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Issue 9

CollectivED Working Papers

Working Papers from CollectivED; the Centre for Mentoring, Coaching and Professional Learning

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A University Research and Practice Centre where collaborative conversations create powerful professional learning.

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Author surname, author initial (2019), Paper title, CollectivED [9], pages x-xx, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University.

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Preface: connecting research and practice in a process of sense-making.

Some recent CollectivED updates from Rachel Lofthouse

CollectivED came into being in October 2017 with our first tweet. In this preface I am marking two years of CollectivED by outlining five dimensions of our recent work (the new Advisory Board, our national conference, an international research network and the working papers). It is also noteworthy that in the last few months we have updated our name, and we are now *CollectivED: The Centre for Mentoring, Coaching & Professional Learning.*

Throwing down the gauntlet

The stimulus for our new CollectivED title was a discussion at our first Advisory Board which challenged us to articulate what our core objectives are – it felt like a moment when they literally threw down the gauntlet. We reflected on this question and in response we now summarise our purpose as follows: ***to generate collaborative conversations which create powerful professional learning.*** These conversations happen during our CollectivEd events, during our Carnegie School of Education mentor training, during our new PGCert, during our research student supervision, and during our school-based enquiry groups. They also happen within and

through our working papers, with frequent feedback that they are being used as the basis of professional and scholarly discussion in schools and universities. They happen through engagement on our twitter feed and with our Carnegie School of Education blogpost, and they happen through our commitment to supporting external CPD, such as with Teaching Schools and during mentoring and coaching conferences. These conversations happen at education research community gatherings in the UK and internationally and through supporting and undertaking study visits.

Many of these conversations become visible through tweets and its always fascinating to read responses to our work. What is less visible, but is actually more important, is how these conversations then filter out into staffrooms, leadership discussions and planning for professional development, mentoring and coaching practice and into the opportunities for individuals to think and act in new ways. We can never take full credit for changing practice, messages from many organisations and individuals weave together into individual decision-making and collective thinking; thankfully we are not alone in

advocating for enhanced opportunities of professional collaboration and dialogue.

As well as challenging us to think about our objectives the Advisory Board also suggested that we create a new graphical representation of our work (figure 1). In another version of this diagram their role is also articulated. We have created the Advisory Board and challenged them to bring expertise from the education sector and beyond and linking CollectivED to a range of stakeholders and partners; to offer challenge and insight to the director and core team of CollectivED to support strategic decision-making; to engage with the wider CollectivED network and events, and finally to advocate for the work of CollectivED and professional learning in education. They have already made an impact and we look forward to working with them in future. Our Advisory Board members are

- Kelly Ashley (Kelly Ashley Consultancy)
- Mhairi Beaton (Leeds Beckett University)
- Amanda Bennet (Greetland Academy, representing the Teaching Schools Council)
- Rachel Bostwick (Leeds Beckett University)
- Katy Chedzy (Chartered College of Teaching)
- Liz Dawson (Success Coaching Ltd)
- Peter Hall-Jones (The Spiral Partnership Ltd)
- Charlotte Harling (SISRA)
- Rose Hegan (Growth Coaching International)
- Bethan Hindley (Teacher Development Trust)
- Andrew Mears (Thinking Leadership)
- Phil Mellen (Leeds City Council)
- Jackie Moses (UCET, the University Council for Teacher Education)
- Lou Mycroft (nomadic educator)
- James Pope (InspireEDucate)
- Charmaine Roche (Leadership for Wellbeing)
- Jonny Uttley (TEAL Multi Academy Trust)
- Stefanie Wilkinson (Barnsley College)

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	CollectivED Research, Practice and Engagement	• Expanding the available knowledge base on coaching, mentoring and collaborative professional development through research • Making the knowledge base accessible and developing new approaches to active knowledge exchange • Offering a suite of CPD provision to support enhanced professional learning and the development of practice • Building regional, national and international networks through publications, events and social media
	CollectivED Values and Purpose	• Encouraging and enabling collaborative conversations which create powerful professional learning • Building capacity in the work of educators and leaders to create contexts which support inclusive career-long and profession-wide learning • Working to break down barriers to professional development through positive engagement with the education sector and allied practitioners • Increasing the opportunities for educational change through enhanced professional agency and wellbeing

Figure 1 Making sense of CollectivED

A summer fling

In July we held our first CollectivED national conference. It was lovely to greet participants from far and wide and an early fire alarm and consequent forty-five minutes on a pedestrian street in Birmingham certainly got the conversations between the attendees and our contributors flowing before we had even had a chance to tell people the fire safety routines! This conference felt like a summer fling, we called it a knowledge exchange and we designed it in such a way that conversations were at the heart of the day, with even the keynote being a dialogue between me and Christian van Nieuwerburgh. You can read this dialogue on page 67. Throughout the day there was so much going on and such a buzz of discussion that it was hard to imagine another hotel ballroom in the country could have been creating so many new insights, so many new professional relationships and so much personal engagement that day. It is impossible to capture everything from that day, but it is important that we acknowledge those contributors who gave their time to hosting roundtable discussions and allow those of you who could not attend a glimpse into the wisdom they brought to the day. Before I do that I also want to recognise the importance of 'Tom' a dramatic construction created by the Hywel Roberts who opened and closed our conference from a seat in the corner of his staffroom, from where he told a personal

and professional story of belonging, un-belonging, bewilderment and anticipation.

Our roundtable discussions were hosted by 16 fabulous CollectivED friends and partners who brought with them insights into rich practice and the legacy of their research and experience.

Some discussions focused on *re-thinking mentoring and coaching.* Mal Krishnasamy asked whether mentoring obsolete with the new wave of coaching hitting the education sector. Kim Gilligan followed up her working paper (Gilligan, 2018) with a discussion about why mosaic mentoring might be just the approach that student teachers and schools need to ease the burden and enliven professional learning. Claudia Owad and Christian van Nieuwerburgh brought expertise from GCI in Australia with a focus on training students to become coaches so that they can coach one another. Other discussions gave an opportunity for *re-thinking the impact of coaching*. In these Rachel Lofthouse asked what more we could learn if we learn together through a focus on promoting inter-professional coaching; challenges and opportunities (Lofthouse, 2018). Charmaine Roche challenged participants to consider whether the current approach to workplace coaching in schools is outdated and causing

more harm than good (Roche, 2019). Mark Quinn's roundtable discussion considered why 'improving teaching' is so difficult and shared how middle leaders in Newham use coaching to achieve it. (You can read more on this on page 52).

