.'* (Olwen)
>
> *'I think it is definitely prompted me to do so. I give you a 99.9 per cent chance of me going in and doing the development plan.'* (Dave)

The data also highlighted that debriefing provided the impetus for taking the first step towards action. Participants were encouraged to break down goals into manageable pieces.

> *'I think what I learned was to take it one step at a time and if it starts off slow don't be hard on yourself and let the creativity come out. That's the biggest thing for me.'* (Martin)

Participants reported an increase in motivation to act as a result of the debriefing. Eighty-five per cent of the participants when asked 'what action if any they had taken after the assessment' stated that they had not taken any action other than reading their profile report. After the debriefing, 100 per cent of the participants had set specific goals.

> *'I've got some very clear objectives. I will use a lot of this stuff for the New Year and I feel a lot of energy actually. It's a very useful process.'* (Rachel)

The motivation in relation to goals was self-concordant and this may have been facilitated by the debriefing. Burke and Linley (2007) found that coaching leads to changes in self-concordance and goal commitment.

The general consensus was that the debriefing simplified the report by focusing on the strengths and goals that were most important to the individual rather than giving attention to the less relevant ones.

Strengths were applied to goals in three ways during the debriefing. Firstly, many chose a goal which focused on developing a particular strength, especially an unrealised one. For example, one participant, when examining her strength of creativity, decided to harness this creativity in future team planning. Others identified and chose to work on strengths that would assist in goal attainment. A third way strengths were applied to goals was by identification of new ways to use a strength. Seligman (2002) suggests that strengths are malleable and with concentrated effort they can be developed. The research findings concurred with this.

> *'After the debriefing, I understood better the whole thing about emotional awareness and how to apply it into practice but also starting with myself.'* (Christine)

2. Enhancing self-efficacy

The second theme of enhancing self-efficacy emerged as a result of participants reporting that the debriefing helped them to increase their belief in their capabilities and strengths. They reported that the process did this in two ways: by increasing their positive emotions and by enabling strengths acknowledgement.

2.1. Positive emotions

Participants were engaged in talking about themselves 'at their best' for part of the debriefing and this seemed to generate positive emotions and ideas. Seligman et al. (2005) found that the exercise envisioning 'you at your best' led to a transient increase in happiness. All participants reported that the debriefing was a positive experience and bolstered positive emotion and energy. Common words used by participants that captured this affect included: 'happy, stimulating, interesting, beneficial and exciting'. This increase in energy and positive emotion increased the participant's ideas for future action. This is in keeping with Fredrickson's (2001) finding on positive emotions, showing that they serve to broaden our thought-action repertoires and build our personal resources.

> *'I've known about a lot of these things for a long time but now I feel I've got the tools to actually be able to do something about it. Like I say, it was a eureka moment I think. I feel energised and I'm keen to try it out.'* (Alex)

2.2. Strengths acknowledgement

According to the feedback from the interviews, the debriefing process was instrumental in participants acknowledging their strengths. The structured debriefing created a safe environment where participants were able to explore their strengths in detail. Bandura (1997) contended that 'people's level of motivation, affective states and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true' (p.2).

> *'I definitely feel more confident now about the report and the assessment, that it's actually accurate for me.'* (Allison)

Thus people's accomplishments are generally better predicted by their self-efficacy beliefs than by their previous attainments, knowledge, or skills. People do not tackle challenging tasks if they harbour self-doubts, even if they have made a good action plan (Luszcznska et al., 2010).

> *'It's almost like you're acknowledging it, admitting it to yourself. You know you can do this so why don't you give it a go. When you say it to somebody else it makes it more real.'* (Sandra)

Planning is a powerful strategy when individuals feel confident that they can take action (Luszczynska et al., 2010). Self-efficacy beliefs influence the choices individuals make and the courses of action they pursue. Graham and Weiner (1996) conclude that, particularly in psychology and education, self-efficacy has proven to be a more consistent predictor of behavioural outcomes than any other motivational constructs. Clearly, it is not simply a matter of how capable one is, but of how capable one believes oneself to be.

> *'I need to realise that actually people appreciate what I do and I need to build on that.'* (Gabriella)

Popper and Lipshitz (1992) claim that enhancement of self-efficacy is a central component in coaching. The participants reported that exploring and acknowledging their strengths during the debriefing enhanced their belief that their goals were achievable. This finding suggests that a strengths assessment accompanied by a debriefing may give coaches a valuable tool to enhance the self-efficacy of their clients.

> *'I plan to push myself to areas that I wouldn't have been comfortable in before but clearly they are things that give me energy.'* (Rachel)

3. Stimulating psychological development

Participants made frequent reference in the interviews to the fact that the debriefing increased their insight and understanding of themselves. They also reported an understanding of how to develop and use their strengths. A theme of psychological development emerged from the data with two subthemes consisting of self-awareness and insight, and strengths development and use.

3.1 Self-awareness and insight

Firstly, there was consensus that participants became more self aware and gained insight as a result of the debriefing. They also reported becoming more aware of their individual strengths and how to use them.

> *'It was great to get out of one's comfort zone. My role is very numerically, financially based, so it's great to talk about the softer side of your skill set. I like the whole, becoming more self-aware.'* (Fred)

Self-awareness and insight was prompted by a number of factors according to feedback, such as: getting out of their comfort zone, putting things in perspective, becoming aware of own thoughts and actions and identifying areas for further growth. A number of participants choose growth goals to work on in the future. Understanding how strengths can be applied and seeing them in the specific context of their work and personal life facilitated personal insight. According to Sedikides and Skowronski (1995) insight is important in facilitating goal attainment and behavioural change.

> *'After the debriefing, I understood better the whole thing about emotional awareness and how to apply it into practice but also starting with myself'.* (Christine: 75)

Spending time self-reflecting after the assessment did not necessarily lead to developing insight, but this did occur after the

debriefing process. Grant (2003) suggests that self-reflection and insight are two separate processes and, therefore, self-reflection will not necessarily lead to insight.

> *'Without the debriefing session, I don't think I would've got that level of insight.'* (Alex)

Forty per cent of participants reported that the debriefing gave them insight to the draining effects of their learnt behaviours.

> *'Clearly there are things that give me energy but also at the same time checking things that I am good at but they are draining me and understanding why they are.'* (Rachel)

The data also found that the debriefing was a forum for addressing weaknesses when they were performance critical. Discussing weaknesses in a direct, non-judgemental coaching context helped many participants to acknowledge, accept and plan to deal with them.

> *'In reality I do need to work on that particular weakness and by doing that it will improve things and make my performance better.'* (Sandra)

3.2. Strengths development and use

One of the key findings reported in the semi-structured interviews was that the debriefing enhanced the participant's ability to develop and use strengths. The participant was seen as an expert in their own life and was encouraged to use the right strength, in the right way, and at the right time in accordance to their situation and values (Linley, 2008). They reported an understanding of how to use the 4M model for their future strengths development after completing the debriefing.

The fact that this assessment considers energy in relation to strengths seemed to resonate with participants. As well as describing the debriefing process itself as energising, participants began to explore their strengths and activities in relation to energy. While the profile report outlines energy in relation to strengths many of the participants had not paid it any attention before the debriefing. Not one participant mentioned energy when asked about their experience of completing the assessment. However, energy was mentioned by 50 per cent of participants during the semi-structured interview as being important to them. The conversation proved to be a good forum to explore this in more detail and feedback was given around shifts in energy in terms of voice and body language when discussing strengths.

> *'I realise my unrealised strengths are things that give me energy, they are good things. There are things that I can do to try and use them more. Where as I wouldn't have picked that up just from doing the assessment in my opinion.'* (Rachel)

4. The coaching component

The debriefing was conducted in a coaching context and this impacted the participant's experience. Eighty per cent of the participants mentioned the coaching as being an important part of their understanding and utilisation of their strengths. Two sub-themes emerged from the data relating to coaching, namely: the coaching relationship and the coaching context.

4.1. Coaching relationship

One significant finding in this study was that the coaching relationship was an important factor in the success of the debriefing process.

> *'You can delve in more deeply with the facilitator then you can reading through what each of them mean.'* (Fred)

Key skills used by the strengths coach were perceived by participants to have a favourable impact on their experience. These included goal setting, helping development of alternative perspectives, stimulating problem solving and by challenging and supporting. Research findings show that the relationship and the client's own inner resources are the most important variants contributing to successful therapeutic outcomes (Norcross, 2001). Furthermore, a coach's personal attributes have been found to have a favourable impact on coachees (Passmore, 2010).

> *'Everything about this has been really good and talking to yourself, not judging or anything and taking on the feedback and asking a lot of questions affirming and recognising some of the things I'm saying, I'm feeling encouraged and saying let's do more here.'* (Kevin)

4.2. Coaching context

The data reflected the benefits of having the debriefing as a coaching style of conversation with open and powerful questioning. Participants reported that they found the coaching debriefing session beneficial by increasing self-reflection, motivation and facilitating decision making. These are similar to the benefits of coaching described by Passmore (2006) which include: enhanced personal performance, optimised decision making, better self-reflection and higher levels of motivation.

> *'It was great to explain here, to be able to talk about it. Whereas if was just there in front of me, I am reading but I don't remember as much. Whereas in conversation, it makes way more sense to me.'* (Marlene)
>
> *'You have a different perception. You are going to ask the why's and it's good to dig down deeper. It's good to thrash it out with somebody.'* (Niamh)

The confidential, non-judgemental and strengths-guided approach of the debriefing resulted in participants divulging rich information during the process.

Having a structured debriefing was a beneficial context for strengths work. The debriefing was structured to enable the participants to capitalise on their strengths and focus on what works well. This was apparent when participants focused on deficits and were coached to find strengths-based solutions.

> *'We don't often talk about her strengths do we? I do tend to ask for feedback from my manager is. Is there things that I can improve on but I never usually ask for feedback on strengths only weaknesses.'* (Niamh)

Another example of this was Martin who had a deficit focus but responded really well to this strengths-based approach.

> *'You helped me to relate to something else which was great. The conversation turned out much more than just talking about skills, lack of skills or talents. It turned out to be the first step in a new project, the more creative me.'* (Martin)

This suggests that coaching is an ideal context for strengths development.

Discussion

Implications for coaching psychology

There is evidence to suggest that completing an assessment may in itself be beneficial by leading to a more positive self-assessment (Seligman et al., 2005) and that in the hands of a skilled coach, even more benefits might occur. This study certainly provides preliminary evidence of this and is relevant to coaches as strengths debriefings add value to coaching conversations. This research suggests that a debriefing done in a coaching style provides an ideal change methodology for strengths-based development by increasing utilisation and understanding of a strengths profile report.

Seligman (2007) suggests that 'coaching is a practice without limits on its scope, lacking theoretical foundations and meaningful accreditation' (p.266). Others have found little uniformity in executive coaching approaches (Bono et al., 2009). The results of this study show that the combination of a strengths assessment followed by a structured debriefing could potentially give coaching some of its much needed credibility by providing a consistent and evidence based framework. This study has implications for coaching psychologists as it suggests a framework which can engender action and enhance the self-efficacy and psychological development of their clients. The increase in positive emotions, insight and self-awareness as a result of the debriefings would also be a useful aid to coaches.

This study also leads to a question of whether there is benefit to completing strengths assessments without adequate follow-up. This is an important point for consideration for those working in the

strengths arena. This study highlights the importance of a structured follow-up when strengths are completed in the workplace and suggests that a coach with in-depth strengths knowledge would be ideally placed to provide this debriefing and subsequent follow-up.

Study limitations

There are a number of limitations to this current study which should be considered when interpreting the findings. Further research is needed to investigate how the application of strengths may be integrated into the coaching arena. Follow-up coaching sessions after the structured debriefing may further enhance the utilisation and understanding of strengths. The majority of participants, when asked what follow-up they would like, recommended another coaching session to check progress and reassess status.

The design of the study may have being influenced by a demand effect where participants may have reported positive experiences to please the researcher who conducted both the debriefing and the semi-structured interview (Grant, 2003). Elston and Boniwell (2011) suggested strategies to minimise the risk of this demand effect by discussing any possible power dynamics and minimising the researcher's voice within the interview by using short open questions specific to the experience of the participants. This study encompassed these considerations.

The debriefing was completed by a qualified coach and strengths practitioner with many years experience in this field. The debriefing completed by a less experienced individual may not produce the same results. Another limitation of the current study is the fact that there was no follow-up to determine whether the goals agreed within the debriefing session were attained. A longitudinal study would address this issue. Nevertheless, this study adds valuable information to the growing evidence on strengths development and coaching practice.

Conclusions

This study has illuminated the benefits of completing a structured debriefing following a strengths assessment. As the title suggests, the debriefing needs to go hand in hand with assessment completion to maximise the understanding and application of the profile report. This study has shown that the debriefing is an effective coaching tool to create positive change by facilitating goal attainment, self-efficacy and psychological development and provides a useful framework for coaches seeking to integrate strengths into their work.

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The Authors

Brenda Roche
Cork, Ireland.

Kate Hefferon
University of East London, London, UK.

Correspondence

Kate Hefferon
Email: k.hefferon@uel.ac.uk

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Paper

Towards a systems model of Coaching for Learning: Empirical lessons from the secondary classroom context

Qing Wang

Objectives: *Coaching psychology has been increasingly used in the discourse of education. However, there has been a lack of research systematically looking at the nature of coaching in the learning process from a participatory and systems approach. This study aimed to investigate how coaching, implemented in enquiry-based learning, would make a difference to the knowledge construction process, the development of positive learning dispositions and learning agency in secondary students.*

Design: *An exploratory participatory case study within a prototyping framework was utilised.*

Methods: *One classroom in a mainstream secondary school in south-west England was selected as the case. 30 students participated in three prototypes of enquiry-based learning facilitated by teachers who were specifically trained to be coaches. Semi-structured and narrative interviews, focus group and classroom observations were conducted with two teachers and 30 students. Teachers' plans and students' enquiry products were collected in each prototype. Students' learning power was measured by Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory before and after the three prototypes.*

Results: *The thematic analysis and observational analysis showed that coaching in learning was a complex process in which teachers and students moved along different modes of coaching relationships. Noticeable increases in students' independence, learning relationships, confidence, and learning agency were documented. However, the Wilcoxon Signed Test did not show any significant increase in learning power dimensions.*

Conclusions: *It could be concluded that the nature of coaching in learning can be captured in the systems model of Coaching for Learning. The model has important implication for facilitating the enquiry-based learning process. The current study has special value in linking coaching and learning more explicitly and extending our understanding of coaching and coaching psychology to the context of secondary education.*

Keywords: *Coaching; secondary education; enquiry-based learning; participatory research; systems thinking.*

COACHING as an approach to effective facilitation of performance enhancement and goal-attainment has been used extensively in organisational and business contexts on executive populations (Allison & Harbour, 2009; Passmore & Brown, 2009). However, more research is needed to build our understanding of coaching for different populations, as well as to understand the nature of how coaching makes a difference over other learning and developing interventions (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006, 2007). The current study is concerned with exploring the relationship between coaching and learning in the secondary classroom context and with considering the implications to teaching and learning practices.

Background: A shift in educational model

Our predominant educational model is built on a view that values the primacy of knowledge and reason characterised by a predescribed curriculum, typified by the themes of acquisition, dependence and competition

(Marshall, 1999). Thus the way in which knowledge is encountered by students is 'top-down' and the teacher-student relationship is typically hierarchical. The primary goal of teaching and learning is students' academic performance and meaning making is reduced to repeating pre-packaged abstract inert knowledge that has little relevance to students' lives outside the classroom wall. However, rapid societal change has dramatically influenced our needs in education, which in turn challenges us to transform the structure and the process of teaching and learning (King & Frick, 2000). Disseminating inert knowledge and building basic skills may no longer serve the educational purposes in the 21st century. Bentley (1998) argues that the goal of education should be 'the development of understanding which can be applied and extended by taking it into the spheres of thought and action which, in the real world, demand intelligent behaviour' (p.19). The educational purposes of the 21st century require new ways of managing teaching and learning to cultivate generic and active knowledge workers. The paradigmatic shift indicates a movement towards a 'bottom-up' development and change, leading to a participative, collaborative approach to learning.

This article reviews the place of coaching in learning from a participatory, systems perspective and then to report the empirical investigation into the relationship between coaching and learning in a secondary classroom, followed by the emerging model of Coaching for Learning.

Coaching and coaching psychology research in the educational context

The vocabulary of coaching is touched upon by some researchers and increasingly used in the discourse of education (Hargreaves, 2004–2006; Claxton, 2008). McDermott and Jago (2005) defined coaching as 'a conversational yet focused discipline that supports people in learning how to lead and manage themselves more effectively in relation to their issues, their resources, their contexts and their potential' (p.8). In relatively inclusive definitions of coaching, three aspects are usually tackled: *performance*, *learning* and *development* (Parsloe & Wray, 2000; Whitmore, 1996; Ives, 2008), indicating that coaching has the potential for pedagogical significance in education. Coaching psychology is defined as 'for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established learning theories or psychological approaches'. This definition *explicitly* includes the application of appropriate psychological theories (Grant & Palmer, 2002; Palmer & Whybrow, 2006). There has been evidence that coaching psychology and the psychology of learning are strongly interwoven with each other (Law et al., 2007).

Coaching has been used in a wide range of educational contexts for a variety of purposes (Burley & Pomphrey, 2011). These include: Initial teacher training; continuing professional development of teachers; leadership programmes which use coaching for specific development of the individuals at senior level and for broader institutional purposes; coaching to support school students with learning or behavioural difficulties; coaching for developing students' motivation and aspiration; and finally coaching in schools to develop abilities, skills and talents in specified areas such as music, art or sports. In addition, coaching texts reflect a growing interest in coaching's potential contribution to education with a focus of studying different coaching interventions and the impact on adult learners (Grant, 2001; Bolton, 1999; Graham et al., 2008).

Of more relevance to the non-adult population, Hamman et al. (2000) examined types and frequency of coaching at secondary school level and its relation to students' strategic learning. The findings from a multiple regression analysis indicated that students' strategic learning activities were significantly related to teachers' coaching of learning. It showed the potential of coaching

to develop secondary students' learning capacity though other factors that influence students' learning, such as learning relationships, were neglected in the study.

Passmore and Brown (2009) presented findings from a three-year longitudinal study to explore how coaching contributes to GCSE students' learning and academic performance. The study confirmed that with non-adult population, coaching has potential value as a tool in supporting educational attainment and examination performance. However, the study focused with one local area and only examined performance of GCSE grades; it did not offer any impact of coaching on students' learning capacities or dispositions.

Another perspective on enhancing learning performance is developing mental resilience and coping skills, which have been picked up by other coaching research (Green et al., 2007; Campell & Gardner, 2005; Seligman et al., 2009). Positive educators argue that positive education can promote skills and strengths that are valued by most people, produce measurable improvements in students' well-being and behaviours and facilitate students' engagement in learning and achievement.

It becomes increasingly apparent that there is a developing trend that coaching researchers try to understand coaching from a learning perspective, whereas educational researchers try to enhance learning by introducing coaching. Nevertheless, there has been no research which systematically looks at how coaching makes a difference to the knowledge construction process and learning disposition development of secondary students. The current study aims to understand the nature of coaching in the enquiry-based learning process, to explore the relationship and communication between students and teachers, to investigate how coaching skills and strategies can be implemented in the classroom and finally how coaching would influence the development of students' learning disposition and learning agency.

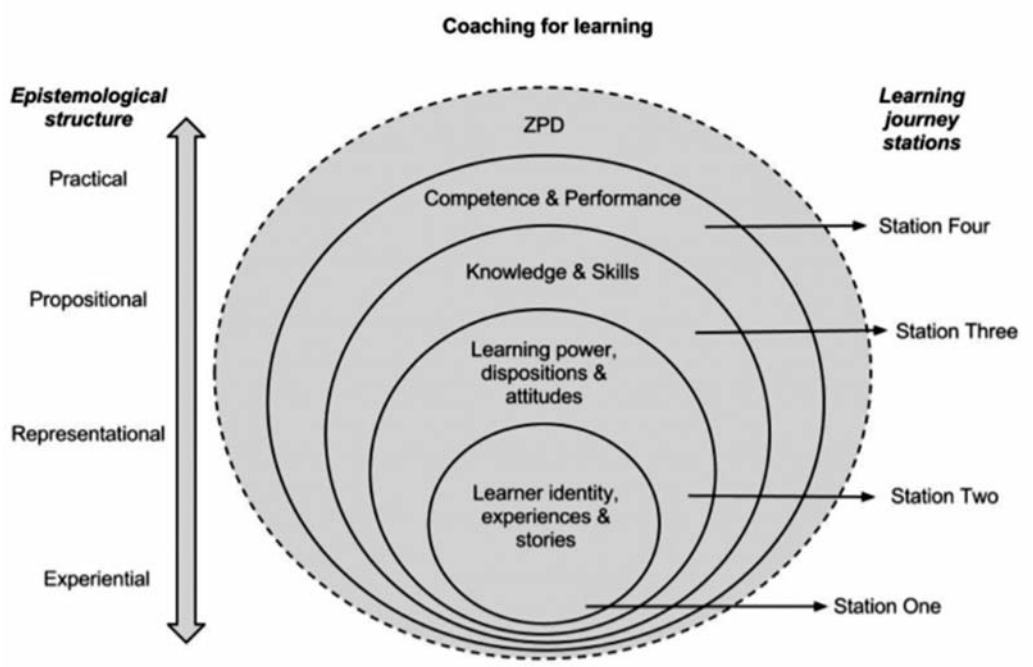
The theoretical framework of the current study

The theoretical framework of this study (see Figure 1) integrates the participatory paradigm (Heron & Reason, 1997), systems thinking (Aronson, 1996; Blockley, 2010; Capra, 1994) and Vygotsky's social-cultural perspective on learning, particularly the concept of zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

The framework reflects a participatory and systems approach to learning, which is captured in a journey metaphor comprising four critical stations (Deakin-Crick, 2009, 2010). It is a kind of learning where a learner starts from identity, personal motivation, experiences and stories within an individual's social context *(Station One)*, moves through the development of values, beliefs, attitudes and dispositions that individual learners hold when they learn *(Station Two)*, and then to knowledge construction and sharing *(Station Three)*, to the final presentation of learning outcomes and preparation for public assessment *(Station Four)*. The metaphor articulates that the learner is a traveller through this journey, taking responsibility of his or her own learning, negotiating personally meaningful ways through collaborative practices and being nested in evolving relationships with people in different contexts.

The personal power to learn is coined as 'learning power' as 'a form of consciousness characterised by particular dispositions, values and attitudes, with a lateral and a temporal connectivity' (Deakin-Crick et al., 2004; Deakin-Crick, 2007). Learning power has seven dimensions: *changing and learning*; *creativity*; *critical curiosity*; *meaning making*; *strategic awareness*; *learning relationship*; and *resilience*. These seven dimensions have emerged from a factor analytical methodology (Deakin-Crick & Wilson, 2005). Learning power is viewed as 'energy' in the journey metaphor because the personal and autogenic features of learning power serve as fuel or energy to enable learners to move forward to their learning goals.