We also took the opportunity to *re-think professional agency through coaching.* Gill Kelly explored how expressing true vulnerability and openness to other perspectives on teaching can transform practice. Jon Andrews brought more Australian perspectives with his discussion on coaching for agency through powerful professional dialogue which is linked to his chapter in Netolicky et al. (2019). An important theme was *re-thinking wellbeing through coaching*. Liz Dawson focused on how coaching can promote wellbeing in schools. Ruth Whiteside drew on her working paper (Whiteside, 2019) and reflected on using Emotional Intelligence as a coaching model with the potential of being more intentional with thought and action to develop teacher resilience.

There were also discussions through which participants were invited to *re-think leadership through coaching cultures.* Kenny Frederick asked whether hierarchy in schools is robbing teachers of their voice, their agency

and professionalism and wondered whether we need to lead differently? Jeremy Hannay led a discussion on collective efficacy and teacher development as leadership responsibility and advocated making time for reflection, research and collaboration. Viv Grant took as her focus coaching headteachers to change the narrative of leadership. And last, but not least we had a chance to *re-think lesson observation & teacher collaboration*. Jon Haines shared practices and challenges related to using video to support mentoring &/or coaching. Suzanne Savage hosted a discussion about out using non-judgemental coaching skills in the observation of classroom practice. John Mynott drew on his doctorate (Mynott, 2018) and focused on facilitating professional learning in and from Lesson Study through the development of teachers' collaborative expertise.

Just writing these summaries reminds me of what an amazing day it was; and massive thanks is due to everyone who led and engaged in the discussions and also to Rachel Bostwick of Carnegie School of Education (my right-hand Rachel) who had the foresight to imagine how the knowledge exchange would work and brought the organisation the day together superbly. You can read Lizana

Oberholzer's reflections on the conference on page 90.

#EdCoachRes: An internationally-orientated, practice-focused research network

I am writing this from Kansas the day after the most recent research meeting of the 'International Research Network for Coaching and Mentoring in Education' known on twitter through the hashtag #EdCoachRes. This USA network meeting followed several in Australia and three in the UK in which participants who are engaged in research related to coaching and mentoring in education have been gathering to share their work. The Australian network has the longest history and has been supported throughout by Growth Coaching International, being first constituted by John Campbell and Christian van Nieuwerburgh. Following on its heels and launched in 2018 was the UK network supported by CollectivED and GCI, and the Kansas meeting formally marked the backing of Jim Knight's Instructional Coaching Group.

The meetings have a common purpose, to provide a supportive network to anyone engaging in research in this field. Through this support we provide a space for emerging research questions to be articulated, for

methodologies to be discussed, for research findings to be shared, and for impact to be considered. While there are good opportunities for peer critique this is offered through coach-like conversations characterised by appreciation, challenge and forward thinking. There are too many participants in this research network to list here but do take a look at #EdCoachRes on twitter if you'd like to know more about what we have been discussing and who is taking part. There will always be room for new members so do get in touch if you are interested, and don't worry about whether you would fit in. If you are engaging in and with research in coaching and mentoring in education this network could be a good home.

Curating voices from research and practice in our working papers

Between December 2017 and October 2019 we have published, as an open access resource, nine issues of CollectivED working papers, now with over 140 papers with perspectives from 15 countries, making them a key aspect of our work. The working papers are an opportunity to connect educational practice, policy and research. They are written with a broad audience in mind:

teachers, governors and school leaders, academics and students, members of grassroots organisations, advocates, influencers and policy makers at all levels. The working papers enable a diverse range of informed voices in education to co-exist in each publication, in order to encourage scholarship and debate. To achieve this, we publish several paper types. Research working papers are typically summaries of empirical research, case studies, action research or research vignettes and include a consideration of the implications for practice and/or policy at an appropriate scale. Practice insight working papers focus on aspects of educational practice and offer readers insights into its particular features, its context and the decision making that shapes it. Think-piece working papers offer opportunities for writers to share opinions, reflections or critiques of education practice, research and/or policy. Our online archive of working papers demonstrates how our writers have contributed to the creation of a new accessible knowledge base, with each paper adding a new unique insight, and the whole representing lived experiences of professional development in education offered through a number of lenses. Do consider contributing, we are keen to hear from more potential authors.

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Exciting times ahead

Finally, I want to celebrate the new partnership between CollectivED and Growth Coaching International, which has now been agreed by Leeds Beckett University. We welcome Rose Hegan-Black to her new role and desk in our building a look forward to working with her and the GCI team as they roll out more coaching training in the UK. You can read about this partnership on p.95.

Sitting here in Kansas has given me another opportunity to connect with members of the global GCI team as they are also a partner with Jim Knight's Instructional Coaching Group and it is Jim who invited me to contribute to their 14th annual Teaching Learning Coaching conference. The conference theme is 'Keep Learning', which seems like a suitable final phrase to preface this collection of CollectivED working papers.

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A Tale of Two Mentors: Mentoring with perspective
A practice insight paper by Victoria Crooks

Mentoring and training newly qualified teachers is a vital element of beginning teacher development. The opening paragraph of the newly established Early Career Framework asserts that:

'Teachers deserve high quality support throughout their careers, particularly in those first years of teaching when the learning curve is steepest. Just as with other esteemed professions like medicine and law, teachers in the first years of their career require high quality, structured support in order to begin the journey towards becoming an expert.' (DfE, 2019, p.4)

Yet, the latest government briefing paper about Initial Teacher Training (ITT) reasserts the Carter review (2015) findings that:

'Mentoring across England is not as good as it should be. The DfE should commission a sector body to develop some national standards for mentors.' (Foster, 2019, p.22)

At the University of Nottingham, we understand the partnership between the university and school-based teacher educators to be crucial to providing this 'high quality, structured support'. We want our beginning teachers to develop ways of thinking critically and reflectively about their teaching practice, considering how research informed practice might influence their approaches in the classroom. We aim to prepare beginning teachers for the classroom today and for longer term careers where they are equipped to be leaders in education. To this end we seek to develop and support our school partners, in their varied contexts, providing a framework for our ITE programme which marries theory with practice (https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/education/schools-partnership-gateway/partnership/ethos-aims.aspx, accessed 17/07/2019).

In the history partnership at the University of Nottingham School of Education, we have been working with our school-based teacher educators to develop their appreciation of differentiated models of beginning teacher development. We encourage our mentors to work with the university tutor to develop mentoring approaches which understand their mentees' unique experience of becoming a teacher. We seek to focus on the training needs of the individual whilst

maintaining the ethos and guiding aims of the ITE programme. This approach has resulted in some very successful mentoring practice which has made a considerable impact upon our training teachers.