Figure 1: The theoretical framework.



The journey metaphor involves coaching into the big picture in a way that coaching can be viewed as a 'vehicle' which carries the learner from some starting location to a desired place (Dilts, 2003). Throughout the journey, the learner is coached by another person who supports and provides prompts, guidance and resources at key points with different coaching skills and techniques and through formative use of learning power. Coaching could be facilitative to stimulate change, scaffold the learning process, move learners forward through effective support, and develop self-awareness and responsibility for their own learning.

How coaching becomes this facilitative tool has deeper theoretical underpinning in Vygotsky's socio-cultural perspective on learning and development, zone of proximal development and scaffolding in particular. Zone of proximal development (ZPD) was defined as 'the distance between the actual development level (of the learner) as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). Coaching works within the learners' ZPD and it shares a number of important features with scaffolding: (1) the essentially dialogic nature of discourse in which knowledge is co-constructed; (2) the significance of the authentic and cognitively challenging tasks in which knowing is embedded; (3) the role of social mediation and the establishment of inter-subjectivity as shared understandings between learners and teachers (Wells, 1999; Wertsch, 1985, 1998); and (4) the transfer of responsibility for the task to the students as the major goal (Mercer & Fisher, 1993). In this highly personalised journey, coaching recognises the agency in learners, offers customised support and facilitation that is responsive to the needs of particular learners in any situation where learners are offered collaborative interventions.

Methodology

Research design

The research design was essentially an exploratory participatory case study within a prototyping framework (see Figure 2).

Participants

One classroom in a mainstream secondary school in south-west England was selected as the case. Thirty Year 7 students and two history teachers participated in the current study. The teachers were specifically trained by external coaches who hold professional qualification accredited by Association for Coaching. The teachers were invited to contribute in interviews, classroom observations and collection of teacher plans in each prototype. The students were coached by the two teachers in their enquiry-based learning projects in the three prototypes. From all the 30 students who participated in classroom observations and surveys, six students were randomly selected to join focus groups in each prototype. Three students joined narrative interviews.

Interventions

The current study was conducted in three prototypes according to the three terms in the academic year 2010/2011. Each prototype began with a staff training day when teachers were specifically coached by external coaching experts and practitioners. After the training, the teachers co-designed the interdisciplinary, enquiry-based curriculum and prepared relevant teaching materials. Then the teachers conducted a 'Hook Day' event with students in order to clarify what the enquiry theme would be, identify a range of enquiry questions that the students would be interested in exploring and divide students into different groups based on their enquiry questions. This was followed by two weeks' coaching lessons to support and scaffold students' enquiry-based learning inside the classroom. During this period of time students were assigned tasks and required to do their own research outside of the school, supported by their peers and parents. Towards the end of each prototype students presented their enquiry outcomes to their teachers, peers, parents and wider communities in a public assessment event. At the end of each prototype, the teachers were debriefed with the findings from observations and interviews, summarised highlights of the current prototype and made suggestions of curricular or pedagogical adjustments for the purpose of improving the next prototype. The teachers reflected on the process collectively. Future activities were refined and re-designed based on these collective reflections.

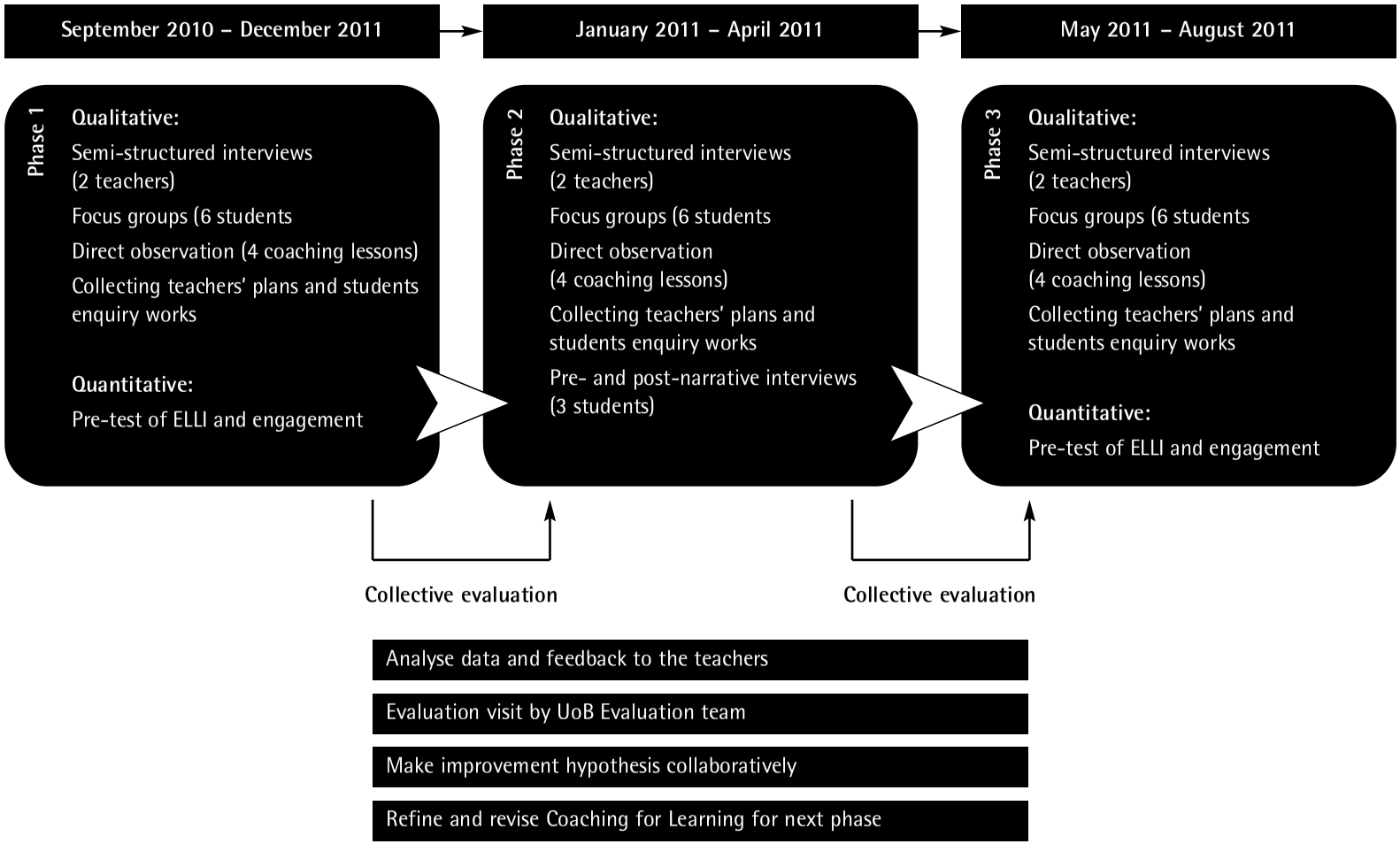
Ethics

The current study met the requirements in ethical procedures for projects involving human subjects at the University of Bristol. CRB check has been obtained for working with children under age 16. Informed consent, which provided sufficient information and allowed the right to withdraw at any stage of the study, has been obtained from each participant, including the gatekeeper of the school teacher participants, student participants and their parents. Personal information concerning individual participants was protected by confidentiality and anonymity.

Data collection

The prototyping design required a data system capable of informing ongoing activity (Bryk et al., 2011), therefore, data collection was embedded into the prototyping process rather than added on top of it. Qualitative and quantitative methods were employed and the study was primarily driven by qualitative investigations. Qualitative methods included focus groups with students to investigate their experiences of coaching and enquiry-based learning; narrative interviews with students to gain information about their learning stories and how well they could talk about themselves as learners; semi-structured interviews with teachers to understand their experiences and practices of implementing coaching in enquiry-based

Figure 2: Research design.



learning; and unstructured classroom observations to see how exactly coaching would look like in the secondary classroom context and how it would affect the dynamics between teachers and students. Teachers' plans and students' enquiry outcomes were collected after each prototype.

Quantitative methods included the Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) online questionnaire measuring students' positive learning dispositions on the seven dimensions of learning power. ELLI is a research-validated, self-assessed learning questionnaire containing 72 items, measuring what learners say about themselves in a particular dimension of their learning power at a particular point in time (Deakin-Crick et al., 2004; Deakin-Crick & Yu, 2008). Learners rate themselves on each item ranging from to 1 ('not like me at all') to 4 ('very much like me'). Samples of items in each dimension are presented here:

- 'I like to be able to improve the way I do things.' *(changing and learning)*
- 'I prefer an interesting question to an easy answer.' *(critical curiosity)*
- 'I like it when I can make connections between new things I am learning and things I already know.' *(meaning making)*
- 'When I'm stuck I don't usually know what to do about it.' *(opposite of resilience)*
- 'I like to try our new learning in different ways.' *(creativity)*
- 'I learn equally well on my own and with others.' *(learning relationships)*
- 'I often have a good idea of how long something is going to take me to learn.' *(strategic awareness)*

The teachers and the technician staff in the school were trained to how to use install and use ELLI. The students were instructed and supported to answer the questions as accurate as possible. There were 25 students completed their ELLI questionnaires before the interventions and 22 students completed their ELLI questionnaires after the interventions.

Data analysis

All the qualitative data was analysed both manually on the transcripts and using QSR Nvivo 8 software for a variety of themes using a coding scheme. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework was adopted for analysing the data from semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Students' narrative accounts were examined by narrative analysis. For observational data an analytical framework,was designed focusing on verbal, non-verbal languages and relationships between teachers-as-coaches and their students. Quantitative data was statistically analysed. Wilcoxon Signed Test was conducted to see whether coaching had any influence on seven dimensions of learning power before and after three prototypes. A Critical Synthetic Analysis Framework was originated to synthetically analyse different types of data across three prototypes (see Table 1).

Summary of findings

Due to the limitation of the length, a summary of the key research findings are presented in this section.

The qualitative findings from teachers' interviews and classroom observations indicated that the enquiry approaches in the three prototypes took three organically evolving processes that naturally occurred in the current context. Each enquiry approach differed from each other in terms of focus, goals, strategies, materials, topics, grouping, and coaching interventions. There was a strong relation between the structure of enquiry-based learning and coaching approach: the looser the enquiry structure was, the more non-direct the coaching approach was, and the more authentic students' learning outcomes appeared to be.

During the coaching process, teachers seemed to experience a mixture of different roles in coaching relationship: a knowledge expert, a coach, a mentor, and a counsellor. Teachers should be equipped with sensibility to respond to the individual learner's need in particular situations and an ability to

Table 1: Critical Synthetic Analysis Framework.

	Qualitative data				Quantitative data
	Interviews with teachers	Interviews with students	Observations	Teachers' plans and students' works	ELLI
Prototype 1					
Prototype 2					
Prototype 3					

make professional judgments regarding when and which role to take in different contexts. Responses to interviews showed that teachers were adopting and adapting to these roles more naturally; they gradually obtained an 'ownership of coaching' and deepened their understanding of coaching theories through practice, which indicated that coaching was beneficial for teachers' continuing professional development.

There were major differences in instructional styles of conventional teaching from coaching: when coaching, teachers did significantly less talking and information transmitting in the classroom in general, instead they offered more freedom, encouraged interdependency and co-construction of knowledge and handed responsibility over to students. Teachers stated that students' engagement level has increased and learning relationships and positive learning dispositions have developed enormously during the academic year. This notion was supported by my observations that students in coaching lessons have undergone gradual and accumulative change in their engagement in on-task moments.

Teachers and students in coaching lessons utilised rich verbal and non-verbal languages to achieve different purposes in coaching conversation. Active listening, open questions, paraphrases, summaries and feedbacks were frequently used by teachers together with eye contacts and other body languages to show recognition and encouragement. Students were taking an active role in the coaching conversations and there was a dramatic increase in collaboration between them. In contrast, non-coaching lessons was characterised by teacher-led communication and content orientation. Students were passively responding to learning and there was less authentic engagement, less dialogues among peers and less on-task behaviour.

The themes from students' focus groups suggested that coaching optimised their learning experiences in terms of offering them more personal choices in learning and more personal connections to their enquiry topics. Coaching helped to scaffold the enquiry process so that students could gain feedback and guidance when they did research or mind-mapping. However, students had various responses to coaching relationships and they were becoming more critical about the overall experience of 'being coached'. By investigating the suggestions that students offered for improving Coaching for Learning, it was found that students expected a balance between 'teaching' elements and 'coaching' elements, which indicated that Coaching for Learning in secondary education could not be the same as life coaching or executive coaching in terms of the knowledge construction approach.

There was one discrepancy of quantitative and qualitative findings resting in the development of learning dispositions before

and after the three prototypes. The findings from students' narrative interviews and focus groups showed that students' learning relationships, autonomy, self-awareness and learning agency were greatly fostered. Students were more able to articulate their learning stories and experiences and what they would like to achieve in future learning. The narrative accounts also showed fostered confidence and self-efficacy in learning. Learning power has been developing as a whole, particularly *learning relationships*, resilience, and c*hanging and learning* were mentioned mostly by students. However, Wilcoxon Signed Test of pre- and post-ELLI questionnaires did not demonstrate any significant increase or decrease in learning power dimensions (see Table 2), which was in contrast to qualitative findings from interviews and observations.

Discussions

The findings from qualitative and quantitative data analysis across three prototypes have shown a number of interesting corroborations and discrepancies between different types of data. Moreover, patterns and relationships between variables were constantly developing across time.

The study posed a number of challenges regarding coaching in the secondary classroom context, including how to balance the authenticity in students' learning outcomes with the intellectual quality that the teachers and parents expected; how to balance public assessment criteria and independent knowledge construction outcomes; how to balance performance fixation and process orientation; and how to evaluate learning outcomes and coaching efficacy through multiple perspectives.

The comparisons between quantitative and qualitative findings have been foreseen at the start of the study given that learning power is a complex concept. However, further consideration of the results posed a challenge to think deeper into the relationship between self-report assessment tools and interview responses which also come from participants' self-evaluation. There are a number of reasons that we need to be cautious in interpreting statistical results of learning power dimensions especially comparing pre- and post-intervention profiles of an individual learner. The major reason is that there was a small sample size involved in the quantitative investigation so that the statistical power was resulting low. Secondly, there is a level of interpretive flexibility built into learning power dimensions: an individual's understanding of learning power language and his or her own learning are both highly subjective judgments; that is why individuals might respond to the questionnaire in particular ways that would influence the outcomes. Thirdly, ELLI is sensitive to the context in which learners fill it in and not a linear tool computed from a set of objective facts. Last but not least, it is possible that students have been changing through the process and became more critical about themselves, so the self-held standards of learning power dimensions might be raised higher and the scores might become lower. But it did not mean the *actual* dimension became lower.

Table 2: Wilcoxon Signed Test of learning power before and after the interventions.

Test Statistics[c]

	t2CL-t1CL	t2CC-t1CC	t2MM-t1MM	t2CT-t1CT	t2SA-t1SA	t2LR-t1LR	t2RS-t1RS
Z	−.424[a]	−.309[b]	−.081[a]	−.701[a]	−2.059a	−1.315[a]	−1.511[a]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.672	.757	.935	.483	.059	.189	.131

[a] Based on positive ranks; [b] Based on negative ranks; [c] Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

Table 3: Coaching for Learning at four stations.

	Station 1 Agency and identity	Station 2 Learning dispositions, values, beliefs and attitudes	Station 3 Knowledge, skills and capabilities	Station 4 Competence, performance and assessment
Aim	To coach learners to be reflexive and reflective to understand oneself and one's situation	To facilitate learners to develop positive 'mind habits' and attitudes	To teach skills and capabilities to enable learners to better acquire knowledge and be more efficient through social interactions	To coach learners to enhance competences and improve performance
Expertise of the coach	A co-learner of understanding self or a counsellor in supporting learning about the self	A facilitator in building strengths and resources in critical awareness, positive dispositions and meta-learning	An expert or a mentor who passes on skills and knowledge, a designer and a facilitator of enquiry-based learning process	A mentor or an examiner who observes, evaluates and offers constructive feedback
Role of the learner	To increase self-awareness and identity as a learner, to foster learner agency and a sense of responsibility	To understand and reflect on their learning power dimensions, and negotiate with the coach on how to improve them as a whole	To engage with others in the process of understanding, developing new insights and co-constructing knowledge	To improve their performance and competences in order to meet public standards and fulfil their role more effectively
Values	Contemplation, self-determination, autonomy, self-knowledge, wisdom, sensitivity, empathy	Communication, collaboration, interaction, interconnectivity, interdependence	Meaning making and knowledge construction	Accomplishment, measurement, progress, achievement
Methods of coaching	Using narratives, coaching for reflection, exploring personal stories and experiences	Developing a language of learning, implementing learning power into teaching practice	Guiding, instructing, lecturing, demonstrating, modelling, facilitating collaborative work and group activities	Sharing observations and exploring possibilities, clarifying expectations and standards, feedback
Anticipated outcomes in the classroom	More self-aware and critically aware learners who are more self-motivated and take responsibility of their own learning	More confident and positive learners with enhanced learning power and better learning relationships with teacher and peers	More knowledge and skills gained around certain subjects as well as meaningful and connected to personal value	Better performance and higher intellectual quality in learning outcomes

The nature of coaching in learning involves multiple layers of relationships and processes interact and anticipate the need for renewal through the psychological change to provide sustainable results (Reeves & Allison, 2009). There should be an appropriate combination of challenge and support to make sure that students are working within their current zone of proximal development and the upper limit of this zone is able to be extended by effective coaching.

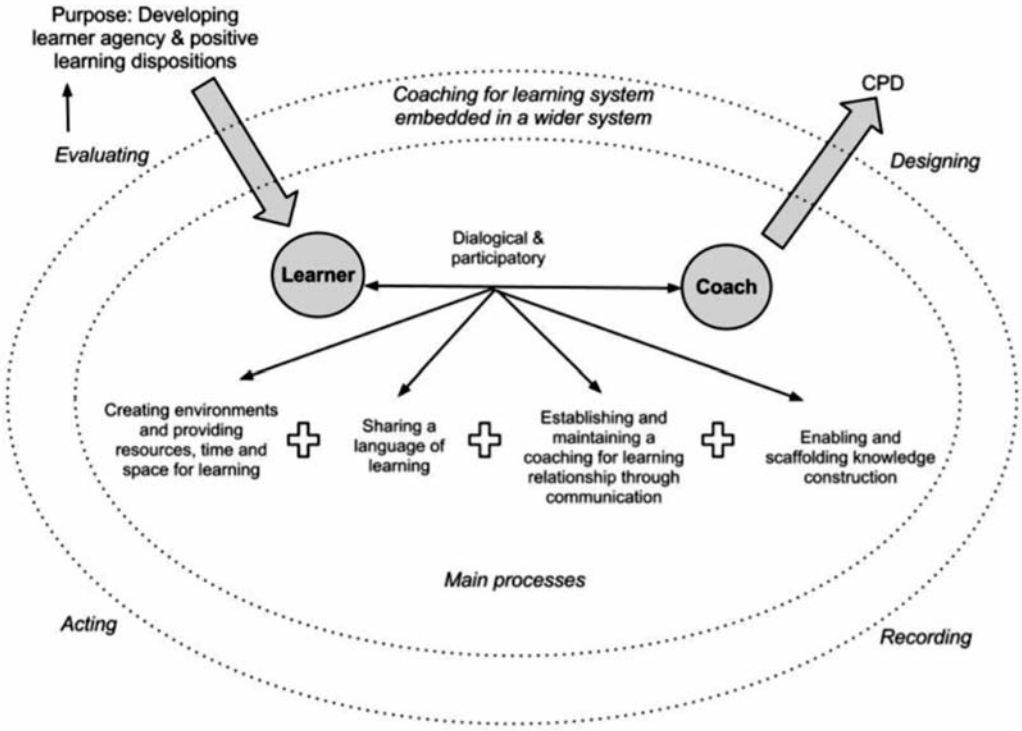
The emerged systems model of Coaching for Learning

It emerged from the study that coaching has much to offer to the learning process. It is essential to facilitate learners in the enquiry-based design and not to separate *who* is learning, *what* is learned, *why* it is learned, *when* and *how* it is learned and used in context.

The nature of coaching in the enquiry-based learning process was best understood as a participatory system. The author named it as 'Coaching for Learning' and it has been used extensively in this paper. Coaching for Learning can be defined as 'an evolving learning relationship between coach and learners through effective coaching conversations in order to enhance learner's ownership, develop learning dispositions, scaffold knowledge construction, and improve competence and performance and create lifelong learners as the long-term goal'. Coaching for Learning interrogates context, purpose, relationships, processes and performance that lead to change, grow and co-learning *between coach and learner.*

One way of making explicit the links between coaching and learning and then relating these links to classroom practices is to develop a model of the various factors related to coaching and learning. Such a

Figure 3: The emerging systems model of Coaching for Learning.



model is presented as Figure 3. It comprises elements regarding contexts, purpose, people, processes, and a feedback loop for its sustainability. This model attempts to capture the main processes involved in the facilitative approach to enhance learning and highlights some of the factors that a coach may consider during incorporating coaching into learning processes.

Features of the system

Coaching for Learning as a participatory system demonstrates a number of features of an open system, such as *emergence and interrelatedness*, *adaptation*, *development and sustainability*. The aim is to ensure communication and secure desirable growth by transforming inputs and by adapting to changes when they occur (Flood, 2010).

Coaching for Learning as a system is regarded as an assemblage of interrelated elements comprising a unified whole with emergent properties that have their own regularities which can passed over, influenced by, and negotiated between each other. (Loveridge, 2009). It reflects the emergent coherence to constitute a whole system, and this emergent whole displays properties that cannot be reduced to the level of the individual agents or predicted from lower level (Stacey, 2005). Since parts, or sub-systems, comprise people, Coaching for Learning is concerned with the needs and purposes of both coach and learners. A whole structure reflects the interrelated nature of its sub-systems, so that it is more able to encourage coaches' and learners' participation and involvement, to enable democracy and to provide conditions for autonomy and agency.

The system is open and adaptive to its environment. Bertalanffy (1968) explained that in open systems a final stage can be reached from various starting conditions and through different processes. This notion is important for understanding the system because a coach can work with learners at various system levels and through multiple openings created within the coaching relationship.

Reeves (2009) acknowledged the necessity of coaching for sustainability: 'Only a coaching system that anticipates the need for renewal and works through the psychological and organisational barriers to sustained change will provide enduring results' (2009, p.18). The feature of sustainability is essential in transformative learning, which is 'deeply engaging and touches and changes deep levels of values and belief through a process of realisation and re-cognition' (Sterling, 2003, p.94).

The whole system focuses on the interactions between internal systems (individual's structure of interpretation, capacity of self-aware and self-adaptation, and so on) and external systems (learning place environment, contents of subjects, external assessment criteria, social relationships, and so on). Coaches need to create a trusting and safe environment and relationship for learners to explore, learn and embrace changes, ideally for the development of self-empowerment. So learners need to be appropriately positioned in a place of receptivity, in a state of motivation, balance and congruence. This is where self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and sense of agency come into play.

Feedback is essential in maintaining the integrity of coaching the system. In a coaching relationship, it is very important for the coach to model and provide good feedback for the person being coached (Goodman, 2002). However, feedback cannot happen without trust and safety. Establishing rapport and connection is important at the beginning as well as maintaining this trust through the coaching process. In my research, the teachers and the students have already known each other, and this was very helpful for them to move on to deeper coaching conversations. But they might face a bigger challenge to build a new systems/relationship structure that was different from traditional teacher-student relationship. Both parties might feel uncomfortable and even resist or feel threatened by experiencing changes. In this they are facing

new challenges, altering behaviours and performance, adapting to core innovation and developing new necessary competencies.

The context of Coaching for Learning

The context of Coaching for Learning occurs in the intersection of the coach's context, the learner's context and the learning context. Individuals in the context co-create their world with all its meanings, purposes, relationships, etc; and this co-creation is dependent on understanding and sharing context (Carroll, 1996). Though teacher (as a coach) and student are still the two main roles in the classroom context to construct a Coaching for Learning system, the involvement of wider contexts of these two people is of critical importance in order to extend the learning relationship *inside* a classroom to *outside* wider learning community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The classroom is not a closed system but an open system, where there is a continuing relationship between it and its environment (Carroll, 1996). Thus to be the most effective, generative and lasting, the system needs to function within a greater system in which the classroom is only one area and being a teacher-coach or a student is only one role that the individual takes. Moreover, Coaching for Learning needs extended collaboration and partnerships in communities, including schools, families and organisations. Each coaching partnership is unique, making its own operating rules, its own discoveries and its own journey of progress (McDermott & Jago, 2005).

Why: The purpose of Coaching for Learning

The purpose of Coaching for Learning covers four aspects: (1) to explore and empower learners' agency, a clear sense of identity and self-awareness, learning aspirations, a sense of ownership of learning and take responsibility of their own learning; (2) to develop positive learning dispositions, beliefs, and attitudes that are transferable to different contexts in real world learning and living; (3) to advance knowledge and skills and to cultivate knowledge construction and intellectual capabilities; and (4) to enhance authentic performance, competence and achievement that meet public assessment criteria. The next section elaborates how we can meet these purposes by establishing sustainable processes throughout the learning journey and attuning to different focuses at four stations.

How: The processes of Coaching for Learning

Coaching for Learning systems is never presented as a linear process. Teachers as coaches view Coaching for Learning as distinctive emerging dialogues with individual learners rather than following guidelines from coaching manuscripts. We might expect various aims, focuses, values, roles, and methods of coaching at different stations throughout the learning journey (see Table 4).

Table 4: Roles and tasks of teachers in Coaching for Learning.

Role	Task
Knowledge expert/teacher	To deliver, impart, clarify, inform (knowledge)
Mentor	To provide resources, to instruct (skills), to share experiences, to monitor the process, to evaluate practices
Coach	To support and share (meanings), to scaffold and model meaning making process, to facilitate enquiry, to create conditions of self-directed learning
Counsellor	To protect individuals feelings, to deal with personal issues, to facilitate personal growth

It needs to be noted that these processes are a system of communication and improvisation: they are interconnected, not made of separate entities; they are not a singular methodology, not based on one firmly established way of proceeding. When the Coaching for Learning system is applied to the classroom practices, it may not appear to follow a 'Station 1-2-3-4' approach. Instead, it is generally structured and based on a set of principles following the theoretical background of four stations in learning. It would touch knowledge about personal experiential and identity as well as propositional and practical knowing to a balance, varying according to individual student's current circumstances, expectations, and needs. The reasons of using coaching vary, so the approaches taken and ways in which key steps in the processes are carried out. The point is to recognise the power of human agency and dialogues as creators of reality and use these concepts to co-create the facilitation processes congruent with the needs of a particular student. As a result, no two coaching processes are exactly the same. This notion reflects teaching as a pedagogical design process rather than following a script (see South Australian Teaching for Effective Learning Framework, TEFL).

There are four main inter-related processes parallel to each other. Each process entails sub-processes and their factor elements. Since it is difficult to frame them together in a single model, each process will be elaborated in turn.

The process of creating learning environments and sources includes:

- Effectively using and updating learning resources (reference books, magazines, online information, ICT equipments, etc.).
- Providing timely and constructive feedback.
- Creating time and space inside as well as outside classroom for individual or group reflections.

The process of sharing a language of learning requires a commonly agreed and accepted language to talk about learning:

- Co-defining meanings of vocabularies of learning power.
- Supporting students with interpreting learning profiles.
- Negotiating purposes and values in learning.
- Facilitating narratives about learner identity.
- Co-identifying and describing learning processes.
- Clarifying learning goals and expectations.

Facilitating knowledge construction entails an open-ended, formative and dynamic process which takes a spiral method that covers the following key points:

- Undertaking an enquiry-based learning methodology.
- Designing an authentic context.
- Encouraging generation of meaningful questions as the focus of enquiry.
- Exploring stories and experiences.
- Enabling systematic data gathering.
- Using and connecting existing body of knowledge.
- Scaffolding mind-mapping and researching process.
- Validating and incorporating knowledge into presentation.
- Negotiating assessment criteria.
- Paying attention to both the process and the product of learning.

The process of building and maintaining a quality Coaching for Learning relationship through effective communication is fundamentally *learner-centred*.

- Co-developing coaching process and positions.
- Balancing power and relinquishing control.
- Valuing individual voices.
- Providing freedom and choices.
- Responding to learners' needs.
- Shifting psychological dynamics.
- Strengthening classroom emotional support.

- Developing interdependency and trust.
- Supporting to manage associated emotions.

Throughout the research the relationship between coach and learner has been given predominance. Establishing and maintaining a *learner-centred* relationship through effective communication is the key process in Coaching for Learning, which is shared and owned by all people who participate in forming, changing and maintaining the system. This is one of the core features that put *people* in the centre, and every layer of the system. For such practice to be realistic and sustainable, teachers need to become more aware of their relationship with students as knowledge generators and active participants in their own learning. The issue of power in the Coaching for Learning relationship is considered. Power is shared by the coach and the learners; coaching methods become a means to serve the purposes rather than an end in themselves.

Who: People in the system

The teacher and the students are the main two partners involved in the system because they have direct and immediate interactions and conversations in the classroom. The system has its root in understandings of Coaching for Learning in which teacher and student adopt certain relationships towards one another. Holloway (1995) stressed the centrality of relationship as the context in which tasks are performed: 'the structure and character of the relationship embodies all other factors… and in turn all other factors are influenced by the relationship… understanding the relationship is understanding the process' (p.51). It has been clear from the empirical evidence that teachers adopt different roles in the coaching relationship. I have categorised these roles as knowledge expert, mentor, coach and counsellor. The term 'role' was defined as 'the content of a position or the behavioural implications of occupying that position' (Bee & Mitchell, 1984, p.22). The central meaning here is position-associated *tasks*, which are the behavioural side of roles (Carroll, 1999). Tasks exist in no doubt: teachers and students are present to involve themselves in specific behaviours. Each role sets up a different framework of tasks to be performed, with a different kind of relationship between teacher and student, and a different form of communication. Teachers can use a combination of roles when appropriate. The roles and tasks are presented in Table 4.

Two points need clarifying. Firstly, the 'role and task' framework is to clarify the kind of relationship involved in Coaching for Learning; it is about the *structure and nature* but not the *quality* of the relationship. The second point is that the generic roles and tasks outlined here might not be accepted to all teachers. Furthermore there might be different teachers stress different roles. The point is to acknowledge the importance of role/task in understanding people involved in the Coaching for Learning relationship, but in no way indicate that individuals actually carries out the role/task in similar ways.

Evaluation of effectiveness

How can we tell whether Coaching for Learning really works or not? How can we know that Coaching for Learning is not a waste of time and money: does it really benefit the learners? How can we know its impacts on learners and their learning? Where can we get the evidence? Though the evaluation of effectiveness of this model is not the focus of this article, the author would like to invite the readers to go beyond the definition and identification of processes and think about the above questions.

The author considers that there should be a systematic way to evaluate the effectiveness of Coaching for Learning rather than a single method, and we need to investigate its *developmental* effects rather than merely focusing on one person at one point, based on the following reasons. Firstly, Coaching for Learning entails a non-singular methodology and it is such a complex system aiming

at long-term goals; it is difficult to obtain tangible, concrete results at a quick pace. Secondly, the practice of Coaching for Learning is not aimed directly at raising standards as traditionally defined, but at systematically building wider, tangible and transferable learning-related dispositions, expanding the range of valued outcomes to include the development of the confidence and capacities to learn and fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility of learning within individual learners.

A mixed-method approach to evaluate Coaching for Learning is suggested:

- Quantitative: learning power survey or other psychometric tools for assessing learning disposition, attainment data.
- Qualitative: learning portfolios, interviews and narratives and observations.

It is vital to recognise that coaching does not jeopardise students' performance on tests and examinations; indeed it may even improve them. Therefore, if the attainment and examination results do not go up, it is not a failure; if these results remain the same whilst learning power improves or learner agency develops, that is a success. If the conventional standards are raised, that is not a surprise because students know themselves better as learners. They are students who are better able to manage and plan their own learning, more critically engaged in the process of meaning making and knowledge construction, more resilient and interdependent in the face of challenges and do better at exams and tests. Ideally the impact of coaching prepares students effectively for lifelong learning and real-life learning as well as for examinations and further study.

Conclusions

It was intended in this article to theorise the relationship between coaching and learning in the secondary classroom context by presenting a systems model based on both existing literature and empirical investigation.

The model of Coaching for Learning has significant potential implications to educational practices. One of the most distinctive points is that teachers are no longer viewed as the primary deliverers of information or sole distributors of resources. They are transformed into coaches for individual learner, to raise aspirations and unlock potentials for effective learning and better performance. Coaches must be able use their knowledge and expertise from a broad repertoire of pedagogical strategies on a continuum from teacher-led to learner-centred. Students' learning is supported by targeting at and focused on the needs and demands of the learners themselves. However, Coaching for Learning faces a huge challenge from the current educational system. The development of learner agency, learning capabilities and dispositions is a long term goal, whilst the external educational inspectors focus more on actual achievement in a short term. Teachers would be exposed to external pressures that potentially make their pedagogical approaches limited. If schools have too much intensive pressure to raise standards, it can be hard for teachers to hold onto the long-term goal. But this conflict itself is where innovation and transformation comes from.

The empirical investigation was a small-scale case study designed to be a preliminary and exploratory investigation of coaching in learning within a classroom setting. As such there are a number of limitations that must be taken into account when considering the findings.

The first concern was the small sample size in the statistical analysis. The second concern was the quality of the interventions in each prototype. Due to its participatory nature, the interventions were designed and conducted primarily by the teachers. The process of design and re-design were under unpredictable changes. The third concern laid in the incomplete mapping of data collection methods in each prototype. This could be a major pitfall in the research design itself. Fourth, data analysis might have potential weaknesses in individual student's response to ELLI questionnaires: there might be problem in validity if the time

for completing the questionnaires was not sufficient for them, unexpected technical problems happened, or the students merely wanted to finish the tests rather than complete them carefully and accurately. The emotional and physical status of the students at the questionnaire-filling time might affect their self-perception of their learning and their criteria of judging their learning capacity. The fifth problem was that the students' genders, social-economic and cultural backgrounds were not considered in interpreting the findings, nor the students' attainment data. The last concern was that a considerable volume of data was produced. The data might hold more information that would give a richer and more sophisticated picture if analysed further.

Future research directions relating Coaching for Learning could be examining whether coaching has impact on students' subject learning nested in formal curriculum because academic performance is still the central concern of parents, school principals and policy makers. It would be extremely valuable to include another mainstream secondary school which is demographically similar to the school undertaking interventions but goes a more traditional route of teaching and learning, document their development and changes, and then compare their results both quantitatively and qualitatively. In this method we would know more about the influence of coaching on students' learning. Longitudinal studies covering two or three years length, following the same cohort of students undergoing coaching interventions, would generate much insight into the study of coaching in enquiry-based learning in terms of its long-term impact. Future research could be extended to different age groups, such as undergraduate students or postgraduate students. Moreover it could take a cultural and comparative perspective. For example, how Coaching for Learning would look like in a Chinese classroom? The innovative model of Coaching for Learning has the potential to facilitate young people's learning, make learning authentically owned and shared and cultivate individuals to be the authors of their own learning journey. The author invites the reader to experiment with this idea in new ways and new places.

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The Author

Qing Wang
Graduate School of Education,
University of Bristol,
Helen Wodehouse Building,
35 Berkeley Square, Clifton,
Bristol BS8 1JA, UK.

Correspondence

Qing Wang
Email: Q.Wang@bristol.ac.uk

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Paper

Developing a healthcare leadership coaching model using action research and systems approaches – a case study: Implementing an executive coaching programme to support nurse managers in achieving organisational objectives in Malta

Ho Law & Reggie Aquilina

Objectives: *This study aims to show how a leadership coaching programme for Nurse Ward Managers may be implemented in a general hospital with the following objectives:*

- *clarify the Nurse Ward Managers' idealised leadership attributes (ILA);*
- *identify any perceived gaps in leadership skills;*
- *develop and provide a comprehensive coaching programme; and*
- *identify the impact of the programme.*

Design: *An Action Research (AR) was adopted to involve the participants in a collaborative partnership and influence both the implementation process and outcome of the programme. It incorporated two iterative Plan-Act-Reflect cycles.*

Methods: *The sample consisted of 12 randomly chosen Nurse Ward Managers. The coaching methods used in the Action stages include a range of eclectic coaching psychology approaches. The analytical tools used in the Reflective stages included thematic analyses and a systems approach. The impact of the programme was identified using Law et al.'s (2007) Universal Integrative Framework.*

Results: *27 idealised leadership attributes were identified. Both group and individual coaching sessions were found to be effective in helping the participants identify areas of development and goals. The impact of the coaching programme included enhanced self-awareness, feelings of support, ability to take decisions and keep to time frames and achievement of organisational and personal goals.*

Conclusions: *The structured coaching programmes had a substantive impact on developing Nurse Ward Managers' leadership skills, providing them with an on-going support, and helping them achieve both personal and organisational goals.*

Keywords: *Action research; coaching psychology; coaching programme; leadership coaching; executive coaching; healthcare; learning; nursing; Universal Integrative Framework; systems approach.*

UNDER THE current global economic condition, organisations are increasingly expecting employees to do more with the same, or less, resources (Ohman, 2000). Organisations are constantly challenged by the ever increasing demands of rising costs, continuous change, increased patient acuity, multiple professional hierarchies and staff shortages (Contino, 2004; McAlearney, 2006; Storey, 2010). This entails leaders to engage and inspire employees to achieve peak performance using transformational and ethical forms of leadership (Alban-Metcalfe & Mead, 2010; Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2005). The need to develop such leadership styles is experienced even more acutely within the healthcare sector than other sectors. There is a growing awareness that the traditional hierarchical and bureaucratic organisational model is incompatible with the new complexities of the healthcare system (McAlearney, 2006) and this is leading to the decentralisation of healthcare management with more leadership responsibilities placed on the Nurse Ward Managers (Casida, 2007). However, there is evidence that Nurse Ward Managers are frequently ill-prepared in assuming leadership roles and do not receive the support they need (Mathena, 2002; Grindel, 2003). Thus, developing leadership capacity at the mid-management level has become an urgent item on the change agenda in the healthcare system.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of formal leadership training programmes is an issue with little empirical evidence to demonstrate improved performance (Ford & Weissbein, 2008; Kirwan & Birchall, 2006). Leadership Training seminars may create a moderate 'buzz' of enthusiasm for a short period but they rarely lead to sustained behavioural change (Dearborn, 2002). This may be due to the short duration of such seminars, lack of post-training support to implement changes and lack of regular reinforcement through on-going practice (Clarke, 2002). On the other hand, Executive and Leadership coaching has been identified as a powerful vehicle to develop leadership within the organisational context (Law, et al, 2007) and has been linked to several positive outcomes including enhanced transformational leadership skills (Abrell et al., 2011); goal self-concordance and attainment (Burke & Linley, 2007; Grant, 2006; Law et al., 2007); self-awareness, accountability and just-in-time learning (Turner, 2006) and productivity and ROI increases (McGovern et al., 2001; Olivero, Bane & Kopelman, 1997). Leadership coaching can capitalise on the energy and enthusiasm that is generated during formal training sessions (Finn, 2007) since it is not a one-time event, but a strategic process that adds incremental value both to those being coached and to the bottom line of the organisation (Goldsmith & Lyons, 2006). It also promotes the application of knowledge within the reality of the work settings through feedback and ongoing customised support; thus making learning immediately applicable (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004; Oberstein, 2010).

In the healthcare setting there is still a dearth of research studies related to nurse coaching. However, the few studies available have also shown positive outcomes with a leadership coaching intervention. A study by Kushnir, Ehrenfeld and Shalish (2008) found that compared with the control group nurses who participated in a coaching project improved in training motivation, self-efficacy and behavioural transfer of several skills. These results were in contrast with the decline in most outcomes of the control group. Another study by Johnson, Sonson and Golden (2010) found that coaching helped to improve individual and organisational performance and job satisfaction. Rivers et al. (2011) found that a coaching programme for 30 Nurse Ward Managers helped with setting goals, making realistic plans, accountability, and setting priorities. Further research and case studies on implementation of leadership coaching in the healthcare setting are, therefore, welcome.

This paper provides such a case study with an aim to show how a leadership

coaching programme may be implemented for Nurse Ward Managers in a general hospital. More specifically, the key objectives of this study were to:

- Clarify the Nurse Ward Managers' idealised leadership attributes (ILA).
- Identify any perceived gaps in leadership skills.
- Identify an ideal model to implement a comprehensive coaching programme.
- Identify the impact of the programme.

Methodology

Action Research (AR) was chosen as a methodology approach since it focuses on generating evidence through research so as to find solutions to practical problems or issues of pressing concern with the aim of helping practitioners improve the quality of their practice (Craig, 2009; Elliott, 1991; Reason & Bradbury, 2006). With its focus on generating collaborative solutions to practical problems it empowers practitioners to engage themselves within the research process (Meyer, 2000). It consists of a collaborative spiral of reflective cycles, or iterations, that include identifying a problem, designing inquiry-based questions, planning a change, acting and introducing the change, observing and reflecting on the process and re-planning again (Craig, 2009; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). Thus it is an ideal approach for facilitating the process of introducing a coaching programme into the organisation (the primary aim of this research). It is also in line with the principles of coaching as a learning process (Law et al., 2007), a reflective practice (reflection in action, Schön, 1983, 1991), and a collaborative partnership to improve personal and professional performance (Kilburg, 1996). The AR approach adopted for this study .

Design

The researchers designed to incorporate the AR process in two cycles, (iterations or phases). Each cycle maps on to Kolb's (1984) learning cycle, that is, integrating planning, action, and reflection stages with the aim of addressing the research objectives (see Figure 1).

The detailed methods and procedures for implementation are described next; the outcome of the reflection forms part of the results and discussions.

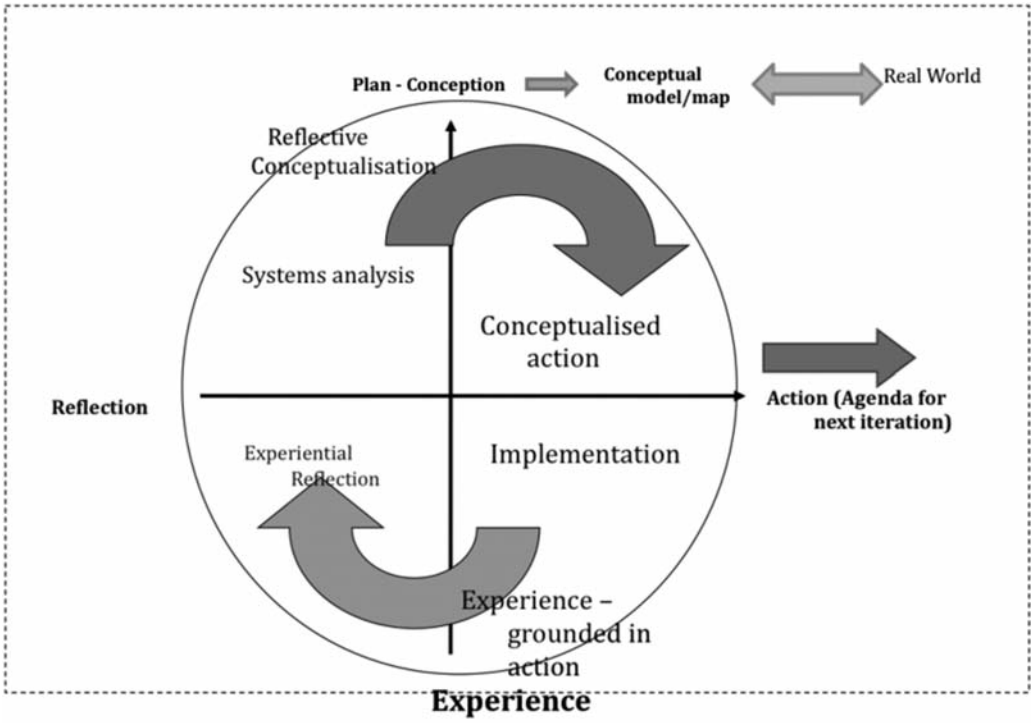
The inclusion criterion is that participants were the Nurse Ward Manager in the hospital. For practical purpose, the stratified random sampling approach that was based on the random choice of two Nurse Ward Managers out of seven from each of the six departments ensured that that the final sample of 12 Nurse Ward Managers reflected an unbiased representative sample of the whole hospital and all departments. The exclusion criteria are seemly those who have not been randomly selected. There were no matching criteria for the sample, as this was an action research, not a quasi-experimental design.

Methods

A mixed range of research methods were used. A stratified random sampling technique (Polit & Hungler, 1999; Burns & Grove, 1993) was used to identify the participants. Thematic and systems analyses were applied in the reflective process (evaluation and conceptualisation) to identify the relevant themes and develop a conceptual model for leadership coaching. Finally, Law et al.'s (2007) Universal Integrative Framework (UIF) was used to evaluate the impact of the coaching programme.

The coaching programme consisted of four one-to-one coaching sessions. While the basic coaching process followed the GROW model (Whitmore, 2002), a range of eclectic coaching psychology methods were embedded according to the individual coachee's need. This included cognitive behavioural coaching (Palmer & Szymanska, 2007) and solution-focused (Green, Oades & Grant, 2006). These aimed to help the participants to focus on identifying and achieving self-congruent goals within specified time-frames. In general, the coaching approaches were underpinned by the philo-

Figure 1: Action research learning cycle (adopted from Law et al., 2007).



sophy of Positive Psychology (Seligman, 2002) and integrated transpersonal and narrative collaborative practice – the 'third generation' coaching practice advocated by Stelter and Law (2010) to support reflective exploration of personal meaning and aspirations. These would address the individuals' psychological, cultural and spiritual needs and identify core values as guiding markers for decisions in their private and professional lives (Law, Lancaster & DiGiovanni, 2010; Law, 2007; Stelter & Law, 2010).