A Tale of Two Mentors

During the last academic year, just as the students hit the development plateau in their main teaching practice placement, I was struck by the practice of two of our mentors. These school-based teacher educators were mentoring in ways which empowered their mentees to reflect on their teaching, reassess and take the lead in 'moving *themselves* on'. In both cases a concern for well-being, the long-term health and resilience of their beginning teacher colleagues, was a refreshing feature of the mentors' approaches.

Providing space, providing focus

Fernando was a new mentor to the programme. He was enthusiastic and keen to be supportive and to take the guidance and professional development offered by the university-based teacher educator. He was also realistic of the demands placed upon trainees in the ITE year and realised that beginning teachers need to be encouraged to

find their own teacher identity; he took time to understand his mentee and their needs and to become a critical friend (Adey, 1997).

Fernando's mentee had made significant and obvious progress between her two main teaching practice tutor observation visits. Her awareness of pupils' individual needs and their understanding of the subject knowledge being introduced in the lessons was impressive for a beginning teacher, as was the way she then attempted to adapt her lesson to address misconceptions. Fernando explained how he had been stripping away distractions for his mentee. Over the past two weeks her only target had been to concentrate on developing her use of assessment for learning in the classroom. Her aim at every point in the lesson was to check for understanding and any observation Fernando or colleagues had undertaken during that time focused purely on this. Her recent lesson observations all discussed how well, or not, she had checked for historical understanding throughout the lesson. She was pushed to reflect on how successfully she had used this information to benefit pupils. Behaviour wasn't a focus, the quality of her differentiation wasn't a focus, her resourcing hadn't been focused on, and neither had her subject knowledge. And yet, all these areas of her practice had

improved. Why? She had been encouraged to focus on the one thing which would help her to develop her own reflections and evaluation of her teaching and the learning taking place in her classroom. Stripping away the supportive but overwhelming raft of targets had given her space to look with fresh eyes. Space to really see what was happening in her classroom and to understand *herself* what she needed to do to move her practice on.

Fernando was equipped to make mentoring decisions as a school-based teacher educator which centred on the beginning teacher's needs. These decisions were firmly founded in the ITT programme's ethos and guiding principles but were not confined to a rigidly prescribed schedule of tasks. Taking this individualised approach had allowed both the mentor and mentee to grow in confidence in their roles.

Providing enrichment, providing perspective

Helen has been a mentor via our programme for two years. She is passionate about growing teachers who will have longevity in the profession and is keen to work with the university teacher educator to achieve this. She is also realistic and understanding of her mentees. She seeks to create a friendly and welcoming environment where ITE students are able to concentrate on their teacher development. She encourages her mentees to take risks; they are allowed to make mistakes as a necessary part of their growth. She is that 'critical friend' beginning teachers deserve as part of their 'high quality support'.

Helen contacted me about her mentee who, until this point, had made remarkable and unusually consistent progress throughout his PGCE journey. Exhaustion had hit, his confidence was low, and he had reached the plateau with a bump. Helen's plan to address this was to similarly strip things away. She removed lessons from him, radically reducing his planning and marking load, and then she organised enrichment for him. At the point of contact he was out and about doing various observations around the school. Departmental colleagues were modelling different pedagogical approaches and demonstrating how examination subject knowledge content can be embedded in disciplinary understanding to develop greater depth. He was being encouraged to 'observe' his colleagues as his mentor observed him, completing the observation sheet and offering 'feedback' after the lesson. In this way, Helen had sought to rebuild his confidence by

valuing his opinion and teaching experience, and re-injecting him with ideas and inspiration and modelling of good practice. Most significantly though she has not panicked about him teaching 'enough', but instead chosen to carve out some space for him to rest and reset his understanding. She understood that in the long run 'less' will lead to 'more' in terms of quality of understanding and purpose. She also did all of this whilst emphasising, in many different ways, that this was **not** a negative judgement of him. She communicated clearly to her mentee that this was an opportunity for him to gain a fresh perspective. Seeking the support and guidance of the university tutor also meant her mentee could receive this message from more than one side.

The outcome of this approach was a beginning teacher who was refreshed and renewed. On the subsequent tutor visit, he taught a sophisticated lesson involving a self-generated debate between year 9 pupils which revealed deep historical understanding worthy of a GCSE group about to sit their final exams. From this point, his practice became increasingly confident and he was able to move beyond the plateau and begin

addressing new targets to move his practice on.

Mentoring as collaborative self-development

Mentors and mentees often make a direct link between the amount of time the mentor spends with their mentee and the quality of support being offered, as if 'more time equals more support'. Thankfully, as illustrated by Fernando and Helen, this is not necessarily the case. Fernando and Helen demonstrate how effective mentors can do this as they embrace a mentoring style which is one of 'collaborative self-development' combined with 'mentoring as support' and allow 'mentoring as supervision' to take a back seat (Kemmis, Heikkinen et al. 2014, p.163). Targeted, focused support, underpinned by care and concern and 'friendliness', is what helps beginning teachers to grow. Ultimately the students will not have a mentor holding their hand, even in their NQT year the level of support is necessarily reduced. If we are to take the Early Career Framework seriously, our job should be to equip them to direct their own development, giving them the tools to increase their reflective and evaluative skills. We need to help them understand how to 'reset' and learn how to 'move themselves on'.

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Is stress always stressful? Using a language-games lens to raise questions about normalising stress in an age of teacher accountability

A research working paper by Liz Beastall

Abstract

Teacher stress is widely reported in the popular media and is thought to be a contributory factor to the current teacher retention and recruitment crisis. Because of the reported managerialisation and datafication of education, teachers are now subjected to additional methods of surveillance and, as a result, are thought to require increasing levels of resilience. This discussion paper provides a narrative that uses the language-games lens to explore how teachers narrate stressful situations they encounter, noting that reactions to common events are impossible to predict. Individual agency is an important factor in the teacher stress debate, as is the social environment(s) from which this agency emerges.

Rationale

This paper will focus on a single narrative collected as part of a wider EdD study into teacher stress and will draw on early drafts of the thesis due for submission in 2020. My previous paper (Beastall, 2017) focused on Alistair's story of despair and struggle, whereas this story brings a different perspective. An important part of undertaking any narrative-based research is to listen to the stories, and to avoid bias and early assumptions. Popular media are keen to tell stories of failing schools and failing teachers, of stress and burnout and to provide statistics that support a widespread teacher crisis. It is hoped that this story will provide a different outlook and contribute further to the debate of the importance of effective workplace communication. All the interviewee's names featured in this paper are pseudonyms.

Aims and research questions

The three issues that I wanted to address were how teachers' stories of everyday experiences in schools reflects the popular media portrayal of a 'teacher crisis', how teachers narrate the 'stress' experienced in their school roles, and to think about what insights into the causes and effects of teacher

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stress can be gained by using Wittgenstein's language-games lens.