Research area and participants

This study was conducted at Mater Dei Hospital which is the largest acute hospital in Malta. A stratified random sampling of 12 Nurse Ward Managers was carried out to extract the study sample from the total target population of 42 Nurse Ward Managers of the hospital. Participation in this study was on a voluntary basis and there was no pressure on the Nurse Ward Managers to participate. The age group of the participants was between 32 and 46 years and all the Nurse Ward Managers drawn up through the stratified random sampling willingly accepted to participate in the study. Seven of the participants were female and five participants were male.

Reflexivity – validity and rigour

Kock (2007) states that action research has three validity threats to contend with, namely: Subjectivity threats, due to personal bias of the researcher; Contingency threats due to the broadness and complexity of data generated; and Control threats due to the lack of full control over the environment.

As an 'antidote' to counter these threats Kock (2007, p.103) suggests action researchers to conduct multiple iterations of the AR cycle and collect cumulative data to strengthen the findings. It is also suggested

that findings are validated by participants throughout the study (Meyer, 2000). In conducting this research, the researchers were fully aware of their own subjectivity and how this might have an impact upon the research process and the participants' responses. In line with the qualitative research philosophy, participants were regarded as co-researchers who equally contributed to the knowledge production.

Ethical considerations

The Research proposal for this study was approved jointly by the University of East London, the CEO of Mater Dei Hospital and the Director of Nursing. A covering letter explaining the issues of confidentiality, anonymity and the aims of the action research was given to the participants and informed consent was obtained in line with ethical principles (Polit & Hungler, 1999; Bowling, 2002).

Procedures

As previously stated, the AR process incorporated two cycles.

Cycle 1:

Planning Phase

A meeting was held with the Director of Nursing to discuss the Agenda for the Focus Groups and coaching sessions. It was agreed that the main organisational objective for this study would be to help Nurse Ward Managers become more aware of their Leadership attributes. During this planning phase the stratified random selection of participants was carried out and an Action plan and the date for the first focus group was decided. The Idealised Leadership Attributes (ILA) Exercise consisting of a list of Leadership Attributes was developed and piloted.

Action Phase

The first Focus Group was carried out using a Nominal Group Facilitation Technique. Following this two coaching sessions with each individual participant were carried out and these sessions were followed by a Validation Group meeting to decide the way forward for the second iterative cycle process and to validate the emergent themes from the first Focus Group.

The reflective outcomes from this first cycle are presented in the Results section.

Cycle 2:

Planning Phase

The reflection on the experience of the first Cycle led to the development of a Coaching Log template to structure better the next set of individual coaching sessions with the participants. The ILA exercise was revised and simplified and a plan for a second round of coaching sessions was drawn up. A date was also agreed for the second Focus Group.

Action Phase

The second round of coaching sessions were conducted with the participants and the final Focus group was carried out as a way of concluding the second cycle.

The results of the two cycles will now be presented.

Results

The First Iteration

Findings of the first Focus Group

The first iteration of the study was initiated through a Focus Group with the aim of piloting the ILA Exercise and identifying the Leadership values and attributes that the participants identified as the most important and impactful in effective leadership. The following themes and attributes emerged from thematic analysis of the discussion transcripts:

Intrinsic values – Intrinsic values such as honesty, loyalty, fairness, empathy and trustworthiness emerged as a central component of idealised leadership. These were viewed as blending within each other to provide an ethical foundation that could be expressed in any life situation.

Vision – Having a vision that is congruent with one's behaviour was also emphasised.

It was stated that although Nurse Ward Managers were not directly involved in creating the Organisational vision they still needed to create their own 'mini' vision.

Visibility – Visibility and presence of the Nurse Ward Manager in the clinical area helped to integrate the leaders with followers, create a sense of teamwork and provide an opportunity to role model good values. It also helped the leader remain connected and in control, know the team better and delegate and supervise more effectively.

Assertiveness – Assertiveness was viewed as a means of expressing one's certainty, commitment and conviction about doing what is right in a persistent way without being aggressive. It gave a sense of empowerment, control and pride as well as the ability to realise the vision through role modelling and educating others.

The experience of the first iterative cycle suggests the need of integrating the GROW model (Whitmore, 2002) within the coaching sessions to increase the focus on goal attainment. The ILA pilot exercise also shows the need to make the tool more compact.

The Second Iteration

Findings of the second Focus Group

From the findings of the second focus group, we can provide possible answers to our research questions as follows:

1. What are the idealised leadership attributes of Nurse Ward Managers?

In total, 27 Idealised Leadership Attributes have been identified from the focus group discussion and the thematic analyses. These are summarised in Table 1.

It is important to emphasise that the list in Table 1 does not reflect the complex interactions of the attributes. Consequently, a visual representation was drawn up to integrate the chosen attributes and provide a depiction of their interrelationships. For example, values related to Authenticity, Direction and Caring emerged as a central component while dominant, competitive and manipulative approaches were rejected as being incongruent with these values. Visual representation was found to be useful as a framework to develop a 360º feedback tool. This visual representation was further developed using a General System Approach (GSA,) during the Reflection stage (conception phase in the learning cycle) to handle the complexity of organisational interactions and relationships. This is congruent with the recent discussions and current debates on using systems approach for coaching and action research (Ulrich, 1996; Cavanagh, 2006; Eidelson, 1997; Cavanagh & Lane, 2012; Shams & Law, 2012). A conceptual model was mapped out in a Systems Relationship Diagram (SRD) (Figure 2). This shows the potential positive effect on the behaviour of the healthcare team, patient care and the subsequent output (patient satisfaction) as a positive feedback loop. The system of interest that emerged from the modelling exercise is named as a healthcare Leadership System (HLS).

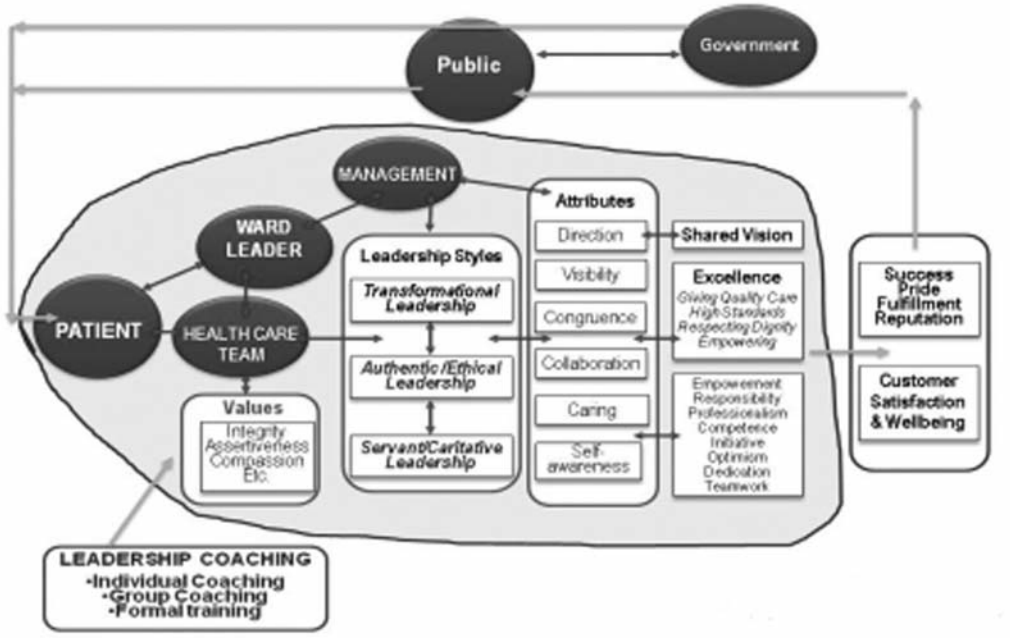
2. Do Nurse Ward Managers identify deficits in their leadership attributes or skills?

The Nurse Ward Managers stated that the process of going through the ILA and Values Clarification Exercises helped them to identify both their strengths and areas of development. The one-to-one coaching further fine-tuned the process and specific development areas were identified. However, there was also consensus on the need of doing a 360º feedback as part of the self-awareness process. The ILA exercise increased participants' knowledge about different leadership attributes and served as a self-assessment exercise to increase their insights about personal strengths and areas of development. This self-awareness was further developed through the Values Clarification Exercise and one-to-one coaching. Although the ILA, Values clarification exercises and

Table 1: Idealised Leadership Attributes of Nurse Ward Managers.

Idealised leadership attributes (themes)	Characteristics
Authenticity	honesty, integrity, fairness, equality, transparency, respect, self-awareness, trustworthiness, loyalty, ethical behaviour, role modelling, openness to criticism, acknowledging mistakes.
Responsibility	accountability, reliability, dependability, dedication, fidelity, constancy, consistency, commitment, self-discipline.
Collaboration	teamwork, communication, co-operation, partnership, solidarity, support, conflict management, consensus building.
Caring	empathy, concern, compassion, dignity, kindness, generosity, nurturance, helpfulness, consideration, understanding.
Excellence	high quality, competence, skills, high standards, aptitude, professionalism, effectiveness, evidence-based practice.
Safety	security, protection, well-being, risk containment
Empowerment	involvement, power sharing, delegation, broad-mindedness, freedom, self-determination, autonomy, non-blame culture
Influence	authority, power, decisiveness, assertiveness, command, control, confidence.
Growth	development, coaching, learning, guidance, counsel, mentoring, supporting, challenging, knowledge-sharing.
Vision	clarity, strategy, purposefulness, direction, future minded, pro-activity, initiative
Visibility	support, presence, instruction, supervision, accessibility, role modelling
Contribution	serving others, making a difference, leaving a legacy, altruism, generosity, selflessness, abundance mentality
Patience	serenity, flexibility, tolerance, endurance, temperance
Inspiration	passion, optimism, encouragement, engagement, charisma, motivation, energising, confidence, stimulation, humour
Determination	resolve, certainty, fortitude, hardiness, resilience, persistence, perseverance, steadfastness.
Courage	daring, boldness, challenge, risk-taking, audaciousness, non-conformity.
Orderliness	tidiness, neatness, structure, efficiency, organisation
Appreciation	praising, thanking, gratitude, acknowledging, rewarding, gratefulness, cherishing
Creativity	originality, inventiveness, innovativeness, imagination, ingenuity, resourcefulness.
Humility	serving others, modesty, humbleness, gentleness, reserve.
Diligence	duty, industry, accountability, conscientiousness, self-discipline.
Pragmatism	practicality, realism, sensibleness, factuality, expediency, feasibility, convenience
Prudence	carefulness, cautiousness, non-risk decisions, discretion.
Reputation	status, esteem, standing, popularity, admiration, recognition.
Ambition	achievement, results, success, accomplishment, being the best, competition, superiority, pride, winning, drive, triumph, territorialism.
Meticulousness	precision, accuracy, perfection, exactness, thoroughness.
Conformity	stability, constancy, compliance, observance, conventionality.

Figure 2: A Healthcare Leadership System (HLS); note: the leadership coaching system is still outside the system, which is to be implemented. The hand drawn line represents the HLS system boundary and emphases the fact that it is a human system.



one-to-one coaching provided awareness and insights about personal strengths and areas of development, a 360º feedback was requested to provide participants with a genuine and complete picture of their leadership strengths and weaknesses.

3. What form of development or coaching do Nurse Ward Managers need to improve their leadership skills?

From the focused group discussion, it was identified that a coaching service providing an integrated approach of formal training programs, group coaching and individual one-to-one coaching sessions was required. These are further elaborated on below.

Formal Training Programmes: It was stated that there is still a place for traditional leadership training sessions were the basic theoretical and practical elements of leadership could be covered. It was also suggested that Nurse Ward Managers could be provided with a formal and basic coaching skills training programme to help them hone their coaching skills.

Individual Coaching: It was suggested that one-to-one coaching sessions should form an integral part of any effective leadership programme. These sessions should be based on self-awareness, personal core values, identification of leadership strengths, areas of development, organisational and personal goals including homework and reminders. It was also stated that a coaching service should be available according to needs and that booster sessions should continue as required.

Group Coaching: It was identified that group coaching could serve as a healthy forum for sharing ideas and group goals. 360º feedback based on the Idealised Leadership Attributes was also suggested as a way of developing self-awareness.

4. What is the impact of Executive Coaching on Nurse Ward Managers at a personal and professional level?

The perceptions of Nurse Ward Managers related to the impact of the four coaching sessions they received included enhanced self-awareness, clarifying personal strengths and areas of development, and enhanced social and professional skills. Although individualised coaching was limited to four sessions, participants verbalised a number of tangible organisational and personal achievements. The organisational goals achieved included changes in the Medication distribution systems, enhanced interdisciplinary documentation and development of training programmes and standard operating procedures. The other benefits elicited by the participants in relation to the effects of this coaching programme could be organised according to the structure of the Universal Integrative Framework (Law, Ireland & Hussain, 2007) as follows.

Personal Competence

- Enhancing self-awareness about intrinsic core values, beliefs and behaviour.
- Understanding own behaviour and associated beliefs, rules, 'musts' and 'shoulds'.
- Identifying personal strengths and areas of development.
- Using personal strengths as leverage to enhance expertise.
- Providing a structured way of identifying and achieving personal and professional goals.
- Creating accountability to achieve goals and keep to time-frames.
- Utilising and adopting insights into new situations.
- Eliciting 'out of the box' thinking and exploration of new solutions from different perspectives in a flexible way.
- Increasing resilience in challenging time.
- Providing a positive outlook for each situation.
- Supporting and encouraging authenticity and mindfulness.
- Providing a healthy and safe environment to discuss concerns, feel reassured and understood whilst reducing feelings of isolation or helplessness.
- Receiving total attention and personal time from your coach without any hidden agenda.

Social Competence

- Developing communication skills.
- Managing anger when communicating with others.
- Conflict management techniques to handle different situations.
- Learning to appreciate and praise others.
- Delegating more to others.
- Role modelling values and taking congruent decision and actions.
- Becoming honestly open to criticism and feedback from others.

Cultural and Organisational Competence

- Building a sense of cultural bonding to enhance collective consciousness through group coaching.
- Developing new ways to enhance teamwork, for example, more efficient documentation systems.
- Championing empowerment of staff by listening more, using effective questions and giving people space and time to talk and be involved in decision-making.
- Supporting and integrating those who may seem ineffective to cope with their responsibilities or situations.

Professional Competence

- Development of Nurse Ward Manager's Coaching skills to introduce one-to-one coaching for staff.
- Developing CPD training programmes for nurses.
- Introducing changes and standard operating procedures that lead to enhanced safety for staff and patients.
- Helping new Nurse Ward Managers to go through transition process to reduce fear.

Discussion

Idealised Leadership Attributes

On reflection, the researchers conclude that the participants themselves effectively co-developed the emerging idealised healthcare Leadership System in relation to how they desire to be as leaders. Using GSA/SRD, the researchers have developed a conceptual model to represent such system (Figure 3). The emergence of *Authenticity* as a fundamental ideal component within this SRD provides further evidence to the claim that – Authentic leadership represents an overarching component that beneficially encompasses other forms of effective leadership (Avolio et al., 2004; Avolio & Gardner, 2005). The main attributes in Figure 3 shows an alignment towards an authentic-transformational leadership style (Bass, 1985; Nichols, 2008) with aspects of Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2003) and Spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003). These leadership styles revolve around the values-based, ethical leadership compass focusing on authenticity and integrity of the leader (Poff, 2010).

The findings of this study are also in line with the findings of several other nursing studies. Stanley (2006 a,b,c,) found that nurses preferred a 'congruent' leadership style aligned to actions based on authentic and ethical core values. Other studies pointed out the importance of enduring relationships, presence and visibility, caring about the team's well-being, loyalty, trust, respect, flexibility, shared vision, self-discipline, commitment to principles, and empowerment of others rather than personal prestige (Cummings, Hayduk & Estabrooks, 2005; Johansson, Sandahl & Andershed, 2011; Kleinman, 2004; Manley, 2000; Shirey, 2006; Stanley, 2008). These were all referred to in this study and form an integral component of the HLS. The fact that the participants also rejected manipulative, competitive and dominant styles of leadership also reflects the findings of a study by Hendel et al. (2006). Although the desirable attributes of managers have been well-documented in the literature, the finding added value by confirming that similar leadership

Figure 3: A Healthcare Leadership Coaching Model (HLCM).

attributes are required for nursing managers and thus it has implications on the knowledge transfer in terms of applying leadership to the nursing sector. Also the study highlighted the different priority of the leadership attributes in nursing in comparison with other sectors (e.g. care and ethics).

Thus, through the application of a GSA, the complexity and interaction of the participants' idealised leadership attributes was mapped out. The SRD provided a means of explaining the pattern of relationship and interaction of these values with system elements and how these adapt in novel ways, interact and provide feedback to the system to impact on ongoing behaviour and change (Cavanagh, 2006).

Identifying strengths and areas of development

The ILA and Values Clarification Exercises served as a prompt for the participants to identify both their strengths and areas of development, thus developing a benchmark against which to measure their performance and leadership style. However, it was also acknowledged that self-reported scoring was limited in providing a complete picture and 360º feedback was requested. This method has been confirmed by research to be effective in promoting awareness about personal skills and deficiencies (Hagdberg, 1996; Shipper & Dillard, 2000; Lord & Emrich, 2001, Law et al., 2007). Kleinman (2004) also identified a discrepancy between Nurse Ward Managers' perceptions of their leadership styles and staff perception of their leaders, thus indicating the importance of having unbiased feedback from others. Accordingly, it was agreed that the next phase of the coaching programme would include a 360º feedback exercise.

Leadership Development Programmes

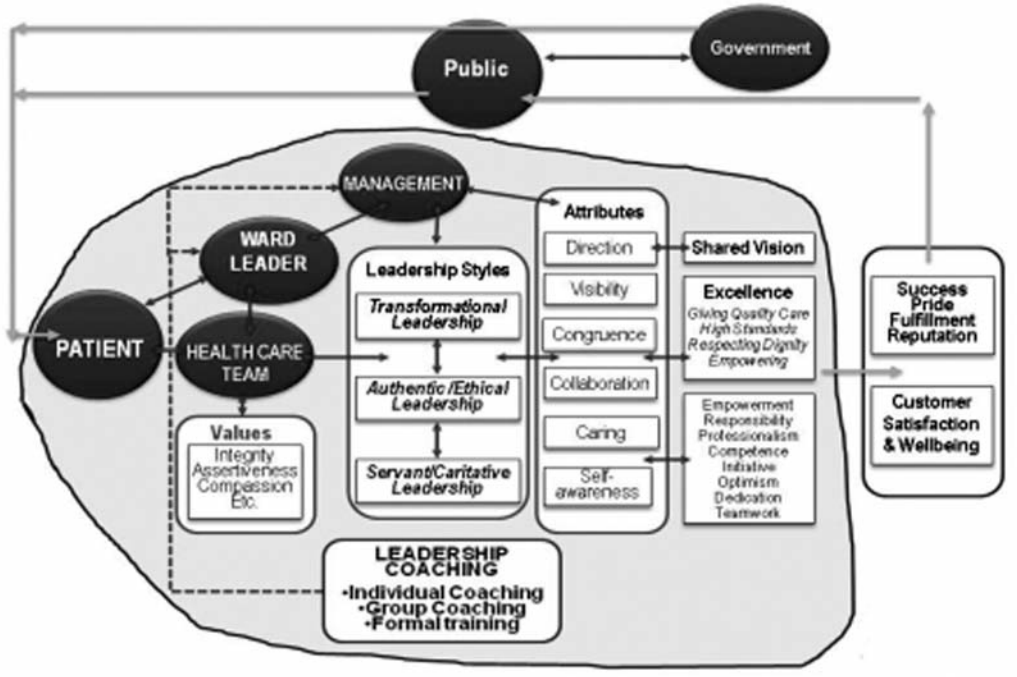
The results of this study further confirms the importance of an integrative approach towards leadership development (Carey, Philippon & Cummings, 2011; Clarke, 2002; Dearborn, 2002; Horner; 2002; Reno, 2005; Tobias, 1996, Law et al., 2007), which is not only limited to conventional training programmes, but also to post-training support. The participants stressed the importance of using a combined approach that includes formal training programmes supported by one-to-one and group coaching.

The systems mapping exercise in Figure 2 shows how coaching matches onto the need of leadership. We call the model in Figure 3 a healthcare Leadership Coaching Model (HLCM) which may represent a blueprint for leadership coaching programmes. This is congruent with the good coaching practice as exemplified by Law, Lancaster and Di Giovanni (2010). A further systems modelling shows how leadership coaching may be embedded within the healthcare system as an integral part leading to an organisational development process (Figure 4).

Impact of Coaching

The impact identified in this study also relates to the coaching outcomes reported in the literature – reflection, insights, increased self-awareness, and the importance of continuous one-to-one attention, expansion of thinking and personal accountability (Grant, 2006; Horton-Deutsch, Young & Nelson, 2011; Passmore, 2010; Turner, 2006). Other benefits mentioned in this study include: goal self-concordance and commitment, values alignment, and increased resilience (Burke & Linley, 2007; Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009); enhanced planning and accountability (Rivers, Pesata, Beasley & Dietrich, 2011); non-judgemental support (Du Toit, 2006; Byrne, 2007); well-being (Green, Oades, & Grant, 2006; Passmore, 2010); adoption of a coaching leadership style as a result of being coached (Gegner, 1997); solving own problems, identifying development needs and improving work-life balance (Jarvis, 2004); development of authentic behaviour (Drenthen, 2010); and resistance to social pressures that challenge one's ethical values (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Figure 4: A Healthcare Leadership Development System (HLDS) which shows leadership coaching is embedded as part of the HLDS. The hand drawn line represents the HLDS system boundary and emphases the fact that it is a human system.



The Values clarification exercise using picture cards to evoke critical reflection provided a number of important insights to the participants about their attitudes, beliefs and values, thus providing transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991). The participants also felt challenged to stretch and commit themselves to timeframes to achieve their identified goals and 'homework' given. This movement out of one's comfort zone is referred to by Stacey (2000) as a place where the tensions between chaos and stability, described as the 'edge of chaos', elicits creativity and innovation. On the other hand, the therapeutic environment of group coaching referred to in this study seems to be in line with Wenger's theory of communities of practice (COP), which are 'groups of people who share a common concern or passion for something they do and interact regularly to learn how to do it better' (Lave & Wenger, 1998). It also provides a way to identify and address system wide issues (Crethar, Phillips & Brown, 2011; Edmondstone, 2011).