The philosophical language-games lens will provide a new approach to understanding teachers' experiences. This research aims to inform policy concerned with teacher retention and recruitment at local and national levels and hopes to act as a catalyst for effective organisational change, with regard to the everyday experiences of teachers in schools.

Method

This EdD research involves 9 educational practitioners who were interviewed over a period of 18 months. Seven of them were interviewed three times each, for around an hour each time and the other two participants I spoke to twice and once respectively. Participants were chosen using a convenience sample which is, as noted by Denscombe (2002, p.47), "reasonable" when working within a qualitative study that is not claiming to use random sampling. The sample consisted of 1 primary school teacher and 8 secondary school teachers, with 5 male and 4 female participants. The age range was between 25 and 55 and the staff had various

roles in their schools, including 2 members of senior leadership teams (SLT).

This paper will consider one of the narratives. Jen is a primary school class teacher, with eight years' experience, working in a large multi academy trust school, following a recent takeover. The 3 interviews with Jen were undertaken as part of a narrative inquiry which aimed to place the individual voice at the centre of the story. Narrative inquiry can be considered distinctive to other discourse-based research approaches because, as noted by Coulter and Smith (2009, p.589), there are significant differences in the handling of the data. One such difference is that narrative inquiry should not search for a particular truth that has been predetermined by the researcher; instead, the individual stories are handled holistically as data, supporting Connelly and Clandinin's (2006, p.375, cited in Clandinin, 2013, p.13) point that "to use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomena under study".

Teacher Stress

The word stress is used as both a noun and a verb; meaning it is a thing that can be identified, experienced and named, but also

that it is something that can be done and seen. For instance, an individual may say "I feel stressed", "I am stressed", "I need to stop stressing", or "she was so stressed". It is widely acknowledged that stress can be experienced as a physical response, with increased heart rate, perspiration and increased adrenaline, originally designed to avoid physical threat rather than to cause individual problems. Munt (2004) notes that it is only when an individual is not allowed the time to reset and to be 'stress-free', that stress hormones become problematic. More recently, the use of the word stress has become commonplace and usually describes negative feelings and emotions experienced by the individual, to varying degrees of discomfort.

Teacher stress has been discussed since the early work by Dunham (1978, 1981), Kyriacou (1997) and Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1977) when pupil behaviour and workload were cited as areas of concern for teachers. Kyriacou (2001, p27) noted that the term "teacher stress" has become more widely used and provides a definition that "teacher stress may be defined as the experience, by a teacher, of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher" (Ibid, p.28). Munt (2004) noted how

the idea of workplace stress has been normalised and somewhat accepted as part of a discourse of education that is heavily managerialised and target driven, things which are themselves considered to be triggers for teacher stress (Troman and Woods, 2001; Galton & McBeath, 2008 and Day and Gu, 2010). Within the debate of the impact of accountability and surveillance on teacher well-being, is also the need to credit teachers with a capacity for agency and to not reduce them to becoming passive victims. As noted by Page (2017, p.377) teachers are not 'dupes'; they can demonstrate resistance and are often able to act and react to their environment and to make changes.

Language-games

In everyday conversations and communications, meanings are exchanged between individuals and groups of individuals, simplistically and without extensive need for contextual explanations. These different types of communications, both verbal and non-verbal, take place in what Wittgenstein (2009) referred to as "language-games". These language-games do not take place in isolation and are constantly changing and evolving, through structural and relational factors. Wittgenstein (2009, p.8) notes that "language

and the activities into which it is woven" are part of the language-game, meaning that the language doesn't stand alone, and that it needs to be given meaning through its use.

Language-games rely on an understanding of what words and phrases mean. There needs to be an understanding that is much more than a definition of the word, something that can become more complicated when words have more than one meaning. In discussing the drive to improve 'quality' in healthcare, Newman (2017, p.73) explores the complex process of developing a social agreement of key terms, that facilitate a shared understanding of important words and concepts in the workplace. He notes that in some situations, misunderstandings and confusion can arise from assumptions about what words mean, and that understanding the role of language-games is crucial; particularly the need for time to be spent developing some social agreement about important words and concepts.

In terms of researching teacher stress, understanding what is meant by a word is particularly relevant, because teachers are routinely and regularly assessed and provided with a single word overview of their performance as a teacher and given a word that they should aspire to 'be'. These words are the result of long-standing language-games where teachers understand how to be 'good' at their job and collectively understand and share a social agreement of these words and phrases. However, in 2015, there were significant changes in OFSTED's inspection criteria, when the definitions of 'outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' or 'requires improvement' teaching, was amended overnight, in the middle of the school year. A basic summary is that what was 'good' became 'requires improvement' overnight (Page, 2015, p.1044). Teachers will have had schemes of work and planning in place for a full years' teaching, leaving them having to take part in the new language-games where they will have limited shared meaning and understanding. Because these words carry such a lot of practical context and form the basis for classroom practice, it is reasonable to assume that the confusion and uncertainty caused by sudden changes to practice, such as this one, could contribute to individuals feeling confused, uncertain and 'stressed'.

Jen's Story

At the time of the interviews, Jen is a primary school class teacher, with 8 years' experience. She is married with one young child and works full-time. She has several responsibilities at

school, including being acting key stage I leader at the school which is part of a recently converted Academy trust of religious schools. Jen is very positive about being a teacher and about teaching in general and loves her job. When she approached me to take part in the research, she said she was not sure if she would be suitable because she didn't consider herself to be stressed. Because Jen had told me explicitly that she herself did not feel stressed, the interviews and discussions were centred very generally around her life as a teacher. What this means for the narrative is that when Jen talks about the more negative aspects of her working environment, it should be noted that these things do not cause her what she understands to be 'teacher stress.'

Jen describes what happened when the head of school was removed from post very suddenly, and reflects on it objectively, as something that happened to someone else. The environment at the school would have been very tense and according to Jen, the head was very well-regarded among staff, students and families and therefore his removal would have reasonably been expected to cause some stress among staff members.

They kept picking and eventually found a way to, not get rid per se, because he is on secondment, until he gets another job.

They were going to pay him until Christmas but because he had such a good paper trail of evidence of bullying, he managed to get it so that he got paid until he got another job. There was very much the feeling that he was forced out, because it's his parish, he goes to church here, he went to this school when he was little, it was really underhand and horrible.

The atmosphere at the school was affected initially because there was a period of time where certain people were rallying the parents and we were wondering if we would get him back, but then it was apparent that he wasn't coming back and things were extremely frosty. The capability went on for about a year, but he was gone all of a sudden. People were really sad, it felt like a bereavement and when he had his leaving mass it was like a funeral and everyone was crying. Because we are such a tightknit family, it's more than just a staff, we are to this family and it felt like the father figure had been plucked out and it sounds dramatic, but they are more than just work colleagues. He was very good at nurturing people and spotting when people were down, and we miss that about him.