Limitations of the study

Like most qualitative methods, lack of generalisation is a limitation. However, the AR process may be replicated as a standard of good practice. Since AR is dynamic it is difficult to control all stages of the study, however, the support and commitment shown by the participants ensured a positive outcome and no derailing issues emerged during the research process. To address facilitator and social desirability bias all perceived measures were taken by the researchers by limiting their personal input to asking questions, reflecting back and summarising.

Research implications

Future research may include replication studies to identify any variances in leadership attributes, preference of leadership development programmes and impact of coaching on Nurse Ward Managers (or different management level) in different hospitals (or organisation) and countries. The impact of a comprehensive coaching programme as discussed in this research study, that includes formal, one-to-one and group coaching can be further explored. Such studies can further inform healthcare organisations on the benefits of adopting such coaching programmes as an integral part of their healthcare leadership development programmes. Research can also shed light on the impact of coaching programmes on the outcomes of patients and the effect on accountable, effective and efficient use of scarce resources of society.

An exploration of the effect of introducing values clarification exercises for healthcare students can also be researched since there seems to be a gap in this area. This research may be further informed by exploring present value system of student nurses and newly-graduated nurses.

In line with good practice of action research, in addition to the publication of this paper in an appropriate professional journal, the researchers have also presented the findings of this study at the 3rd International Orthopaedic Nursing Conference as part of wider dissemination of knowledge (Aquilina & Law, 2012, in press).

Conclusion

The constant changes and decentralisation of management in healthcare has put more responsibility on the Nurse Ward Managers (Casida, 2007). Thus, an organisational commitment towards appropriate on-going training to support these key frontline leaders is required to sustain the healthcare system and provide quality care to patients (Care & Udod, 2003; Mathena, 2002; Kowalski, Bradley & Pappas, 2006; Smith & Sandstrom, 1999; Wessel Krejci & Malin, 1997).

This study has identified a list of idealised leadership attributes as established by the participants of the study and developed a healthcare leadership model that centres around authentic-transformational and servant leadership styles. It has also indicated the importance of using an integrative, eclectic framework of coaching psychology approaches coupled with the formal training, group and one-to-one coaching sessions as a recommended format for the development of the Ward Leader's skills.

The researchers hope that this study has contributed to the growing evidence on the effectiveness of coaching as a mode of support, self-awareness, empowerment, self-concordant goal setting and impact on the professional and personal levels. It has confirmed that as little as four coaching sessions can be effective in providing tangible benefits and goal achievement (Burke & Linley, 2007; Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009).

In addition, this study recommends the integration of leadership coaching in a healthcare system to develop the future leaders. As suggested by Walumbwa et al. (2008), such an eclectic leadership programme may be effective in building a coaching culture so as to develop leaders and promote authentic, ethical, and transformational leadership that can lead to positive impacts and high levels of performance. While the hospital in Malta is funded by the government, the value added intervention may enable further funding from the government. Embedding coaching culture within the existing infrastructure would require very little additional resources. Moreover, the transferability of the model may be applied across cultures to the areas where healthcare systems have not suffered from the same financial constraints as those experienced in the UK. Finally, this study has also resonated with the importance of adopting an ethical leadership as a coaching model; as Law (2010, p.97) described:

'If a leader is to move people, he or she must move them with their hearts and minds so as to instill the team with a sense of great purpose, a mission that they are compelled to achieve. They and their leader share the same goal. To do that, the shared vision has to be grounded in an ethical principle.'

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The Authors

Ho Law
Chartered & Registered Psychologist,
PhD CPsychol CSci CMgr MISCP(Accred)
AFBPsS; FCMI; FHEA
Chartered Psychologist, Chartered Scientist,
Chartered Manager,
Registered Psychologist, Registered Applied Psychology Practice Supervisor (APPS);
Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology,
University of East London, UK.

Reggie Aquilina
Dip. Adult Training & Development (U.M.),
BSc Nursing Studies (U.M.),
MSc Coaching Student (UEL),
Practice Development Nurse,
Mater Dei Hospital,
Malta.

Correspondence

Ho Law
University of East London,
Stratford Campus,
Water Lane,
London E15 4LZ, UK.
Email: law2@uel.ac.uk
Skype username: hochunglaw

Reggie Aquilina
Practice Development Team Office,
Yellow Foyer, Ground Floor,
San Gwann,
Mater Dei Hospital,
Malta.
Email: reggie.aquilina@gmail.com

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Paper

A framework for family life coaching

Kimberly Allen

Many family life educators utilise a coach approach to serving families, and many coaching psychologists serve families in their coaching profession, yet there is a deficit of theoretical or application literature on coaching families. This paper argues that it is time to begin a global discussion on the topic of family life coaching as a unique field of study. The author explains the similarities and differences of family life education and coaching psychology, and creates a framework for professionals to begin a global discussion about how to integrate the two fields in order to create a theory and evidence-based practice in family life coaching.

Keywords: *Coaching; family; family life; family life coaching; family coaching; family life education; coaching psychology.*

THE FIELDS of family life education (FLE) and coaching psychology (CP) are destined to unite. Historically, the field of FLE has been the primary mode for educating families and families were never a big part of the conversation in the field of CP. The field, however, is changing and family practitioners are utilising the technique of coaching in their work with families. Likewise, the field of CP has historically catered to individuals, but there is a growing need for coaches to help family-relationship coaching, youth coaching, and couples coaching are all growing areas of CP. Although work is happening in the area of family life coaching (FLC), there is a vast deficit of information for family practitioners about the practice of and theory of coaching families.

In order to establish a theoretical foundation and evidence-based approach to coaching families, there must first be a conceptualisation and discussion of family life coaching. Coaching families has long been an informal methodology used in family practice, illustrating the need for family life coaching to be a part of the national conversation of family life and CP. This paper aims to present a framework to begin the conceptualisation of FLC and to generate interest and debate on the role of family life coaching in the arenas of family life and CP.

Family life education

Family life education (FLE) is a field of study and application that involves qualified educators delivering family science principles designed to strengthen familial relationships and foster positive development of individual, couple, and family development (Duncan & Goddard, 2011). In its broadest definition, FLE is a process where a professional provides skills and knowledge that helps families function at their optimal level (National Council on Family Relations, 2009). The educational delivery may happen in a variety of settings, but typically occurs in settings outside of the formal education system. Information is delivered to individuals, couples, parents, and on occasion, to whole families. The theoretical foundation of FLE is diverse, having drawn from home economics, social work, family sociology, marriage and family therapy, education, and developmental psychology (Lewis-Rowley et al., 1993).

Although the scholarship of FLE is relatively new, application of FLE by professionals dates back over a century. The turn of the 20th century brought a great many changes to families, therefore creating a

need for education for women and children (Allen, Dunn & Zazlow, 2011). FLE was formed as a response to those changes with the goal of helping families improve their wellbeing (Arcus, 1995) and continues to provide family science scholarship in applied settings.

Most often, family life educators aim to help parents and couples improve their relationships and gain skills to make their family life successful. Duncan and Goddard (2011) highlight seven principles of FLE: relevancy across the lifespan, based on needs of clients served, multi-disciplinary, varied content delivery platforms, focuses on education, honors diversity, and requires educated professionals to deliver education. In fact, to receive the credential of certified family life educator, professionals must show competence in 10 content areas specific to family life (NCFR, 2009).

Most often, FLE is considered to be a top-down process where a credentialed educator shares information with participants (Doherty, 2000). FLE does acknowledge that the family brings wisdom and experiences to the table, but the emphasis is generally on the expert sharing knowledge with participants, and participants using that knowledge for positive change. This approach has its strengths and weaknesses. Having an expert that can clearly articulate the evidence-based approaches can provide families with much needed credible information. On the flip side, however, families have little ownership in the process of change. There are varied approaches to FLE, some of which put less emphasis on the expert-model. For example, Duncan & Goddard (2011), identify six approaches to FLE, including the 'critical inquirer approach' (p.17), which bears resemblance to coaching. In this approach, educators utilise questions to help participants move forward and the approach acknowledges that participants have responsibility in their own life (Czaplewski & Jorgensen, 1993).

Although very little is written on using a coach approach to serving families in the FLE literature base, there is some information about the varying domains of practice. Doherty (1995) proposes that there are five levels of family involvement ranging from simple FLE lessons to full on family therapy. He identified differences between FLE and a licensed therapist working with families, and stated that FLE should contain components of imparting knowledge and skills while keeping a focus on the feelings, attitudes, and goals of the families served. Myers-Walls et al. (2011) expanded Doherty's conceptualisation of FLE by suggesting family case management as a third professional role in family life work. Because of the personal and emotional focus in working with families, FLE involves a relationship, making it unique and separate from other academic subjects or courses one might study. While these one-on-one and group interactions may appear to resemble therapy and often contain elements of relational theory, Doherty stresses the importance of family educators to remain objective and refer the family, when necessary, for additional counseling and therapy (1995).

Table 1: Family life education content expertise areas.

Families and individuals in social contexts	Internal dynamics of families
Human growth and development across the life span	Human sexuality
Interpersonal relationships	Family resource management
Parenting education and guidance	Family law and public policy
Professional ethics and practice	Family life education methodology

Though there are variations among service offerings and styles of services in FLE, the primary foci is on factors such as improving the relationship between parent and child in the specific context of the family, reduction in externalised child behaviours, and increasing the family's skills and resources (Gockel, Russell & Harris, 2008). FLE can take place across levels of intensity and settings, from basic workshops to more intensive interactions involving in-home services and coaching. Some might even argue that coaching is a natural fit with FLE. Very little, however, is written about the use of coaching with families.

Coaching psychology

Like FLE, the literature field of coaching psychology (CP), or coaching, has experienced rapid growth over the past few decades (Grant, 2011). The roots of CP come from humanistic psychology (Grant, 2011). As the field grew, so did the theoretical framework of practicing coaching psychologists. Coaching frameworks now include cognitive/behavioral, solution focused, psychodynamic, rational emotive, and transactional among others (Whybrow & Palmer, 2006). The field of coaching is grounded in psychological theory, but consists of a variety sub categories. The focus of coaching practices includes executive, personal life, business, performance, leadership, career, team, mentoring, health, and sports. All coaches are not psychologists; in fact, 95 per cent of coaches are non-psychologists (Grant & Zackon, 2004).

The field of CP is young, although the practice of using coaching in work with individuals and groups is not new (Gant, 2011). The technique of coaching in psychological practice was written decades ago (see Filippi, 1968), but until recently, there was scarcely any literature about the field of CP (Gant, 2003). There is now a theoretical foundation and major surge in research that is truly shaping the field into a science-based approach to helping others.

The definition of CP is to enhance the 'well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches' (adapted from Grant & Palmer, 2002). This is done through a partnership with the client. Unlike FLE, CP leads with the premise that the client is an equal partner in the process and comes to the table with expertise, knowledge, and abilities to create the change they seek. Coaches work with their clients to create change; there is no hierarchy.

Some view coaching as similar or the same as therapy. Although there are similarities, there are also distinct differences (Hart, Blattner & Leipsic, 2001). Therapy or counseling is often used with clients that have significant mental issues while coaching clients tend to be more goal directed and mentally healthy (Hart, Blattner & Leipsic, 2001). Coaching works to 'enhance the life experience, work performance and well-being for individuals, groups and organisations who do not have clinically significant mental health issues (Grant, 2006, p.16). This approach tends to be for people who are doing well, and express a desire to do even better. Over the past decade, the field of coaching has shifted somewhat to become more than problem solving or remediation; it now has a focus of preparing people and organisations to deal with emerging needs.

Although coaching practices have long been used in therapeutic settings (McGoldrick & Carter, 2001), coaching is, in many instances, a separate profession that utilises different techniques than therapy. Unlike therapy, coaching deals with the present and future, and views emotions as natural (Williams & Menendez, 2007). Although some professional coaches do utilise a variety of techniques such as mentoring and consulting simultaneously, many consider coaching as separate from consulting and mentoring. Like therapy, both mentoring and consulting identifies an expert model whereas coaching is co-creative and both members form a partner-

ship. Williams and Menendez (2007) created a matrix that highlights the differences between therapy, mentoring, consulting, and coaching (see Table 2). These differences demonstrate the uniqueness of coaching in relationship to other helping professions.

One major disadvantage of the coaching profession is the lack of unified quality credentialing. Although there are some efforts underway to form a unified accreditation or qualification process such as those with the International Coach Federation, a rigorous, standard accreditation does not currently exist (Gant, 2006). As such, anyone can call themselves a coach, regardless of qualifications. Of the training programmes that do exist, many are 'credentialing mills'; that offer a short, expensive training that scarcely provides needed information and skills practice to be a professional coach (Gant, 2006, p.14). Furthermore, there is a deficit of literature specifically regarding content necessary for quality education in professional coaching (Grant, 2011), as well as a deficit in integrating evidence-based coaching techniques (Moore & Highstein, 2004).

The good news is the literature of CP is growing, and there is an openness to new ideas, frameworks, and techniques to move the field forward. The world is getting more complex, and models of professional practice are emerging to help people positively respond to change (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012). CP is a prime example of a professional rising to meet a unique need. Slowly

Table 2: Professional distinctions of coaching and other fields.

Therapy	Mentoring	Consulting	Coaching
Deals mostly with a person's past and trauma, and seeks healing	Deals mostly with succession training and seeks to help someone do what you do	Deals mostly with problems and seeks to provide information (expertise, strategy, structures, methodologies) to solve them	Deals mostly with a person's present and seeks to guide them into a more desirable future
Doctor-patient relationship (therapist has the answers)	Older/wise-younger/less-experienced relationship (mentor has the answers)	Expert-person with problem relationship (consultant has the answers)	Co-creative, equal partnership (coach helps clients discover their own answers)
Assumes many emotions are a symptom of something wrong	Limited to emotional response of the mentoring parameters (succession, etc.)	Does not normally address or deal with emotions (informational only)	Assumes emotions are natural and normalises them
The therapist diagnoses, then provides professional expertise and guidelines to give clients a path to healing	The mentor allows you to observe his/her behaviour and expertise, will answer questions, and provide guidance and wisdom for the stated purpose of the mentoring	The consultant stands back, evaluates a situation, then tells you the problem and how to fix it	The coach stands with you, and helps you identify the challenges, then works with you to turn challenges into victories and holds you accountable to reach your desired goals

Williams & Menendez, 2007

and methodically, the bar is being raised for professional standards, the literature base is growing, and evidence-based techniques of CP are being documented. People like coaching and they want to be coached. In fact, the majority of individuals that have been coached say it positively impacts their lives (Filler-Travis & Lane, 2006).

Family life coaching model

Clearly, FLE and CP are two strong fields of study that have much in common. The gap, however, is the use of coaching with families as a field of study. The time is right to introduce a theory of FLC. FLE and CP both have unique qualities and offer a profound impact on the practice of serving families, yet little to no discussion and research has been conducted on the field of using coaching in family life. In a search for the words 'Family Life Coaching' conducted by the author of this manuscript on Summon database in May, 2012, only three results were found. A similar search of 'Family Coaching' yielded only 44 journal articles and of those, none addressed the field of coaching families from a theoretical or applied point of view.

The literature field is bare, yet the work is being done. Although it has never been labeled 'family life coaching', there is evidence that family life educators have been using coaching techniques as an approach to helping families for many years, primarily in the field of social work and home-visitation programmes. In the past 10 years, coaching has become an integral part of family interventions ranging from health and family education to professional and managerial work (Heimendinger et al., 2007). Often used as a parent education intervention, coaching is a process-driven relationship between a learner and a coach designed to foster achievement of agreed-upon goals to include growth, change, and fulfillment in life or work (Heimendinger et al., 2007). Specific to families, coaching provides a structured means by which knowledge can be imparted, skills can be shared in a reciprocal process and further honed, and nurturing feedback can be given to family members (Rush, Shelden & Hanft, 2003).

It is time to consider FLC as a unique field of study and practice that is influenced by the theoretical foundations of coaching psychology and family life education. Combining tenants from both FLE and CP should be the first step towards identifying a new theory of practice. The theoretical foundation of FLC must come from the roots of CP and family practice. Based on humanistic psychology, FLC should be strengths based and optimistic, with the focus on a family's potential. FLC must also approach the family from a systems perspective, both the ecological system and the family systems theories, as no family moves through life in a vacuum.

The purpose of FLC will combine components of FLE and CP to help families reach their goals and achieve wellbeing. In order for families to achieve success, they will engage in a process with a certified family life coach that will partner with them to gain insight, acquire knowledge and skills, and build strengths personally and as a family unit. Family life coaches will work with a family when the family seeks them out or shows an interest in the coaching process; the family or individual member of a family will guide the process based on their goals for change while the coach serves as a partner and appreciative inquirer. Once the family identifies the goal or issue to be explored, the family life coach will utilise a series of powerful questions to guide the process, and will offer educational nuggets as agreed upon by the family. FLE is about creating positive change, enhancing familial well being and fostering development of family life through models of coaching and family life education. The similarities and differences of FLC, FLE and CP are proposed in Table 3. This is presented as a first attempt to generate a global conversation on the field of coaching families, and is in no way conclusive or set in stone.

Limitations of FLC model

Anytime there is a new concept introduced, there are possible limitations and this article is no exception. Although there is some evidence that family life educators are implementing coaching strategies with the families they serve (Heimendinger et al., 2007), the movement toward a collaboration of FLE and CP may not be easily achieved. As mentioned earlier, FLE has a primary focus of teaching family relations content to families via an expert/recipient model. Family life educators would have to sustain a major shift to incorporate FLC model. Most dramatically, the focus would move away from the expert/recipient model towards a co-expert model; it is right to question whether this is a direction the field of FLE would consider.

Furthermore, although FLE is somewhat broad in the scope of work done with families, there are additional family-related fields that merit consideration in a model of coaching families. Fields such as special

Table 3: Comparison of FLE, CP and FLC.

Family Life Education	Coaching Psychology	Family Life Coaching (Proposed)
Education focused; educator as expert	Collaborative partnership; client as expert; partnership with two equals representatives	Collaborative partnership with education as secondary approach; partnership with two equal representatives. Coach has expert credentials and shares family process information
Focus on family dynamics and relationships	Focus on individual, group or organisational relationships	Focus on family relationships, personal and familial well-being and goal setting
Primarily adult focus	Primarily adult focus	One-to-one, couple or full family support with focus on one or all members of the family unit
Foundational knowledge in family studies and lifespan development; pedagogical or anagogical	Foundational knowledge in psychology, strengths based methodology	Foundational knowledge in family studies and psychology, strengths based with emphasis on family studies and lifespan development
Unified credentialing process and standardised accredited education programmes to prepare practitioners	Unstructured credentialing process and gap in quality accredited educational programmes to prepare practitioners	No current: unified credentialing process and standardised accredited education programmes to prepare practitioners expected
Non-formal public education (face-to-face trainings, publications, media)	Individual or family focused sessions or small group interactions often through distance technology	Individual or family focused sessions or small group interactions in face-to-face and/or distance technology

education, occupational therapy, public and community education, sports, family resource management, K-12 education, and health education all merit inclusion in a discussion on coaching families. There is room for collaboration in any field that serves families in such a way that a coaching approach could be implemented to help with familial growth. Although this article focuses on FLE, it is important to keep the conversation open to all family related fields.

Conclusion

Given what is known about the amount of work occurring in FLC and the promising results from coaching work with caregivers and their families, it is clear that the time is right to introduce a theory of FLC that will lead to evidence-based practice. It is time to expand the work of family life educators and connect the work of CP to build a model of FLC. This does not come lightly; there is a need for further discussion on what the theory should entail and further research is needed on the topic of coaching in family life. In fact, so little is written on this topic that first steps must include identifying theoretical foundations, understanding current practices, and creating a national dialogue to create this field of study.

Coaching is a practice being utilised in work with families. Those practitioners need a theoretical foundation and education to guide their work. Because there is currently no governing body determining who can serve as a coach, the idea that coaching is being offered for issues that typically fall under the jurisdiction of mental health practitioners is of concern (Caspi, 2005). The field of FLC needs to have a more defined role with family life practitioners and there needs to be an approach to make sure that the individuals involved with coaching families are the ones that are most prepared to take on the profession.

Correspondence

Kimberly Allen
Department of 4-H Youth Development and Family & Consumer Sciences,
North Carolina State University,
512 Brickhaven Drive,
Campus Box 7606,
Raleigh,
North Carolina 27695.

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Practitioner-based Research

The experience of team coaching: A dual case study

Catherine Carr & Jacqueline Peters

Objective: *This paper presents a dual case study of leadership team coaching with one government and one corporate team. The authors discuss the findings and propose a new high performance team coaching model.*

Design: *In this study, the researchers documented and compared the experience of team coaching between their two leadership teams using a qualitative case study methodology that tracked the participants' experiences.*

Methods: *The case study data were collected through three triangulated methods: semi-structured team member interviews; case study notes and observations; and a collaborative journal.*

Results: *The analysis of the separate case studies resulted in a rich description of the team coaching experience for two teams. The findings revealed valuable coaching elements that were common between the cases and linked to the literature, including the importance of: (i) a team charter and working agreements; (ii) full participation; (iii) coach manner and actions; (iv) a team launch; and, (v) coaching structure and follow-up. Six changes that participants identified included improvements in: (i) collaboration and productivity; (ii) relationships; (iii) personal learning; (iv) communication and participation; (v) impact beyond the team; and (vi) peer coaching.*

Conclusions: *These participant's descriptions of team coaching offer insight into valuable aspects of team coaching that informed the proposed evidence-based high performance team coaching model. The model can be used and studied by team coaching practitioners and researchers alike.*

Keywords: *Coaching; team coaching; qualitative research; practitioner research; high performance.*

TEAM COACHING is a growing trend in the coaching field as evidenced by the increase in team coaching publications over the past 10 years (Adkins, 2010; Dolny, 2009; Mitsch & Mitsch, 2010; Niemala & Lewis, 2001; Thorton, 2010). Although many of these publications offer suggestions for practice, most team coaching approaches are not comprehensive or research-based.

Our objective as practitioners was to do evidence-based team coaching research that was based on our own team coaching practices and a review of the team effectiveness and team coaching literature. As Fillery-Travis and Tyrrell state, 'practitioner research has a specific role to play in the development of the coherent and robust body of knowledge required to underpin coaching as a professional practice' (2012, p.1).

Clutterbuck (2007) and Hawkins (2011) have written some of the more comprehensive team coaching books that are informed by team effectiveness research. Clutterbuck (2010) says that building team relationships is not useful on its own and recommends interventions that 'improve performance when aimed at specific team processes or objectives' (Clutterbuck, 2010, p.273). Hawkins (2011) emphasises that team coaching must expand beyond one-day, internally-focused events. He points out that team coaching has been loosely defined and used as an umbrella term that includes facilitation, team building, and other group process interventions.

For this study, we proposed a definition that was adapted from Hawkins (2011) and Hackman and Wageman's (2005) definitions

of team coaching. We propose that team coaching is a comprehensive and systemic approach to support a team to maximise their collective talent and resources to effectively accomplish the work of the team.