There is evidence in Jen's account that she and the whole school experienced a very

sudden change that would have resulted in new working conditions and practices. The school had become part of a much larger organisation, a familiar and well-liked leader had been removed very quickly, and many of the rules (implicit and explicit) that individuals within the school were familiar with had been changed.

Because effective language-games rely on shared understandings it is fair to assume that such drastic changes could result in stress being experienced by the individuals within the environment, yet what is interesting in Jen's narrative is that she reports that she does not experience this, regardless of a very close working relationship with the removed Headteacher. This suggests that an individual's perception and comprehension of changes in language-games is as important as the changes themselves and that, not everyone who finds themselves in a stressful situation will experience stress themselves.

Another thing to consider here is what Munt (2004) had previously noted, that stress has become normalised within the modern education marketplace. This could suggest that the reason some individuals do not find sudden change stressful is because many of these outcomes are now considered to be

part of the language-games of being a teacher.

When I asked Jen about her thoughts on why there seems to be higher incidents of 'teacher stress' she noted the importance of good leadership and followed that with an example of a meeting that had been held with all staff to inform them of the government policy aimed at reducing teacher workload. Jen felt that this meeting was a positive move and that it demonstrated how the leadership team respected the needs and feelings of the school staff. There is evidence that Jen is aware of what happens in larger schools, when school leadership teams focus more on the data, rather than the staff and feels that this is a part of the problem of teacher stress, but that this doesn't happen in her school.

> *I think it's bad leadership, it's bad leadership who don't see them as people, they see them as cogs in a machine and it's just detrimental to everything. People just do not seem to value people anymore and I think that's the message that teachers are saying at the minute. You know, it's that they are not understood as people, they are just expected to do all of this without anything. There are no realistic expectations. We had a meeting about the document that was released regarding reducing teacher workload. Had a good discussion about in a staff meeting*

with everybody. We know people want to go home and spend time with their family, and one good thing about our leadership is that it's only the head who doesn't teach. In these bigger schools where you've got a lot of the leadership you don't teach any more, then you forget how much work teaching actually produces, on its own without adding all of the other responsibilities onto the top.

It's just got a bit silly. The leaders panic that they don't have enough evidence of this and there isn't enough progress here, and they just put that all on the next tier down, who then disperse it to the next tier down and it just is a vicious circle and as soon as you're stressed out you are not productive anymore which then it looks like you're not doing your job well enough, so they put more stress on you and you end up going off on long-term sick.

Jen is demonstrating an awareness of multiple language-games here. She knows that in some schools a focus on data and performance is creating language-games that are viewed by some as negative and is aware that in her school steps have been taken to create more positive language-games, directly related to adopting national policy, to create a more positive working environment. In explicitly discussing and acknowledging that individuals

need a work-life balance, Jen is demonstrating an understanding of the rules of what being a teacher should be, in addition to discussing some of the very common factors associated with language-games of teacher stress, such as top-down management strategies, datafication and long-term absence from work because of stress. What Jen's narrative provides is an understanding that individuals can have significant positive impact on seemingly hopeless situations, if they are willing to take the time to establish further shared meaning between colleagues during problematic times, such as when a school is going through significant changes both on a local and national level.

It is worth noting that Jen does work in a primary school, which has a relatively small staff when compared with larger secondary schools. It is fair to say that often communication channels between primary school staff are easier to manage because of this.

Concluding thoughts.

This short discussion paper puts forward a different perspective when thinking about teacher stress. Jen's narrative contains details of what most would consider to be highly

stressful events and situations, yet the reflection on these events shows sadness, not stress. Listening to the stories of teachers raises some important issues, not least of which is the idea that workplace stress is becoming normalised, but also that there is no way to predict how some teachers will respond to 'stressful' situations. Further investigation into this is needed to check that the well-being of teachers is not being compromised by a significant shift in language-games that requires a level of resilience that many may find impossible to achieve. Also worthy of closer investigation is the role and effectiveness of straightforward channels of communication, particularly with regard to providing information about significant changes to practice, and the impact this can have on an individual's capacity for agency.

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Coaching for Wellbeing

A practice insight paper by Andrew Macdonald-Brown

Synopsis

There is a problem in student wellbeing, and the data says so. A number of system level movements are raising questions about the purpose of, and measures associated with, education more widely as well as at school level. Schools are not waiting for policy makers to catch up as they are living with the realities now. Schools have an opportunity to build a wellbeing culture, to consider carefully their cultural context, and to build capacity for change in this area.

We have chosen to develop a coaching culture in our aspirations to address student wellbeing. We believe that this is in keeping with our broader underpinning intention to develop student agency and collective teacher efficacy.

Broader Context:

Macro Level Indicators:

There has been for some time a growing interest in wellbeing as a measure of a country's development. The OECD measure, going beyond the economic indicator of Gross Domestic Product, was refined in 2009 to include Social Progress (to include measures around three distinct domains: material conditions, quality of life and sustainability). The inclusion of the OECD Better Life Index evidentially demonstrates a movement towards a broader view of 'development' beyond the economic measure.

Yet more recent research (Dr Jamie Chiu, keynote at the IB Global Conference in March 2019) has demonstrated alarming patterns of relative wellbeing in SE Asia when compared to other countries, notably amongst young people. For those of us in education and in the region, this is concerning; though based on experience, perhaps not surprising. A preoccupation with university destinations and rankings, and examination performance outcomes in the context of high aspiration and expectation necessarily applies a level of pressure seldom universally experienced in other parts of the world. Do young people possess the skills to self-regulate and manage pressure before it becomes 'stress'? Do they have access to the right kind of support in this context?

System Level Responses:

At the same time, the Positive Schools Movement, and metrics such as Seligman's PERM model have created momentum towards a more holistic focus on the purpose and desired outcomes of education beyond the narrowly focused PISA (Programme of International Student Assessment) measures

that had, for some time, be used by Governments to shape education policy towards improving mathematics and Science scores.

This broader view of the purpose of education, and an underlying concern about student wellbeing, is well articulated in Dr Helen Street's focus on 'Contextual Wellbeing' which notes that despite a huge focus and investment in wellbeing and social emotional learning, especially in private schools, research shows students mental health is deteriorating rapidly. OECD data (Dr Street's presentation at the Positive Schools Conference, Renaissance College, Hong Kong, November 2018) notes an alarming increase in anxiety, obsession, depression and addictive behaviours (particularly in independent schools).