The academic literature on team coaching has not caught up to the growing practitioner interest in offering team coaching, and there is even less research about coaching leadership teams. One of the few studies was completed by Wageman et al. (2008) who assessed the performance of 120 leadership teams worldwide on three key areas of effectiveness. These included: (i) the ability to create outputs and perform at a level that met or exceeded stakeholder standards and expectations; (ii) the ability to work together effectively and build capacity to work together interdependently in the future; and (iii) whether the team experience contributed positively to team members' learning and development (2008, pp.9–13).

Wageman et al. (2008) categorised the 120 teams into high, mediocre and poor performance and analysed the differentiating factors between groups. They created a model that outlined three essential and three enabling conditions for team effectiveness. The essential conditions included: (i) a real team with clear membership and boundaries; (ii) a compelling purpose to guide the team's work; and (iii) the right people with the knowledge, skill and experience to perform the team's requisite work. The enabling conditions were: (i) a solid team structure of less than 10 members who have a clear set of norms/agreements to guide how they work together; (ii) a supportive organisational context that provides the information, time, and resources to do their work; and (iii) competent team coaching from an internal or external coach, aimed at helping team members grow individually and as a team.

There are many studies that support one of more of Wageman and Hackman's six conditions of team effectiveness. Wageman (2001) studied self-managing teams at Xerox and concluded that team structure was more important for team performance than coaching from the team leader. She noted that well designed teams benefited from coaching, whereas poorly designed teams did not benefit, or even fared worse, if the coaching was unskilful or focused on giving advice.

Additional studies by Hackman and Wageman (2005) and Wageman et al. (2008) reported that 50 to 70 per cent of team performance variation could be attributed to creating well designed teams from the start. Other researchers have concluded that without adequate team design and structures in place, a team cannot succeed (Friedlander & Brown, 1974; Kaplan, 1979; Wageman, 2001). Hackman and Wageman indicated that 'Coaching interventions that focus specifically on team effort, strategy, and knowledge and skill facilitate team effectiveness more than do interventions that focus on members' interpersonal relationships' (2005, p.274).

As a result, Hackman and Wageman (2005) proposed a theory of team coaching, stating that when the enabling structural and contextual conditions are appropriately in place, competent team coaching that is provided: (i) at the right time; and that (ii) focuses on the task, can effect team performance.

Other researchers have studied Hackman and Wageman's team effectiveness and team coaching models and concluded that team coaching does have a positive impact on a team's outputs, including writing products (Heimbecker, 2006), team effectiveness (Liu, et al., 2009), and innovation and safety (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012). Team processes that improved were effort, skills, knowledge (Liu et al., 2009), and learning (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012).

Practitioners have contributed to the team coaching literature by providing a number of case studies (Anderson, Anderson & Mayo, 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Haug, 2011; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Mulec & Roth, 2005; Woodhead, 2011), and models for

facilitating team coaching conversations (Brown & Grant, 2010; Clutterbuck, 2007; Hawkins, 2011). The case studies document the benefits and outcomes that team coaching participants themselves identified, including increased learning, decision making, information sharing, communication, and participation. Although each study described coaching outcomes, only one study (Anderson et al., 2008) reported an objective business result that was connected to the team coaching; increased employee engagement results.

Overall, our review of the team coaching literature revealed that minimal research has been completed to date, especially on coaching senior leadership teams. As practitioner-researchers, we saw value in doing qualitative case study research with intact leadership teams: (a) to understand what the leadership team coaching experience is like for the participants; and (b) to identify which aspects of team coaching participants identify as most and least valuable.

Methodology

To study the participants' experience of team coaching, each researcher/coach conducted a team coaching programme over a period of six to 11 months with an intact leadership team. The two researchers tracked and analysed their case studies individually and then analysed each other's case studies before conducting a cross-case comparison. This qualitative case study focused on the rich descriptions from the participants' experience of team coaching. Because this was a qualitative analysis and comparison of only two case studies, the results have limited generalisability.

Research aim and questions

The research aim of this qualitative study was to explore the experience of team coaching from the participants' perspectives so we proposed the following questions:

1. What are the participant's significant meaningful experiences or turning points during the team coaching?
2. What changes do the participants feel they made in:
   a. the business; and
   b. their effectiveness as a team as a result of the team coaching?
3. What are the implications for practice from what participants identify as most and least valuable to them in our leadership team coaching process?

Research participants

The participants of this study were two Canadian leadership teams. The first team, coached by Catherine Carr (CC), was an Employee Engagement Leadership team from the British Columbia government that had four male and two female employees between the ages of 30 and 58. One member worked virtually from other locations. Four members had been on the team for over five years while two had joined in the last year. The team initiated team coaching because they saw it as an innovative new government service that would help their high performing team excel even more.

The second team, coached by Jacqueline Peters (JP), started as an eight-person leadership team for a small corporate finance department in a large, Alberta-based, multinational corporation. Six team members were leaders of leaders, and two were technical leaders. There were four male and four female seasoned professionals between 34 and 55 years of age. Although they were forming together in a new leadership structure, they had all worked together for two years or more, except for the team's new leader. She wanted team coaching to support greater departmental alignment and effectiveness. Although this team started with eight members, one male and one female team member left the organisation during the coaching, leaving six team members who participated in the last two coaching sessions and the final research interviews.

Overview of the team coaching process

Prior to commencing coaching, we invited our team leaders to consider Wageman

et al.'s (2008) six conditions for team effectiveness to ensure the team was ready for coaching. The subsequent team coaching approach was based on methods and frameworks previously used in the researchers' team coaching practices, including solution-focused coaching techniques such as focusing on possibilities and signs of change (Meier, 2005). We included a pre-coaching assessment, a two-day team offsite, and follow-up sessions, similar to aspects of Guttman's (2008) and Hawkins' (2011) team coaching approaches. In the offsite and follow-up sessions, we drew upon Hawkins' (2011) team coaching framework and posed questions to help the team focus on their internal team functioning, and the needs and expectations of their various stakeholders.

We chose to coach both of our team leaders since Wageman et al. (2008) highlighted team leader coaching as a useful adjunct to team coaching, and several practitioners included individual coaching in their approaches (Anderson et al., 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Haug, 2011; Mulec & Roth, 2005; Woodhead, 2011). We also included individual coaching sessions for two corporate leaders which began before the team coaching started and continued after the team coaching was completed. Individual coaching sessions for one government team member were requested for issues unrelated to the team coaching.

We incorporated peer coaching in our team coaching interventions since Hackman and O'Connor (2005) found that peer coaching had the most impact on team effectiveness compared to all other team interventions in their study of team leader and team member coaching behaviours. The government coach (CC) formally taught her team to coach each other at the team launch session, and encouraged them to coach each other between team sessions. The corporate team coach (JP) modelled peer coaching techniques and encouraged her team members to engage in peer coaching, especially for ensuring accountability to their working agreements.

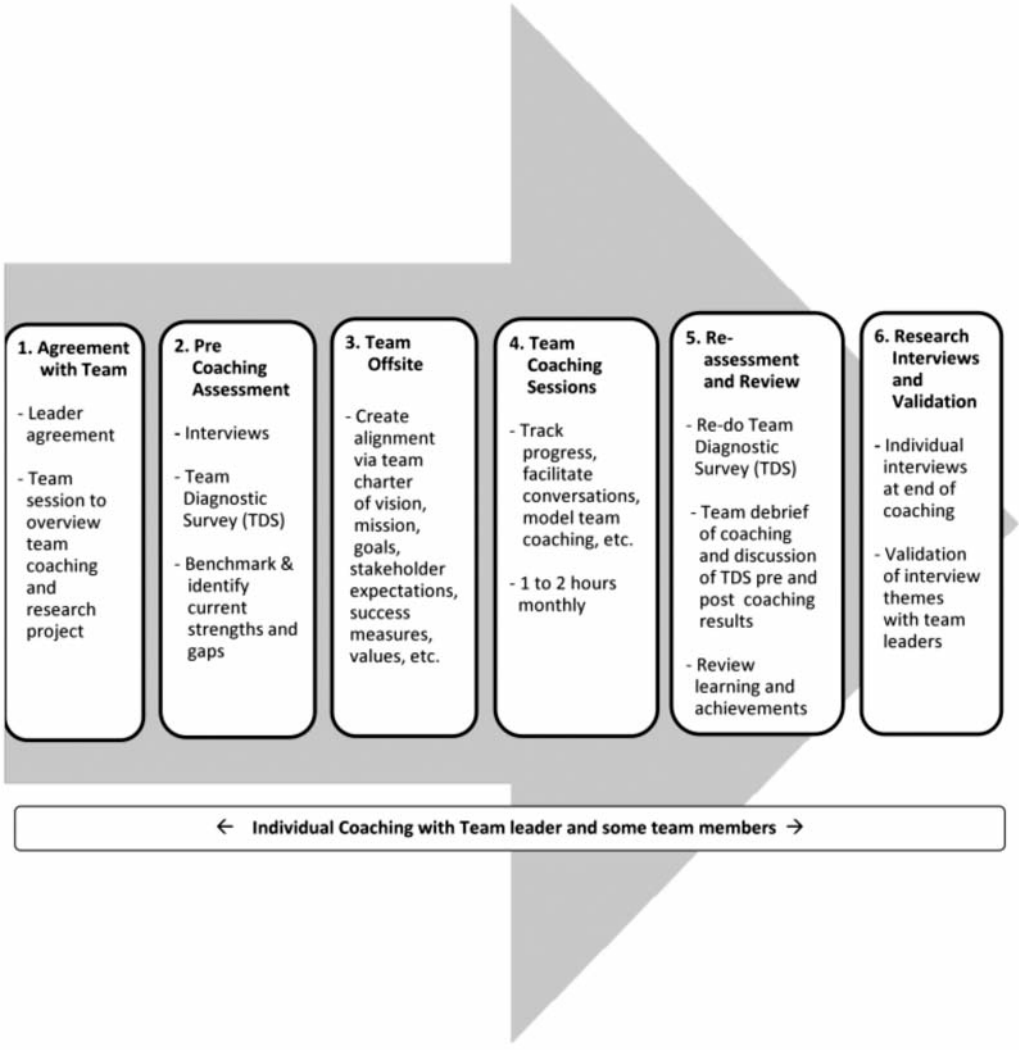
A summary of the steps in the team coaching and research process is provided in Figure 1 (overleaf).

The parallel team coaching process included having all team members complete semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with the team's coach to assess team strengths and gaps. Each team member also completed the Team Diagnostic Survey (TDS; Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005) at the start of the coaching. The TDS is a 38-question online survey that assesses a team's effectiveness and provides an anonymous, composite report based on the average of each team member's answers. The questions are based upon Hackman and his colleague's team effectiveness model of enabling conditions, team task processes, work relationships, and individual motivation and satisfaction (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). The instrument has some initial normative data and the TDS authors indicate that it has adequate reliability and validity, although it would benefit from further testing across a variety of teams (Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005).

For our purposes, the TDS was used as a pre- and post-coaching discussion tool but it was not used as a quantitative measure of team effectiveness for the research. Each coach reviewed both the interview themes and the TDS pre-assessment results with her respective team, allowing them to assess and draw their own conclusions about their strengths, gaps, and goals for the coaching. A two-day team launch session followed approximately two weeks later, with a focus on defining a team charter highlighting the team's vision, mission, purpose, values, goals, roles and responsibilities, working agreements, and success measures.

Each coach held four (JP) or six (CC) team coaching sessions, one to two hours in length, over a period of six (JP) to 11 (CC) months to help the teams achieve their coaching goals and hold themselves accountable to the team charter and working agree-

Figure 1: Team coaching sequence for both case studies.



ments defined during the team launch. The two teams had dissimilar coaching durations because of the different lengths of time it took for each team to meet their coaching goals. At the last coaching session, each team compared their pre- and post-coaching TDS results and explored how they would sustain the positive changes they had made. Both teams held all coaching sessions in person except for two government team sessions in which one team member joined via audio-visual conferencing.

Data collection methods

The primary data source was the individual, semi-structured research interviews with each other's team coaching participants at the end of their coaching intervention. The government team interviews were conducted in person while the corporate team interviews were conducted by telephone because of business and timing constraints between the interviewees and the interviewing coach (CC), who was in another geographic location. Although the 12 hours of transcribed

interviews served as the richest and most important data point in this study of the team members' experience, several data collection methods were used to triangulate the findings, including: (i) 14 hours of pre coaching interviews; (ii) 100+ pages of individual researcher journals that documented each team's coaching notes and observations; and (iii) a 400+ page collaborative journal in which we discussed our learning about team coaching, the literature, and conversations with advisors.

We coded interview themes for both teams separately, looking for major themes among participants and unique comments. Next, we discussed results with one another, checking for appropriateness and frequency of themes. Then we compared the two studies for common and unique themes between the two cases. Finally, each researcher validated the individual case study themes with her respective team leader, ensuring that all individual comments remained anonymous in the summary. No changes were suggested by either team leader.

Dual case study results by research question

Research Question 1: Meaningful Experiences or Turning Points

The first research question explored the participants' meaningful experiences and turning points during the team coaching, as identified in Table 1. One meaningful experience that both teams identified was establishing working agreements for their respective teams, summarised by one of the government team members:

> *We had to actively practice the things we said we wanted, which exposed us to 'walking the talk.' It was a great learning experience for everyone in the team, and the changes have taken hold in how we are together.*

A second common meaningful experience was that coaching encouraged full participation from all team members which enhanced their team performance. In the government team, this occurred when one less vocal team member offered a contrary opinion that significantly changed the team direction. This balanced participation carried forward to future team meetings, as this government team member highlighted:

> *I think the team coaching really helped to have [our] voices fully become an equal part of our team. Even the members who had been around a little bit longer… experimented with stepping back and allowing a bit more time and space for the less vocal members.*

In the corporate team, this participation turning point occurred at the two-day offsite when coaching supported team members to come forward and speak more openly and honestly than before, as noted below:

> *A lot of honesty was shared there that without it, we would not have moved forward.*

The government team identified two unique turning points; learning about each others' different styles and approaches, and full collaboration on a newly-defined team project:

> *We talked at the beginning to have those two goals: integration and to get this tool done. We were focused on results. We wanted to create… the best tool possible. The integration part of it – how do we work together better? We weren't paying attention to that at our regular meetings. So then we started [during the coaching].*

There were two unique turning points for the corporate team that were related to team design: organisational structure changes that occurred at the beginning of the coaching, and the unexpected departures of two team members from the company during the team coaching period. The following comment highlights the corporate participants' awareness that the structural changes and coaching success were highly interdependent.

> *I think it was that the coaching was used in conjunction with the roll out of a new team structure… The change in our department structure, and clarification of roles, that without that, the coaching would not have done any real good.*

Table 1: Identification of cross-case themes in interviews for research questions 1 and 2.
(Bolded themes indicates similarities in both case studies)

1. What are the participant's significant meaningful experiences or turning points during the team coaching?		
Government Team (CC) Themes	**Corporate Team (JP) Themes**	**Cross Case Themes**
● **Working agreements and participation (6/6)**	● **Team charter and working agreements (6/6)**	1. Team charter and working agreements (12/12)
● **Team member participation (6/6)**	● **Honesty and disclosure (6/6)**	2. Full participation (12/12)
● Learning about team member differences (6/6)	● Team member departures (5/6)	
● Collaborative project (3/6)	● Structural changes (6/6)	
2. What changes do the participants feel they made in (a) the business; and (b) their effectiveness as a team as a result of the team coaching?		
Government Team (CC) Themes	**Corporate Team (JP) Themes**	**Cross Case Themes**
● **Collaborative business products (5/6)**	● **Productivity and collaboration (6/6)**	3. Collaboration and productivity (11/12)
● **Authentic relationships (6/6)**	● Work environment **and relationships (6/6)**	4. Improved relationships (12/12)
● **Personal learning and change (6/6)**	● **Personal learning and change (6/6)**	5. Personal learning and change (12/12)
● **Participation and dialogue (6/6)**	● **Communication improved (4/6)**	6. Communication and participation (10/12)
● **Impact outside of the team (6/6)**	● **Reputation and impact beyond the team (3/6)**	7. Impact beyond the team (9/12)
● Peer coaching (4/6)		

Research Question 2:
Changes as a Result of Team Coaching

The second research question explored the changes that participants felt that they made in: (a) the business; and (b) their effectiveness as a team as a result of the team coaching. There were a number of similarities in the changes each team identified as a result of the team coaching, once again identified in Table 1. There were five cross-case change themes that included improvements in: (i) collaboration and productivity; (ii) relationships; (iii) personal learning and change; (iv) communication and participation; and (v) impact beyond the team.

(i) Improved collaboration and productivity

Collaboration and productivity improved for both teams, and a representative comment about general productivity improvements was provided by a corporate team member:

> *I see people doing more… [with] a focus on going forward versus wasting time worrying about emotions and dealing with people's feelings and how they will react… and more time looking to the benefit of the company, and how we can achieve what we need to achieve.*

(ii) Improved relationships

Both teams indicated that relationships improved during the team coaching. One of the government team members said:

> *We've talked about some heartfelt things that typically wouldn't come up. We let others into who we are as people.*

A corporate team member described the improved relationships as follows:

> *People became friends. The baggage was gone, the honesty was there, the trust was building – people were friends. And they had to find out that they liked each other.*

(iii) Personal learning and change

Learning for individuals on both teams occurred over time through new insights, feedback, and experimenting with new behaviours, as this government team member's quote illustrates:

> *I'm learning to change the way I view things. It's not overnight.*

(iv) Communication and participation improvements

Coaching supported team members to come forward and speak more openly and honestly, and participate more fully in team dialogues, as described by this corporate team member:

> *I do see better relationships and communication amongst people… An example I would say [is that] people are more willing to ask questions or ask for help.*

(v) Impact beyond the team

Although both teams talked about impact beyond their own team, the government team members focused on cascading collaboration and integration among the broader teams in the organisation.

> *It feels like people are getting drawn in and that there is more integration happening from the visioning part of the project through to completion.*

The corporate team also discussed impact beyond their own team, but focused more on an improved team reputation within their department and with the senior leadership team.

> *The team coaching addressed the issues that were the same issues addressed by the employee satisfaction survey done independently… Our [executive] vice president was extremely impressed with what we had accomplished with the team coaching.*

Research Question 3:
Most and Least Valuable Aspects of Coaching

We identified six common themes between the two teams related to what the team members found to be most valuable in the coaching process, as noted in Table 2. These six themes were: (i) specific coaching activities and components; (ii) coach's manner and actions; (iii) team launch; (iv) coaching structure and follow-up; (v) team leader modelling and support; and (vi) sustainability.

Table 2: Identification of cross-case themes in interviews for research question 3.
(Bolded themes indicates similarities in both case studies)

3. What are the implications for practice from what participants identify as most and least valuable to them in our leadership team coaching process?		
Government Team (CC) Themes	**Corporate Team (JP) Themes**	**Cross Case Themes**
● **Valuable coaching skills and components (5/6)** ● **Style assessment facilitated insight and change (5/6)** ● Check ins were valuable (3/6)	● **Coaching activities and components facilitated insight (6/6)** ● **Assessments provided insight and marked progress (3/6)** ● All of the team coaching was valuable (unspecific) (4/6) ● Nothing was 'least valuable' (5/6)	8. Specific coaching activities and components (12/12)
● **Appreciation for coach's manner and actions (5/6)**	● **The coach's manner and actions matter (6/6)** ● Safety was critical (3/6)	9. Coach's manners and actions (11/12)
● **Offsite days were valuable (4/6)**	● **Two day offsite valuable = Turning point theme above (6/6)**	10. Team Launch (10/12)
● Just in time coaching supported goals and teamwork (3/6)	● Structure was valuable (6/6) ● Follow-up facilitated progress and accountability (3/6)	11. Coaching structure and follow-up (9/12)
● **Team leader modelling (5/6)**	● **Team leader support was valuable (4/6)**	12. Team leader modelling and support (9/12)
● **Thoughts about the future (3/6)**	● **Hopes and concerns for the future (4/6)**	13. Sustainability hopes and concerns (7/12)
	● Individual coaching is beneficial (4/6)	

(i) Coaching activities and components

The coaching activities and components that were mentioned most frequently in the two teams were the TDS, specific games, and structured coaching activities. One corporate team member provided a representative summary of the impact as follows:

> *People got engaged… doing the team charter and those activities. I thought that type of activity, whether it was a game or not… helps you see things differently.*

(ii) Coach's manner and actions

Most team members made comments about the coach's manner and/or actions. They appreciated the coach's ability to create safety, ask questions, guide the team, and follow up on the actions and outcomes the team had set out to achieve, as described by this corporate team member:

> *She asked questions that are more open, they are not leading, and they are from a different perspective. She is not in [our field]; she doesn't have a clue what we do. But she is able to pull herself out of the detail and see the bigger picture.*

(iii) Team launch

The teams spoke about the value of setting aside time away from their regular offices to focus on their team, their goals and relationships as this government team member describes:

> *The two days were absolutely fundamental. It developed the foundation upon which everything else was built.*

(iv) Coaching structure and follow-up

Having some structure to the coaching meetings was valuable to both teams. The government team particularly appreciated dedicated time to personally check in and discuss how they were working together at every team coaching session;

> *It's about checking in with one another, what's working and what's not… We always made sure we checked in on how folks were doing and what we struggled with and what the learning was.*

Similarly, the corporate team talked about the value of having an agenda and a check in on working agreements and commitments/ actions as a regular part of their team coaching sessions.

(v) Team leader modelling and support

Participants of both teams described the active and important role of the team leader in supporting their team's changes. The government team focused on the team leader's positive modelling of behaviours and personal disclosure within the team meetings. The corporate team focused more on the team leader's active role in initiating and sustaining support for the team coaching generally, as quoted below:

> *Team coaching without a leader supporting it won't go anywhere.*

(vi) Sustainability

Both teams discussed sustainability in their post coaching interviews. The government team committed to peer coaching and continued use of their working agreements as keys to sustaining their new interdependent approach. They felt that their new ways of working together were becoming more natural, and they were not overly concerned about regression. The corporate team committed to continue to follow their working agreements, which included talking positively and directly to each other about issues. Further, they decided to roll out a modified form of the working agreements to their whole department as a cultural initiative.

There was a mix of individuals on each case study team who felt hopeful and at least one team member on each team who expressed concern about the team's ability to self-coach and continue their progress, as represented in this corporate team member's comment:

> *The question for me now is what happens now that the coaching experience is gone? Does the team continue to ask these questions? And if they don't and no one else is asking those questions, do we start to slide backwards?*

Hopefully not, but you can see that there would be potential for that.

Least valuable elements

When asked to describe what was least valuable, most of the corporate team members said that nothing about the team coaching was least valuable. Two government participants found some of the games to be less valuable, as one participant indicated:

Being a pragmatic, results-focused individual, I probably didn't get as much value from the ritual/symbolic activities like the tower activity.

Overall, participants indicated they received great value through the team coaching, as summarised by this corporate team member:

Coaching is really important if you are going to roll out… a new direction. And that new direction goes hand in hand with coaching, and gets people working together and making changes. [It] makes it more focused and strategic.

Discussion

High Performance Team Coaching: A new model

As we reviewed the dominant themes of our case study findings, we noted consistencies between the findings and our literature review. Thus, we saw an opportunity to propose a new, six stage High Performance Team Coaching Model that can be used by leaders and team coaches alike. We not only included ongoing team coaching sessions, but also the structure and design elements necessary for team effectiveness, as indicated in Hackman's (2011) summary of his 40+ years of research:

'Our research suggests that condition-creating accounts for about 60 per cent of the variation in how well a team eventually performs; that the quality of the team launch accounts for another 30 per cent; and that real-time coaching accounts for only about 10 per cent.' (Hackman, 2011, p.1)

Although these percentages may not be exact, our data suggests this is likely to be directionally correct so we accounted for these three important team performance factors in the team coaching model.

The components of the High Performance Team Coaching Model are identified in Table 3 (overleaf) and are represented visually in Figure 2. In Table 3, we match the key components of the model with the most relevant case study themes, acknowledging that several of the themes also match other components of the model. We also indicate the key literature that supports the inclusion of that component in our model.

Three team stages

On the outside of the circle, we aligned the three main coaching functions with the natural beginning, mid-point and ending team stages that Gersick (1988) identified in her punctuated-equilibrium model. This model states that a team hits the ground running early in their work together and only comes up for air around the midpoint of their work to consult with others and shift how they are working together. The team goes through a second reorganising point when they move towards finishing their project. Any coaching interventions that focus on strategy or shifting how a team works together don't have much impact between when the team initially begins their work and their reflective midpoint (Gersick, 1988), which aligns with our team coaching experiences.

Three coaching functions

The three coaching functions as matched to the team's stage are: (i) define and initiate at the beginning; (ii) review and realign at the mid-point; and (iii) integrate at the end of a team's cycle. The arrows indicate the natural progression of the team's stages.

This coaching model has a strong focus on coaching teams at the beginning of a new team cycle since there is great leverage in setting up the team conditions and doing the team launch at this stage (Hackman, 2011). We also found our case study teams needed and wanted a greater frequency and intensity with the initial coaching sessions.

Figure 2: High Performance Team Coaching Model.

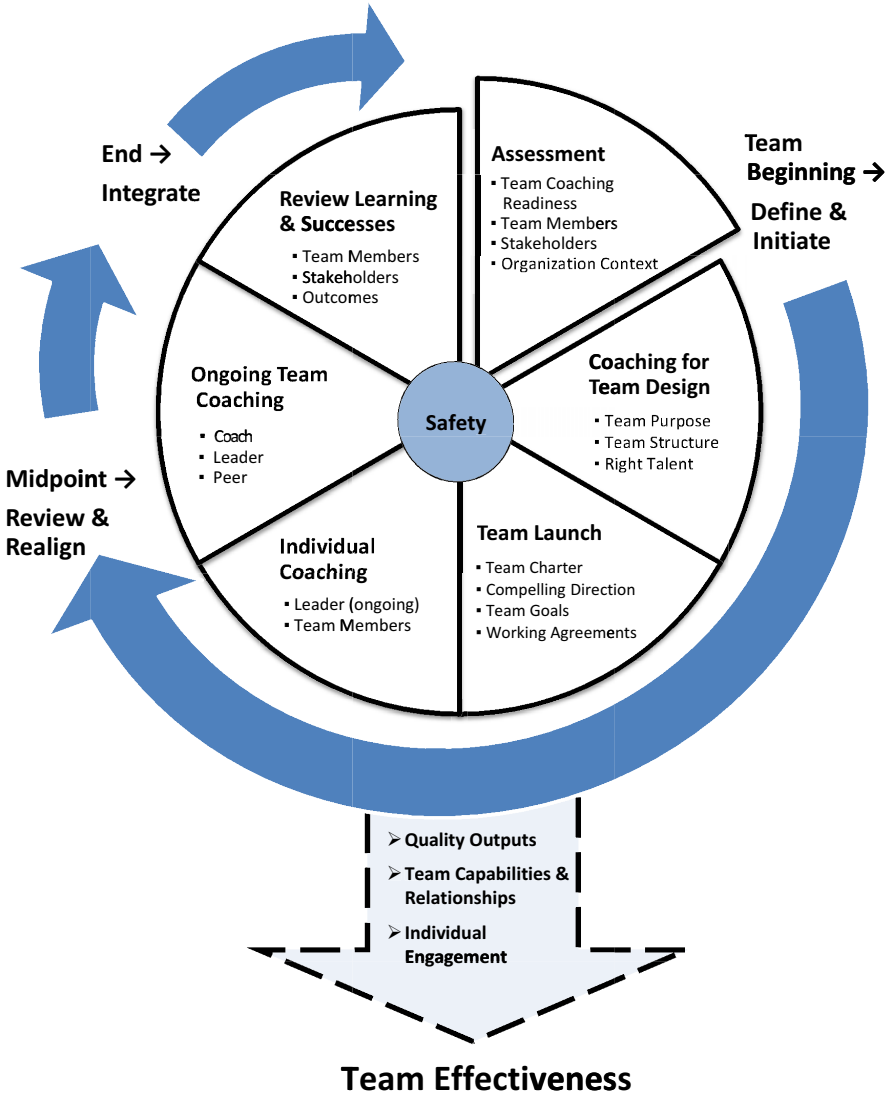


Table 3: Dual case study research themes and parallel High Performance Team Coaching Model components.

Team Stage and Coaching Function	Team Coaching Components	Dual Case Study Research Themes	Literature Review
Team Beginning ➛ Define and Initiate	**1. Assessment**	● Specific coaching activities and components (e.g. Team Diagnostic Survey)	● Six conditions for team effectiveness (Wageman et al., 2008) ● Team Diagnostic Survey (Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005)
	2. Coaching for Team Design	● Structural changes (Corporate team) ● Team charter and working agreements	● Six conditions for team effectiveness (Wageman et al., 2008) ● Team design links to team effectiveness (Beckhard, 1972; Friedlander & Brown, 1974; Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Kaplan, 1979; Wageman, 2001)
	3. Team Launch	● Team launch ● Team charter and working agreements ● Full participation/ Communication and Participation ● Collaboration and Productivity/Collaborative Project (government team) ● Team leader modelling and support	● Team offsite included in team coaching (Anderson, Anderson & Mayo, 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Guttman, 2008; Hackman, 2011; Kegan & Lahey, 2009)
	4. Individual Coaching	● Individual coaching is beneficial ● Personal learning and change	● Team leader coaching beneficial (Hawkins, 2011; Wageman et al., 2008) ● Individual coaching included (Anderson et al., 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Haug, 2011; Mulec & Roth, 2005; Woodhead, 2011)

Table 3 continued...

Team Stage and Coaching Function	Team Coaching Components	Dual Case Study Research Themes	Literature Review
Mid-point ➛ Review and Realign	**5. Ongoing Team Coaching**	● Coaching structure and follow-up ● Full participation ● Collaboration and Productivity ● Team leader modelling and support ● Peer coaching	● Follow-up sessions included (Guttman, 2008; Hawkins, 2011) ● Structured team coaching session format called GROUP and RE-GROUP (Brown & Grant, 2010)
End ➛ Integrate	**6. Review Learning and Successes**	● Full participation ● Coaching structure and follow-up ● Sustainability hopes and concerns	● Reflection and learning facilitated team safety and innovation (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012) ● Team reflection and learning is important in coaching (Clutterbuck, 2007; Hackman, 2003; Kegan & Lahey, 2009).
Central to model (throughout coaching)	**Safety**	● Coach's manner and actions ● Team charter and agreements ● Full participation	● Team safety is linked to enhanced performance (Edmondson, 1999) and innovation (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012)
Outcomes	**Team Effectiveness**	● Collaboration and productivity ● Improved relationships ● Personal learning and change ● Communication and participation ● Impact beyond the team	● Three measure of team effectiveness as outlined by Wageman et al., 2008

This first 'define and initiate' coaching function includes four components: (i) assessment; (ii) coaching for team design; (iii) team launch; and (iv) individual coaching. However, the model is not just for brand new teams; even our case study teams were not completely new. Certain events can trigger a new beginning for established teams, such as team member changes, or the implementation of a new strategy, vision, or project.

When a team is in the middle of a task or team cycle, the coach focuses on inviting the team to review current processes and performance, reflect on learning, and refine their strategy to achieve their goals going forward. We interacted less frequently during this middle cycle with our teams through the (v) ongoing team coaching sessions. We note that (iv) individual coaching, especially of the team leader, can (and did in our cases) continues during this period.

The primary focus of coaching at the end of a task or team cycle is to support a team to individually and collectively review and integrate learning and successes, the sixth coaching component. The coach may also assist the team to develop a maintenance and follow-up plan, as we did with our teams.

Six team coaching components

1. Assessment

Our participants indicated that the pre-coaching interviews and TDS were valuable team coaching elements that supported them to identify and discuss team strengths, challenges, gaps, and opportunities. Further, we found it beneficial for the coach to meet with the team leader as the sponsor of the coaching to identify the initial team coaching goals and expected outcomes. Team assessment is also supported in the literature (Hawkins, 2011; Wageman et al., 2008; Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005).

2. Coaching for team design

If the initial team assessments reveal that key team effectiveness conditions are not in place, team coaches could support the leader to get clear about the team's membership, function, structures, and direction before launching a full team coaching initiative. In the corporate case study, coaching sessions with the team leader resulted in a re-structure before the team coaching started. Participants later reported that this re-structuring was essential to the success of the team coaching. The literature has also reinforced the importance of team design and structure in team effectiveness (Beckhard, 1972; Friedlander & Brown, 1974; Hackman, 2011, Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Kaplan, 1979; Wageman, 2001).

3. Team launch

All our research participants said that the initial two-day team launch session provided them with a more reflective and participatory forum than they were able to create in shorter meetings in the workplace. Hackman (2011) indicated that an effective team launch can impact up to 30 per cent of team performance and other practitioner-researchers have identified a team offsite as a component of their team coaching approach (Anderson, Anderson & Mayo, 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Guttman, 2008; Hackman, 2011; Kegan & Lahey, 2009). We include a team launch in our model, with a focus on learning more about each other, and developing a team charter that emphasises working agreements.

4. Individual coaching

In interviews, team members commented about the value of adjunct individual coaching, whether they received it or not, as a support for people's effectiveness on the team. Other team coaching case studies have also identified individual coaching as part of their process (Anderson, et al., 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Haug, 2011; Mulec & Roth, 2005; Woodhead, 2011). Wageman et al. (2008) and Hawkins (2011) identified that coaching the team leader in particular may be beneficial as leaders develop their skills and capacity to

coach the team. Thus, we include individual coaching in our team coaching model.

5. Ongoing team coaching

Ongoing team coaching occurred through coach and/or leader led team sessions in addition to team members coaching each other between sessions. Participants reported that the team sessions helped the team stay on track while peer coaching helped individual members do the same.

We note that few practitioners or researchers have explicitly included peer coaching as a standard team coaching component, except for a few studies (Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Hackman & O'Connor, 2005). Hackman and O'Connor (2005) emphasised the high impact of peer coaching on team effectiveness, so we have included peer coaching in our model.

6. Review learning and successes

The re-assessment on the TDS and final interviews provided an opportunity for team members to reflect on their learning and successes individually, as a team, and beyond their own team to external stakeholders. Team members in both case studies expressed concerns about how they would maintain and extend the improvements they had made during the final coaching session and in the interviews. Facilitated reflection has been identified as an important part of team coaching (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012; Clutterbuck, 2007), especially since this is not something teams tend to consistently do on their own (Hackman, 2003).

Safety

While team design and structure appears to be crucial to team coaching success, psychological or emotional safety is the factor we believe underpins all coaching, and is highlighted in the centre of the model. In these two case studies, feeling safe to participate, be honest, and disclose were identified as significant turning points. This aligns with other researchers' findings that team members often focus on interpersonal factors, not structure and design, when they consider what most influences team effectiveness (Beckhard, 1972; Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Martin, 2006). Furthermore, Edmondson (1999) and Buljac-Samardžić (2012) emphasised the importance of psychological safety in team performance.

The two teams in this study explicitly identified that the relationship with the team coach, and the coach's manner in particular, helped create a safe learning environment. Further, there is a growing body of research in coaching and an extensive body of research in counselling that attests to the link between a positive working alliance with the coach/counsellor and positive client outcomes (Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Marshall, 2006).

Team effectiveness

We included team effectiveness in this model as the key outcome of team coaching. This research lent support to the ability of team coaching to improve team effectiveness as indicated by team members' subjective assessment of the: (i) quality of outcomes; (ii) ability to work together effectively; and (iii) degree of individual engagement. These outcomes are similar to Wageman et al.'s (2008) three measures of team effectiveness and align with other researchers who have identified that team coaching can effect improvements in team outputs and/or processes (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012; Heimbecker, 2006; Liu et al., 2009).

Summary

The six-phase High Performing Team Coaching Model was developed based on these case study results and a literature review of methods and strategies that were found to promote team performance. We recognise that in real workplace practice, coaches may draw upon only one or several of these six components based upon a real business team's natural rhythm and performance requirements, which often vary.

Limitations

As in any research, there were limitations in this qualitative, dual case study research. Most significantly, this study relied on participant self-reports through semi-structured interviews for identifying outcomes and benefits. These interviews may have been subject to recall flaws and bias in what participants reported particularly since participants were asked to reflect back over the previous six to 12 months.

Suggestions for practice

Many recommendations for practitioners were embedded in the High Performance Team Coaching Model, and two of these suggestions are highlighted below.

1. Team coaching has the potential to be greater than just what a coach does in a team coaching session. The team effectiveness literature suggests strong team design and structure are critical and this study also supports the importance of team design and working agreements. Thus, team coaches could provide a fuller service by supporting teams and leaders to assess the effectiveness of their team structure and design when beginning coaching.
2. Coaches may propose and include individual coaching, peer coaching, and team leader coaching in addition to whole team coaching. These practitioner-researchers found that participants valued all three components.

Suggestions for future research

The field of team coaching is still new and exploratory. We propose two areas that researchers could consider as they further examine team coaching.

1. This was an exploratory qualitative study and while our participants described enhanced team performance as a result of team coaching, further research is required to link team coaching to quantitative measures of team effectiveness.
2. The High Performance Team Coaching Model proposed here requires further research to test the model. For example, are some phases more important than others? Is this model more effective than currently existing models, such as those proposed by Brown and Grant (2005) or Hawkins (2011)?

Conclusion

As practitioner-researchers, we discovered that not enough of the team effectiveness literature has been applied to team coaching in organisations. We sought to begin addressing this gap between research and practice and carried out a dual case study to explore team coaching with two intact leadership teams working within their complex business settings. As a result of the consistencies between our dual case study and literature review, we developed an evidence-based High Performing Team Coaching Model that incorporates components identified as likely to increase team performance and foster team effectiveness. We believe that this multi-stage approach to team coaching is a useful full team cycle model and system that can be applied and studied further by practitioners and researchers.

The Authors

Dr Catherine Carr,
BSc, MEd, DProf, PCC, RCC
and
Dr Jacqueline Peters,
BSc, MEd, DProf, PCC, CHRP

Correspondence

Dr Catherine Carr
2345 Estevan Avenue,
Victoria, British Columbia,
Canada, V8R 2S4.
Email: Catcarr63@gmail.com

Dr Jacqueline Peters
83 Sienna Park Terrace S.W.,
Calgary, Alberta,
Canada, T3H 3L4.
Email: Jacqueline.Peters@InnerActive.ca

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Response

What is personality change coaching and why is it important? A response to Martin, Oades & Caputi

Hugh McCredie

This short paper is a response to Martin et al.'s (2012) assertion that Big Five factor scores are open to the influence of coaching interventions. It is based on an inspection of two key sources cited by the original authors. The first of these reports on the impact of life experiences on the long-term plasticity of Big 5 personality scores and the second on the impact of concentrated short-term coaching. Whilst there is support for long-term plasticity, the case for short-term coaching effects is unconvincing and coaches may be better served by focussing on the achievement of clients' personal goals.

AS A VETERAN USER of personality measures, this author was surprised at Martin et al.'s (2012) assertion that Big Five factor scores were open to the influence of coaching interventions. The basis of the surprise was the knowledge that medium- to longer-term re-test profiles were highly correlated (r circa 0.7 to 0.8) with those emerging from the original administration (e.g. Conn & Reike, 1994; Salter et al. 1997)

In the circumstances, this author decided to examine two key sources cited by the original authors. The first of these was Roberts and Mroczek (2008) on trait change in relation to life experiences, and the second Spence and Grant (2005) presented as the 'only one study of personality change in a coaching context'.

Roberts and Mroczek (2008) presented meta-analytic graphs plotting mean level changes in scores for each of Big Five factors at 10-year intervals. They concluded that:

- Significant personality changes can occur at most ages.
- Most mean-level personality-trait change occurs between the ages of 20 and 40.
- Life and work experiences are associated with changes in personality traits. The most notable influencers and changes are:
  1. Career success with greater emotional stability and conscientiousness;
  2. Remarriage with lower neuroticism;
  3. Counter-productive work activities with decreases on measures of conscientiousness and emotional stability.

However, the Spence & Grant (2005) paper revealed much more tentative findings for short-term coaching effects. It was a very small-scale study (N=64) of personality responses to the NEO Five Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1985) before and after 10 weekly coaching interventions. The study involved three subsets as follows:

- Group 1 (N=21) who received 60-minute sessions from professional coaches.
- Group 2 (N=22) who engaged in 75-minute peer coaching sessions.
- Group 3 (N=21) on a waitlist and, therefore, did not receive any coaching.

The researchers found no significant change in NEO FFI scores for neuroticism and agreeableness and discounted apparent changes in the conscientiousness scores because these were similar across all three groups (i.e. including those who were not coached!). The only other significant changes were within the peer-coaching group for extraversion (p<0.05) and for openness (p<0.01). With 15 comparisons being made, these might almost have been

expected as the result of chance effects. As Spence and Grant (2005) themselves commented: 'The current data set does not permit any strong claim to be made about the ability of coaching to influence personality *per se*.'

Thus, the evidence presented by Martin et al. (2012) for the impact of concentrated short-term coaching interventions on personality change is not convincing. On the other hand Spence and Grant (2005) found stronger evidence for the effect of both professional ($p<0.001$) and peer ($p<0.05$) coaching interventions on personal goal achievement and it is probably into this domain that coaching is best directed.

The Author

Hugh McCredie
BSc(Hons) MSc PhD(Manc) CPsychol,
Chartered FCIPD, AFBPsS.
Independent researcher/writer.
Vice-Chair The Psychometrics Forum (UK).

Correspondence

Hugh McCredie
Email: hmccredie@coordinates.u-net.com

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Rejoinder

What is personality change coaching and why is it important? A response to Martin, Oades & Caputi

Lesley S. Martin, Lindsay G. Oades & Peter Caputi

WE ARE THANKFUL for the useful response on our recent article (Martin, Oades & Caputi, 2012). It is encouraging that coaching practitioners and researchers are beginning to debate whether intentional personality change coaching appear feasible, and worthy of further exploration. In the following discussion we respond to the general themes included in the response; that there is little evidence that facilitating client chosen personality change is feasible in a coaching context, and that coaching efforts could best be directed to an area with stronger empirical support, (i.e. personal goal attainment).

We agree that Roberts and Mroczek (2008) was a longer term study, and, therefore, less relevant to the question of shorter term intentional personality change in a coaching context. Nevertheless, it is suggestive of the plasticity of personality. Furthermore, a more recent shorter term four-year longitudinal study of over 8000 Australians (Boyce, Wood & Powdthavee, 2012) found that, 'personalities can and do change over time – something that was considered improbable until now – and that these personality changes are strongly related to changes in our well-being'.

Well-being is an important construct in coaching literature and practice (Green, Oades & Grant, 2006; Govindji & Linley, 2007; Spence & Grant, 2005, 2007). Furthermore, the literature suggests that personality is possibly the largest single contributor to well-being (Diener & Lucas, 1999; Boyce et al., 2012). Hence, furthering our knowledge of personality change in a coaching context would appear to be beneficial. This view is further supported by a meta-analysis that found that personality has a significant impact on a wide range of life outcomes, and across life domains (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006).

The assertion that Spence and Grant's (2005) findings do not provide strong evidence that personality change is possible is correct, if taken in isolation and without consideration of the design of their study. Nevertheless, we think a number of additional points are relevant to this discussion. The arguments presented in Martin, Oades and Caputi (2012) proposing that personality appears amenable to change were based on the combined findings of several studies and reviews not discussed in the response (Block & Singh, 2007; Boyce, Wood & Powdthavee, 2012; Clark, 2009; Maddux et al., 2009; Piedmont & Ciarrocchi, 1999; Robinson, 2009; Tang et al., 2009). The combined findings of this body of literature in our opinion suggest that personality appears amenable to change, and as a corollary, further exploration of this possibility in a coaching context appears warranted.

In Spence and Grant (2005), although findings on personality change were not strong, significant change was nevertheless found. Furthermore, the more modest findings in Spence and Grant (2005) on personality change (compared to goal attainment) may have been more a product of the study design than personality being resistant to change. In this study, goal attainment was

specifically *targeted* with the coaching strategies, while personality change was *not specifically targeted*. Variables that are specifically targeted with coaching interventions may be expected to change more than variables that aren't specifically targeted. This line of thinking is illustrated in Spence and Grant (2007) when they discuss the minimal change achieved on well-being in a goal focused life coaching study. They state 'While the minimal impact of life coaching on well-being was surprising, it may be partly explained by the design of the study. First, the current intervention was goal-focused rather than targeted at enhancing well-being, and other coaching interventions specifically targeted at increasing well-being may have an effect where this intervention did not' (p.192). Hence, the more significant change on goal attainment as compared to personality reported in Spence and Grant (2005) may have been influenced by personality not being targeted. Therefore, it does not necessarily suggest that personality is less amenable to change, or less worthy of further investigation. From my perspective, the modest but significant changes in personality over 10 sessions of coaching, in the absence of coaching strategies designed to change personality, raises some interesting research questions (e.g. could more targeted personality change strategies attain stronger results).

In response to this line of enquiry, the authors of this reply are currently developing and empirically testing a model and step-wise process of intentional personality change coaching, designed around the 30 personality facets included in the NEO PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The process is designed around the client's intrinsic motivation to increase or decrease a limited number of personality facets, chosen by the client. The preliminary findings from this 54 participant study, incorporating both a wait-list control between subjects design, and a within subjects design, are very encouraging. Furthermore, preliminary findings from a qualitative study of the clients' perceptions of personality change coaching are also very positive, with some clients finding it 'life changing'.