Dr Street notes that 'Contextual Wellbeing' is about each student feeling valued and an active part of a community, fitting in; and that resilience comes from this, and not from competition. As such, schools have a duty to develop communities where every student is known and where positive relationships are prominent, where the source of motivation is 'being your best' not 'being the best', and where wellbeing is not seen as part of a

programme or provision, but as part of the culture and takes into account the cultural context.

Group Level:

Dulwich College International has recently formed an Education Team. Working with the wider group of schools, and taking an evidence-based approach, the group has been giving considerable thought to how student agency (broadly giving greater voice, choice, influence, ownership and autonomy to students in determining and co-constructing their own learning) can be developed and harnessed through school review. Sian May, Director of Senior Schools, writes a thought provoking piece on this (https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/student-agency-what-good-sian-may.). In it she notes that

> *It is therefore essential that we develop the social-emotional competency, relationships and wellbeing of our educators, leaders, support staff and parents. As a priority, teacher and school leadership wellbeing is paramount. Countless studies by Sue Roffey, Rebecca Collie and Jantine Spilt (and others) acknowledge that when educators and other school staff experience manageable stress levels, and social and emotional competency, their collective efficacy and capacity to support positive relationships*

and social and emotional learning for students will increase.

In this piece, amongst other things, the suggestion is that if we are to build student agency, and to enhance student wellbeing (the suggestion is that there is a correlation between these), then we have to develop capacity for doing so through specific leadership approaches and resourcing in order to realise the positive effects of collective teacher efficacy, which according to Professor John Hattie, has a significant positive 'effect size' in terms of student progress and 'is the collective belief of teachers in their ability to positively affect students'.

Our school

Dulwich International High School Zhuhai is part of the larger Dulwich College International group of schools. We some sometimes refer to the group as a 'family of schools' and use the term – "One Family of Schools". As a High School, our students typically join us at the age of 14 years old, having completed 9 years of compulsory Chinese education. Families 'opt out' of the Chinese education system, preferring a more western and holistic education philosophy, and having clear aspirations for their son or daughter to attend a top ranked university in the west. We have c350 students, studying

UK based internationally recognised qualifications – the IGCSE, and also the AS and A level qualifications. 85% of our students come from mainland China, with a further 10% from Hong Kong (SAR), Macau (SAR), with the remaining students from other SE Asian countries and a small representation from 6 other countries. We are very much an international school, with international staff, in China with mostly Chinese students, and an entirely EAL (English as an additional language) environment.

School Level Action:

"That is all very well in practice, but how will it work out in theory?"

Despite the natural and thought-provoking research and analysis there is in the education sector, schools are tasked with actually 'doing something about it'. The challenge for school leaders is, therefore, to address the question of 'what is that right action?' What might be the consequences of getting it wrong, as well as the positive impact of getting it right? And given the relative choices identified, what are the opportunity costs?

At Dulwich International High School Zhuhai we faced these questions during a review of our School Improvement Plan in 2017. We were aware that, as a High School, our

students existed in a context of 'heightened expectation and aspiration' – after all, all our students are sitting external high stakes exams at some point in the year. They come to us because their parents want them to study at some of the 'best' universities around the world.

Despite a clear ethos built around the traditions of a holistic education and a genuine belief (regularly articulated to key stakeholders) in 'best fit' university destinations (rather than 'best in ranking list') there pervades a broader belief in the significance of ranking, relative status and examination outcome. This is not to suggest that parents and students do not recognise the importance of pastoral care, wellbeing focused support, and the value of positive relationship with peers and with their teachers - they do (and this is clearly expressed and evident in our stakeholder surveys). However, there does appear to be a possible juxtaposition with regards to where we see intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. In this context we set about building capacity towards an enhanced approach to achieving our objectives. This was an area we termed 'Deep Support', a term coined from the personalised learning series spearheaded by the SSAT in the UK. This had explored the

relationship between mentoring and coaching, and advice and guidance programmes in schools, and how they might provide a more personalised experience for students.

We wanted to enhance our pastoral support by ensuring that our staff were trained in advanced level coaching techniques. The focus was on training key student-facing staff as coaches so they were able to use coaching techniques in their pastoral interactions with students, especially those related to wellbeing. Our belief was that this would not only develop important skills in this area, but also work towards the benefits of collective teacher efficacy (as noted above).

Coaching was chosen as a 'tool' for a number of reasons. I had for some time believed in the power of coaching as a professional development and leadership tool. As a senior leader in schools it had been one of my 'go to tools' when engaging with colleagues. It was basically a personal preference. Having also been the recipient of coaching through a CTI trained advanced level coach I was increasingly convinced of its effectiveness in exploring issues, distilling and clarifying these, and developing your own actions to address these. When one considers the notion of

'student agency' in this context - as 'voice, choice and ownership' I could see the obvious connection.

Additionally, research seemed to indicate that self-determination was a key characteristic in supporting student's progress. The Education Endowment Funds Toolkit showed that 'meta cognition and self-regulation' are highly influential in supporting student's progress. Whilst the focus here is on self-reflection in learning there are clear associations with a coaching model.

In tandem with this was a broad understanding of EQ (Emotional Intelligence). As a trained facilitator, and having made reference to this in a number of middle leaders development programmes, there was a sense that enhance EQ (in which Goleman outlines the benefits of greater understanding of 'self' in order to be able to 'self-regulate and manage' situations more effectively) could either be developed through coaching, or was possibly a requirement for more effectiveness of coaching.

The question we had was whether this as the right choice? What might the other options be? Certainly, there were many questions left

unanswered and a sense that whilst this 'felt' like the right direction we could not be sure.

School Level Action: What we did

Back to our question – how do we support and empower students to be better able to manage and deal with the pressures that come from being in a high stakes environment and deliver our aspiration to improve wellbeing?

We set about identifying a 'provider' that understood our context and needs and could support us in an enhanced approach to developing capacity. There was some in-house experience of coaching but it was evident that there were a number of advantages in accessing 'outside' expertise. As an international school in China there are some contextual considerations. On-site professional learning was of course possible. However, we needed to give consideration to virtual access too. A one-off course for a day or two might create some momentum and interest, but this was likely to wane over time as the realities and priorities of life in school 'took over'. We also wanted to work with a team that understood an education/ schools' context. Our sense was that 'coaching for performance', as you might see in a business

context, just wasn't the right fit for our purposes.

MSB Emotional Coaching Model

We were able to build a programme with UK-based Making Stuff Better, that allowed us to achieve the blended delivery model we were after. A 'kick off' two-day workshop in November 2018 was planned to really build buy-in, gain traction, immerse participants early on in the practice of (as opposed to the study of) coaching. This was followed up by monthly virtual sessions that would be used to i) reinforce and consolidate existing skills practice, ii) address participant-specific case work queries ("I am working with a student and would like your advice/ perspective on taking XYZ forward…."), iii) introduce new skills so participants feel a continuing sense of progression, iv) maintain frequent 'touch points' so participants feel an ongoing sense of commitment and association with the programme.

12 participants (about 30% of our expat staff) joined the programme, which was completely 'opt-in' and elective. These ranged from teaching staff to professional support staff (all student facing), expat, local bi-lingual, and also expat but with Asian heritage. Virtual sessions were arranged into two sub-groups based on the practicalities of 'availability' and a recognition of the benefits of a more 'intimate' and personalised virtual experience.

School Level Action: What we have found:

Programme structure supporting professional learning:

1. The programme has been very well received as a professional development opportunity. Participants are almost universal in acknowledging this and this has enhanced their skills in leading pastoral interactions with students that are focused on wellbeing. The nature of the programme, in which participants practiced coaching skills 'with and on each other' has necessarily required a very high level of mutual trust amongst the group. An outcome of this has been a heightened sense of shared experience and mutual support. Discussions have naturally led to a consideration of how we address staff

(not just student) wellbeing and this is welcomed given the desire to move to having a truly wellbeing culture in school.

2. Additionally, there has been a sense of enhanced staff agency, as participants seize the opportunity to offer feedback to our leadership team, and are afforded the opportunity to shape and co-construct the next phase of this work.

3. Critically, there is a collective belief in the potential beneficial impact of this work on student support in the wellbeing context. There have been some challenges, and these are outlined below, but the benefits of collective teacher efficacy are clearly evident from both the practice we have seen, and the feedback we have received.

Programme impact related to objectives:

In implementing the programme, we were conscious of the importance of choice. Typically, pastoral systems in schools work on the basis of 'identification and referral' – a concern is raised about a students based on how they present themselves (e.g. a concern about a notable change in behaviour; them appearing withdrawn, for example), and then a designated member of staff (a Form Tutor or Head of Year, for example) engaging with that student to develop an enhanced understanding of the issue and to determine a positive course of action. Of course, there are systems where students have a notion of choice (self-referral systems, for example, where a student might 'ask to see the Counsellor').

When launching our 'Wellbeing Coaches' programme we looked for a blended model; whereby coaches could be accessed based on a 'staff-referral' model, or where students might request access to a coach ('self-referral'). Additionally, having 12 trained coaches, we were able to add an additional layer – 'staff-referral', but with the option of which coach the student might prefer to work with ('elective-referral').

What we have found so far:

1. *Choice does not necessarily equate to opportunity*: Not all our coaches have been able to yet engage directly in a coaching interaction. This is partly because those with more evident 'pastoral positions' (such as Head of Year) have had more frequent opportunity to support interventions and have been able to use their coaching skills more readily. This suggests that our coaching offer is not yet regarded as 'the norm' and this is understandable having only really

launched this to students in December 2018.

2. *Ignorance is not bliss*: A clear reflection from participants is that this work is important and it is important that all stakeholders (and particularly staff) have an enhanced understanding of what our coaching programme is. This is because it is accessed on the basis of staff or student (self) referral. If these stakeholders are broadly unaware of the offer, they will not see the opportunity. Whilst we have begun to address this, it is clear that there is some work to do in 'educating' everyone about what wellbeing coaching is.

3. *Cultural context is key:* participants report that some students that have engaged in a coaching interactions have found it difficult to articulate their feelings / understanding of the issue they wish to address. In part this appears to be caused by the level of emotional intelligence (EQ) exhibited. There is a sense that culturally, exploring 'feelings' and sharing these is not something that sits as 'normal' or practiced. Some suggest that students demonstrate an inhibition build around a concern of 'loss of face'. We have hypothesised that this may be around relational or trust considerations, but given the nature of self-referral and elective-referral this seems less likely.

4. *Trust me, I'm a professional*: we know our students trust us, they tell us so in our stakeholder survey. Trust is the cornerstone of a successful coaching relationship. In Asia trust is built up over time, quite a long time in fact. Ask a business person operating in this part of the world and they will tell you. Whilst deference and respect are given to those in 'authority' this is clearly not the same as trust. As such, it can take quite a time to build a trusting and productive coaching relationship.

5. *'Students come first'*: in our school, and in the wider Dulwich College International family of school, we live by the mantra 'students come first'. The aspiration for this wellbeing coaching programme was to positively impact the lives of students in support of their wellbeing through our pastoral interactions. This remains the primary objective of this work. However, an unintended yet positive consequence of this training has been a heightened sense that we can build a stronger culture of wellbeing (and a coaching culture for that matter) for all in our school. We are moving towards a 'people come first' mantra in some ways as trained coaches

have found themselves using their new skills with colleagues too.

6. *Answers and outcomes, rather than process and self-discovery*: In a school, especially like ours (a High School in China) you might expect to hear a student say…. 'teachers give us answers to our questions', or 'I can pass my exams by learning the answers'… If schools are the place students learn, it stands to reason that they might expect to be given the answers in such a place. Of course coaching is not like that, being built on the coachee bringing their own question and being supported to find their own answers. As such students have been drawn to seeking options and suggestions, much as you'd expect through a mentoring approach. Our coaches have reported this characteristic as part of many of their interactions. This does reflect the broader cultural context of seeking results, and a focus on outcomes rather than process.

7. *Blurred lines and a 'can of worms'*: One can see this work as part of a much wider system of support. It could be considered a continuum (though the linear nature of such rather betrays the complexity of wellbeing interventions). Our wellbeing coaches have engaged in interventions where a more focused and more specific set of skills/ specific approach is regarded as appropriate. At times such interactions have 'unearthed' deep rooted and quite unsettling childhood experiences that one could consider have led to a range of behavioural characteristics that have been the catalyst for the intervention in the first place. At times it is clear that the 'pastoral concern' that was the catalyst for a 'wellbeing coaching intervention/ referral' has begun to uncover an experience for which our coaches are not trained nor able to support. We need to be clear that this work is not a replacement nor substitute for professional medical and therapeutic support by highly trained and qualified practitioners.

8. *"Do ya get me?" / the wrong garden path*: having worked in the UK education system for more than 20 years there are times when the nomenclature of a teenager can present a challenge or two in terms of fully understanding what is intended to be communicated. All our students are EAL (English as an Additional Language) and are being asked to share quite complex emotional ideas in a language that is not their native tongue. When combined with the challenges of

EQ it is not a surprise that there are limitations in what can be achieved through an English medium coaching intervention.

Not only can student's ability to articulate meaning be a challenge, but the ability to understand subtlety and nuances of a question posed by the coach can present a limiting factor.