The conclusion in the short response that Spence and Grant (2005) suggest coaching efforts can best be directed towards personal goal attainment rather than personality change is one interpretation. From our perspective, however, it is important that coaching research not only expands on our existing empirical knowledge (e.g. around goal attainment) but also asks new questions (e.g. can coaching potentially facilitate client chosen personality change goals, if the client wishes to change?). Furthermore, the two are not mutually exclusive. Personality change coaching involves setting goals around personality traits or facets the client wishes to increase or decrease (i.e. goal setting), implementing coaching strategies to support such change, and assessing progress toward this goal (i.e. goal attainment).

Personal goal attainment coaching has already received a good deal of attention in the coaching literature (e.g. Spence & Grant, 2005; Grant, 2008; Green, Oades & Grant, 2006; Green, Grant & Rynsaardt, 2007) while intentional personality change as a goal pursued though coaching remains relatively unexplored. This gap in the literature, combined with the above arguments, suggests that further exploration in this area appears to be warranted.

The Authors

Lesley S. Martin
Sydney Business School,
University of Wollongong.

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

Peter Caputi
School of Psychology,
University of Wollongong.

Correspondence
Lesley Martin
PO Box 5059, Wollongong.
NSW 2500, Australia.
Email: sue@psy.net.au
Telephone: (02) 4243 1323

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Report

Special Group in Coaching Psychology 8th Annual Conference

Judit Varkonyi-Sepp

OVER 120 delegates and speakers came together from around the globe to share two days of knowledge transfer, networking, learning, informing, inspiring and being inspired on the fun-filled Annual Conference of the British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP).

In response to the SGCP member survey at the beginning of 2012, the SGCP Annual Conference, in its eighth year, has undergone a major re-vamp this time both by moving to Birmingham, away from the traditional London location, and also by being divided into two distinct days, one dedicated to Masterclasses and the other to a healthy balance of practitioner sessions, keynotes, workshops and focused papers.

The conference theme, 'Putting coaching psychology into practice: An evidence-based approach', originated from the 2011 conference dinner's provocative guest speaker, Professor Rob Briner, himself not a coaching psychologist but avid promoter of evidence-based psychology practice, who posed the challenging question whether there is evidence in our practice at all and if there is, how robust is it?

Coaching psychology has come of age: these challenging questions can be confidently answered with a loud 'YES'. The two conference keynotes in 2012, one delivered by Professor Briner, the other by Dr Tatiana Bachkirova, beautifully complemented each other on this topic, openly and honestly raising the questions around validity and bias in research. The wealth of research papers and posters in this conference demonstrated the rapidly growing research activity in coaching psychology. But this conference was not only about academic research, it was more than ever before, about translating

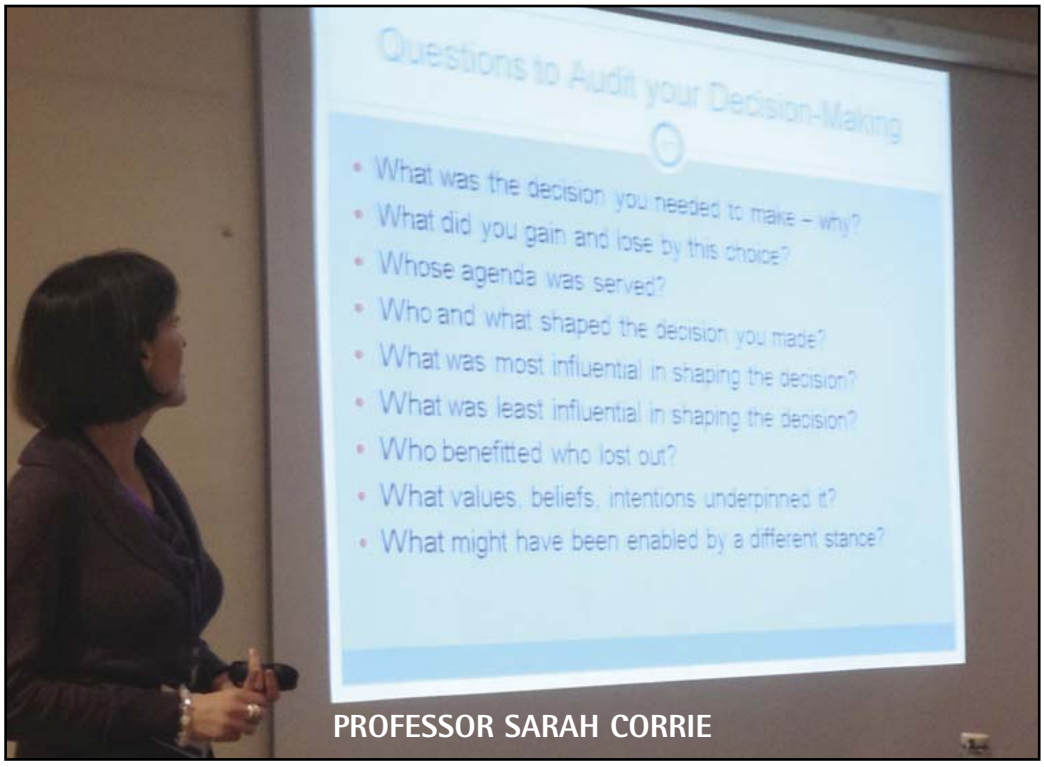
ASTON UNIVERSITY LAKESIDE CONFERENCE CENTRE

research into practice, recognising the complex needs of our inclusive community: researchers, practitioner coaching psychologists, coaches, and everyone interested in psychology behind coaching.

A gorgeous location, Aston University Lakeside Conference Centre, gave home to us for the two days, fully dedicated to our conference. Delegates fed back how welcoming and friendly the location and the entire conference was, with plenty of space, time and opportunity to interact, network, learn from each other and have fun. On the evening of the first day we were invited to a semi-structured playful networking activity designed to break the ice but by that time the ice melted so much that many delegates were already deeply engaged in enjoyable conversations with their new friends. Food was plenty and good – always a very important part to any conference, although when it is really good it is usually not being given special thoughts: and just as well.

With the limitations of a printed article, it is difficult to give a detailed enough account of this most enjoyable event, so all we can attempt is describe a few highlights. Through our other publications we will continue to give further accounts of our conference proceedings.

Masterclasses on day one spanned over five hours, a long enough time to really get into the depth of the topic and choosing to which one to go to was an agonising decision; we wished we could clone ourselves. To Vicki Vandeveer's session on self as a key instrument in executive coaching we brought our own practical examples and experiences and after a wonderfully entertaining introduction she facilitated our discussion forum with openness and genuine curiosity, maximising our learning during the session and we had so much fun, too! We looked into how our own life experiences, beliefs, values and our development influence what goes on in the coaching rela-



PROFESSOR SARAH CORRIE

CONFERENCE TWEET WALL

tionship and especially contemplated over those difficult cases when in the first session you already give up, wondering what your coachee is playing at, as they are not engaged. However, we concluded through case studies and discussions, many times there is much more than meets the eye, and we ought to give a chance to the 'difficult cases' as well. The learning from this session is transferable to many other coaching domains.

Professor Mary Watts' Masterclass examined a similar topic from a different angle, focused on the 'I' and 'WE' in transformational leadership, concluding that leadership is for all, not just a select few. Learning how to 'grow' it both in ourselves and in others can be fun and productive. This workshop focused on how we can do this. We were acquainted with the LEAD LEARN and GROW Model, drawing particular attention to the 'I' – 'WE' dynamics followed by a highly interactive work integrating personal insights, psychological theory and research with the model and the wider application of this in multiple contexts. We finished the day recognising that there is still work to be done in the leadership area and that coaching psychologists are in an ideal position to use their knowledge and skills, in a collaborative manner, to bring about change.

A whole afternoon in a Masterclass listening to and learning from Dr David Drake was a real treat. As ever a wonderful and thoughtful facilitator who conveyed serious concepts as well as allowing for

laughter and enjoyment, David's masterclass focused on 'narrative disintegration' (the past) and 'narrative reintergration (the future), by building a relationship of safety, stability and security and then finding the opening to shift the story. He got us to write about a personal core strength and then took it beyond to the shadow, that is, looking at when the strength does not help us, what we have sacrificed in life because of the strength. Using a delegate's story a narrative and chair moving/inhabiting sequence demonstrated the power of a strength's shadow in our life story and how being in touch with this helps us to mature our strengths and channel our energy into living life fully. Grouping into four archetypes followed and created movement and laughter, but with a deeper message of being aware of moving about them, when are they most helpful to us, rather than becoming stuck. As David pointed out, growth happens in the in-between – which is where coaching plays its part 'providing the scaffolding to cross the threshold'.

The conference day offered us topics from looking at coaching psychology application in the broader context like decision making in the coaching process by Professor Sarah Corrie, and Professor David Lane and Claire Collin's session into understanding the evolution of coaching relationship to very specialist topics such as animal-assisted coaching by Dr Dasha Grajfoner and using coaching to improve dyslexia and dyspraxia in the workplace by Nancy Doyle.

An engaging session with a fabulous speaker, Professor Erik de Haan, set the scene by presenting the findings of the common ingredients in effective psychotherapy research. Because of this, he argued, there wouldn't be the funding for coaching research, like there is of psychotherapy. What was interesting to me, was that the school of thought underlying the therapist's technique did not impact on the outcomes; what made the difference was their conviction to the school of thought. Twenty years after the first coaching studies we are now starting to see some robust research of coaching outcomes, one of which is from the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam and Ashridge collaborating with coaches. This research aims to assess how different variables about the coach and coachee affect the coaching relationship and coaching outcomes (directly and indirectly). If you want to be a part of this research, Erik encourages everyone to go to: www.ashridge.org.uk/centreforcoaching for more information.

Griff Griffiths provided a fascinating look at using positivity (as defined by Barbara Friedrickson) as a measure of impact throughout an organisational change programme underpinned by coaching. After the initial traditional results, Griff opened up a exciting world of graphs based on 'chaos theory' that made the data much more interesting to look at in terms of results. Although more data is required, the swirly graphs, of which we are promised more of next year, showed how positivity one day was linked to positivity the next.

Case studies speak the loudest for our practice and this year's one, coaching psychology application in the NHS in Mid-Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, provided an insight into how one element of the NHS has sought to transform its ways of working to leverage the maximum benefit for patients and markedly increase staff satisfaction and well-being.

Research papers presented fascinating topics, amongst others linking MBTI to the client's stage of development, the evolution of coaching and coaching psychology in Italy, a critical evaluation of coaching psychology outcome research in executive coaching, coaching training in Bahrain and the role for the coach to adapt responsibly to their coachee to realise shared goals.

The conference also celebrated three Research Award winners: Jonathan Passmore was presented with the Coaching Psychology Research Award; Belinda Ryding won for her Master's Research; and Angelina Bennett won for her PhD research work.

The workshop Professor Stephen Palmer facilitated focused on resilience coaching. Working in pairs throughout we were encouraged to apply the techniques and principles discussed to ourselves. Rather than delving straight into tools and techniques to enhancing resilience, Stephen asked us first to explore what sort of things we experience that reduce our resilience and what boost our resilience. A key issue that came out of that for me was 'tiredness' and how for just about everyone in the room it lowers our resilience. The importance, therefore, of looking after our bodies as well as our mind was reinforced. Moving on to our minds Stephen introduced various useful tools and techniques to apply in a coaching session that would benefit from enhancing resilience. A thoroughly worthwhile session!

Dr Julie Allan stepped in at the last minute, as one of our speakers could not attend the conference. And boy, was she brilliant in this ad-hoc session! Julie's interest, and may we say passion, is about ethical issues. The word 'ethics' might send shivers down one's spine thinking about this as an abstract, boring, legislation-filled dry topic, but it is not. Julie skilfully and engagingly guided us through a variety of areas where ethical dilemmas emerge and then we worked in smaller groups to discuss our pracice and how we deal with certain ethical questions. Ethics is there everywhere in what we do and it was a lightbulb moment to recognise how very practical it is.

We were fortunate enough to enjoy the contribution of international invited speakers. Our third keynote speaker, Dr Vicki V. Vandeveer, had come over from the US and represented the Society of Consulting Psychologists, Section 13 of APA. Her engaging presentation was around development of coaching psychology in the US and who would have believed that our Big Brother looks upon us in this field as their inspirational mentor! Dr David Drake who is currently based in Sydney, Australia, delivered a workshop on the coaches' development. Nic Eddy, from Australia, was working with us around the simple, quite subtle moments in the coaching process that can introduce unrealised limitations on the experience and outcome for the coachee – the most dangerous moments in coaching. He said that if the practice of coaching psychology is as valuable as we believe it to be, then this implies being better equipped at identifying and avoiding some of the common assumptions and methodological constraints that many coaches either introduce inadvertently into their coaching practice or encounter as a result of adopting less rigorously-based processes and frameworks. Other international contributions were via research papers and posters and covered insights on coaching and coaching psychology development from Italy through Spain to Bahrain.

Although the speakers represented a variety of coaching/coaching psychology domains, what stands out is that many of the challenges, findings, questions and possible solutions are very transferable across fields of practice in the coaching psychology arena. The emphasis is turning more towards what is happening in the coaching relationship and what is the effect on this relationship of the coach's internal experiences: in essence the interpersonal and the coach's intrapersonal processes are getting into focus to better understand what makes the coaching process work and what hinders it.

With a lot of very positive feedback from delegates, speakers, sponsors and the conference organisers, the work has already started to ensure the SGCP European Conference to be held in Edinburgh this coming December, be at least as engaging and inspiring as the Birmingham conference.

Thank you to delegates who provided their input to this article.

Judit Varkonyi-Sepp

Report

Special Group in Coaching Psychology News

Sarah Corrie

Letter from the new Chair of the SGCP

IN DECEMBER 2012, at the Annual Conference in Aston, I took over from Mary Watts as Chair of the SGCP. It is a real honour to have been appointed to this position, to have the opportunity to play such a key role in the SGCP, and to be so closely involved with a discipline that has so much to offer.

Having been Chair Elect for just under a year, I have been able to work closely with my colleagues on the Committee and have benefited enormously from the energy, commitment, knowledge and experience that they bring to the work of the SGCP. I would like to thank all of them for welcoming me to my new role and for the privilege of working with them over the last few months – a privilege which I am very much looking forward to continuing in the year ahead. Not least amongst these colleagues is Mary Watts whom I would like to thank for her leadership over the last year and whom, on a personal level, I would like to thank for sharing so generously her experience and knowledge on many different levels.

For those of you who don't yet know me, my first Chair's Letter also gives me an opportunity to introduce myself. I am a Visiting Professor at Middlesex University and currently work as a coaching psychologist, trainer, supervisor and consultant. Much of my career has been concerned with, and driven by, a fascination for how individuals learn and how, as coaches, we can best facilitate the learning of others. I come to coaching psychology from a clinical and counselling psychology background and my work as a coaching psychologist reflects this diversity, with a particular interest in health and well-being, and performance coaching,

and the interface between coaching, adult education and the psychotherapies. And, perhaps also important to state, is the fact that I am a beneficiary of coaching myself, being the client of a skilled, thoughtful and empowering coach. So I have first-hand experience of how transformational coaching can be.

The qualities that I value most about the field of coaching psychology were very much in evidence at the December conference. The wide variety of domains in which we collectively practice means that we have the potential to reach an ever-increasing number of individuals and organisations who can benefit from what coaching psychology has to offer. We are a diverse group of theorists, researchers and practitioners which I believe is cause for celebration and one of the hallmarks of our identity. And yet, as our theoretical underpinnings and models of practice become established, I was struck how a key theme of the conference was a call to evidence our claims, to ensure that our commitment to scientific rigour keeps us grounded in what is actually

known and prevents well-meaning but misplaced enthusiasm from leading us astray.

I came away from the conference feeling grateful to everyone who had participated so fully and shared their knowledge, experience and skill so generously. The energy and creativity that was present left me inspired and thankful once again to be part of this emerging profession. And to those of you who perhaps have never ventured to one of our annual conferences, may I warmly commend them to you. You will find them a welcoming and inclusive place to be, with valuable opportunities for networking and enhancing your learning, through some of the high calibre work that the field is generating.

As I look forwards, I am anticipating a busy, demanding and exciting time for all of us at SGCP. At the forefront of my mind is the very important matter of capitalising on the British Psychological Society's recently launched post-qualification Register. This is a highly significant development for the field and in progressing this, our focus will be on how we can best meet the needs for the training and credentialing of all our members – including those who practice coaching but are not eligible to join the Register.

Now is also a time when we are planning our next European Conference in December 2013, as well as our rapidly approaching 10th Anniversary in December 2014. We would welcome your thoughts on both of these events to ensure that they are the celebrations they deserve to be. And, of course, the Committee always welcomes expressions of interest of involvement. If you would like to learn more about the work of the SGCP and its various working parties, or think that you might like to become involved, please contact us. We would love to hear from you.

In the meantime, I look forward to working closely with you, and on your behalf, during what promises to be an eventful and, hopefully, highly productive year.

With my very best wishes.

Sarah Corrie
Chair, SGCP.

Report

Interest Group in Coaching Psychology News

David Heap

ON BEHALF OF THE National Committee I'd like to thank all our members for the great support you have shown the Interest Group in Coaching Psychology throughout 2012. Last year was a very successful year with the International Congress in Coaching Psychology at Manly in May, as well as the numerous state-based professional development activities we have run throughout the year across Australia. I'd also like to congratulate those involved in the re-establishment of the South Australian and West Australian branches, so that we are once again truly a national organisation.

2013 is shaping up to be just as successful, starting with national tours by Donna Karlin and Sunny Stout-Rostron over February and March.

As well as Donna and Sunny, we are also planning to run a series of National events across 2013 around the theme of 'The Future of Coaching'. We are currently planning the details of this and the specific activities should be public by the time this edition of the *ICPR* is published.

Although 2012 was a very successful year for the Interest Group in Coaching Psychology in terms of staging professional development events, there are a number of areas in which the National Committee believes we can better meet the challenges facing coaching psychology and coaching psychologists. The positioning of coaching psychologists in the coaching marketplace, especially in the eyes of potential clients, the continuing impact of Standards Australia's Guidelines on Coaching in Organisations, the relative lack of published Australian research in coaching psychology, professional accreditation and recognition of coaching psychology credentials, and our relationships

with other groups in the coaching industry are all challenges for us in 2013.

We have formed five sub-committees to directly address these challenges.

1. **Marketing and branding:** How can coaching psychology be positioned in the coaching marketplace for the maximum benefit to coaching psychologists and our clients? We aim to publish a handbook on marketing your services for coaching psychologists in the first half of 2013.
2. **Research/publishing:** Whilst Australia in many respects led the way for research driven and evidence-based coaching, we have fallen behind in the quality and quantity of research papers published in this and other publications. We will be looking to stimulate research and to encourage papers to be published to help restore Australia's leadership in evidence-based coaching psychology.
3. **Membership generation:** We are looking to improve the appeal of belonging to the Interest Group in Coaching

Psychology and are considering various options to attract new members and retain existing members. Options include distributing hard copies of the *ICPR*, strengthened connections and shared benefits with other coaching psychology associations as well as accreditation.

4. **Accreditation for members:** One of the purposes of professional associations is to provide recognition of their members' professionally relevant skills and credentials to help signal their expertise to clients and colleagues. We will be investigating what we can do within the scope of an APS Interest Group.
5. **Liaison with other associations and institutions:** Coaching is a relatively new area of psychology and so we do not have the same relationships with Universities as do the Colleges. We also practice in an area of psychology where most practitioners (coaches) are not psychologists. We need to make more of an effort to reach out to other groups and bodies involved in coaching and forge strong connections with them for coaching psychology to have the influence it deserves.

We are looking forward to continuing to grow and explore coaching psychology with you throughout 2013.

Best wishes.

David Heap
National Convener,
APS Interest Group in Coaching Psychology.

Australian Psychological Society IGCP National Committee

From L to R: Genevieve Moore, Nic Eddy, Claire Nabke-Hatton, Peter Zarris, Vicki de Prazer, Vicki Crabb, Aaron McEwan, Patrea O'Donoghue. Seated: David Heap.
(Absent members: Nanette McComish, Patrizia Santoriello, Naomi Harrison)

Report

SGCP Research Award Winners 2012

Alison Whybrow

THE Special Group in Coaching Psychology is keen to support research into coaching and coaching psychology and offers a number of awards for researchers in this field. We are pleased to share the details of last year's winners.

The winner of 2012 SGCP Research Award for a Distinguished Research Project in Coaching Psychology was Professor Jonathan Passmore. The award was given for Professor Passmore's research into the psychology of coaching as a learning methodology and safety intervention in learner driving and its subsequent impact on driver training practice in the UK. The research focused on real world challenges, incorporating beliefs as well as behavioural change through the coaching interventions researched. The collaboration with the driving industry was noted.

Two Student Project Awards were presented for Distinguished Student Research Projects in 2012. Dr Angelina Bennett was the recipient of the Doctoral level award, and Belinda Rydings was the recipient of the Master's level award.

Dr Bennett's award was for her comprehensive research into the use of psychological type in developmental coaching which was original and thoughtful in design. The collection of studies contributed new knowledge to the profession of coaching psychology and to the practice of coaching, as well as informing the literature of developmental coaching.

Professor Jonathan Passmore

Dr Angelina Bennett

Belinda Rydings award was for her research into Imposter Syndrome. Her work approached this body of work from a new perspective using an effective qualitative research methodology. The research will have wide appeal for coaching psychologists as Imposter Syndrome is a potentially common issue and the findings are 'straight from the coach's mouth'.

If you are interested in submitting your research for consideration in 2013, please go to http://www.sgcp.org.uk/sgcp/news/sgcp-awards.cfm for details of eligibility and requirements.

Belinda Rydings

The Author

Dr Alison Whybrow
Chair of the SGCP Research Awards Panel and SGCP Research Officer.
Email: alison.whybrow@btinternet.com

The British Psychological Society
Special Group in Coaching Psychology

SGCP 4th European Coaching Psychology Conference

12th and 13th December 2013

Heriot-Watt University

Edinburgh

In the spirit of continuing to bring together the growing coaching psychology community to enable sharing and learning from each other, the SGCP is delighted to announce the **4th European Coaching Psychology Conference**

Details of how to submit abstracts for papers, workshops and posters, and how to register, will be announced soon

Invited Speakers include:

Dr Diana Aguiar Vieira PhD
Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal

Professor Stephen Palmer
Coaching Psychology Unit
City University London, UK

Professor Sarah Corrie
Professional Development Foundation
Middlesex University, London, UK

Dr Matthias Rosenberger
Elements and Constructs, CEO
Leipzig, Germany

Dr Dasha Grajfoner
Centre for Business and Coaching Psychology
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland

Dr Ole Michael Spaten PhD
Coaching Psychology Research Unit
University of Aalborg, Denmark

Professor David Lane
Professional Development Foundation
Middlesex University, London, UK

Professor Emeritus Mary Watts
City University, London, UK

Dr Almuth McDowall PhD
University of Surrey, Guildford, UK

Dr Douglas Young
HRD Associates, Director

For further information visit the SGCP conference website

www.sgcp.org.uk

All paper & poster abstracts will be subject to review by the Scientific Board and are not guaranteed to be accepted

Notes

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

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