Added to this can be the student's heightened level of self-consciousness – the student may be exploring a very personal and difficult issue (and will be self-conscious of this), and is additionally aware that they might get 'a word wrong' or that a phrase could unintentionally misrepresent the intended meaning. These can lead a coach to explore a path of questioning that is not appropriate, relevant or helpful. Moreover, language is not simply a case of 'direct translation'. It is very clear that language is rooted in cultural references and mores. As such, the complexities of this are significant.

1. *Seeds take some time to germinate*: it is the belief of some of our coaches, and notably amongst our local bilingual participants for whom we believe have most relevant insight, that students are becoming more receptive to this type of support. This is heartening as we move towards the development of the programme (see below)

2. *By students, for students*: a key characteristic of students in our school is that they are very considerate and caring of and for each other. We have exposed a small group of students to a coaching programme to establish their perspective. It seems that there is a potential appetite for this amongst them. Could this be a way to support greater student agency in this area? One noted: "*I will recommend this workshop to some of my friends who have demands in that area. Because the methods they teach are mainly about communicating and coaching which can be really helpful even to our daily life but everyone needs that specific training*" and "*…I think that would be better if more students can get to know about coaching….. putting it into the PHSE course is also a good idea*" and "*We also have psychological counsellors in our middle school, but only a few students would have an appointment with them. If students can do a similar job, I think that would be more helpful and more students may feel more confident and comfortable to ask for help*".

School level action: What we are going to do next

1. *Advanced level coaching for existing coaches* – it seems sensible to build in this area. This will allow us to explore a 'train the trainer' / 'cascade' model and build a more sustainable model over time

2. *Cohort 2 for additional coaches* – we build more capacity, extend this as a cultural (ie school culture) approach. Critically, to address the challenges we have faced in terms of our EAL and cultural context, we believe it right to extend this programme to engage more local bi-lingual staff. This will, we believe, not only address the challenges noted above, but will give us greater capacity to focus on and build staff agency and wellbeing. As Sian May (in her LinkedIn article referenced above notes) *"It is therefore essential that we develop the social-emotional competency, relationships and wellbeing of our educators, leaders, support staff and parents. As a priority, teacher and school leadership wellbeing is paramount"*

3. *Coaching skills for students* – given the feedback we have had from students, we are going to explore the design of a unit of work in a developing PSHCE programme that is built around understanding the triggers and feeling associated with stress and 'tools' that can be used to self-regulate and manage these. Necessarily, a coaching element will form part of this. Additionally, we want to explore a peer mentoring programme with specific coaching training as we leverage the benefits of enhanced student agency.

4. *Cultural competence* – as part of this reflection we have been able to recognise that our cultural context (in terms of how our students and their backgrounds (broadly a Chinese upbringing) influence how they engage in the school's context (a western philosophy build around the traditions of a holistic education)), requires greater understanding. We will be looking to have our expat coaches work more closely with our local bi-lingual trained coaches to support this cross fertilization of ideas, perspectives and practice.

5. *Coaching communication* – we need to ensure that key stakeholders better understand the programme, its purpose and the opportunities that it represents. In this way we hope that it will be seen as 'the way we do things around here' ie genuinely part of our school culture.

Developing Future Black Minority, Ethnic (BME) Leader's Self-Efficacy through Mentoring and Coaching

A research working paper by Lizana Oberholzer

Abstract:

The aim of the study is to explore how aspirational BME Leaders can be supported to develop self-efficacy and confidence to progress to leadership roles. The study will map out how mentors and coaches for aspirational leaders were developed and how they engaged with their mentees over a three week period, and what the impact was of their mentoring support. The study makes use of qualitative research methods to evaluate how the initial training of mentors, and the further engagement with mentees helped develop mentees' self-efficacy and confidence. The study will focus on the mentee's perspective and experiences more specifically. In addition, the study will explore what the impact of the three week mentor support was on the participants.

Introduction:

Coalter (2018) highlights the importance of diverse teams, and that these teams bring with them a variety of experiences and approaches to enrich the schools they work in. However, it is often the case that school leadership teams do not reflect a diverse team or mirror the diverse communities they serve. In turn, the lack of BME leaders in senior leadership roles in the United Kingdom (UK), not only has a negative impact on the effectiveness of the way in which the leadership team function, it also has an impact on how learners perceive their ability to achieve and excel. 3.1% of heads in schools are from BME backgrounds compared to the pupil population of 31.4% in primary and 27.9% of secondary (DfE, 2016).

It is noted that learners often feel that they are not able to progress or achieve as there are no aspirational role models for them to look up to in their education contexts (Garner, 2015). It is therefore imperative to continue to develop BME leaders and prepare them well for their leadership roles.

However, apart from the challenges faced by aspirational leaders when trying to get promoted as described by Elonga Mboyo (2019), BME leaders, experience a lack of confidence and self-efficacy, similar to women in education, as outlined by Kay and Shipman, (2014) to even apply for senior leadership

roles. Future BME leaders often feel that they are not worthy, and therefore don't even attempt to apply for these roles.

Johnson (2007) highlights the benefits and effectiveness of informal mentoring, and how it can help others to grow and develop. After discussions with aspirational BME school leaders in a University in London regarding their needs, it was decided that based on Johnson's (2007) work, a mentoring and coaching programme was to be rolled out for aspirational leaders, to offer them with support in developing their self-efficacy to progress as future leaders.

It was decided that it was important to develop mentors well to ensure that they were well-versed as mentors to draw both on mentoring and coaching skills to support their mentees well. They were trained prior to pairing them with future leaders to ensure that they too were effective and confident in their roles.

Aim of the Study:

The study focuses on both how mentors are developed to support future leaders, and what the impact of their mentoring was on increasing future leaders' self-efficacy to progress to leadership roles.

Methodology:

The study takes the form of an action research approach. Mentors were provided with a full day of mentoring and coaching training to ensure that they were clear on the different strategies they are able to make use of. The training ensured that mentors were aware of Blanchard et al's (2018) theory regarding development phases of mentees, to ensure that mentees were appropriately supported throughout the engagement. Mentors engaged with critical race theory discussions and reflected on the challenges BME mentees might face to ensure that mentors were well prepared for possible scenarios that might be shared with them during the mentoring sessions. Mentors reflected on the mentor journey as outlined by Clutterbuck (1992) alongside Blanchard et al's (2018) model. The training focused on the importance of listening too. Mentors were also provided with resources to enable them to offer career advice, support with personal application forms, and interview support.

In addition, they were paired up with aspirational BME leaders who contacted the programme lead for the initiative. Mentors and mentees were required to engage with 3 formalised meetings, over a period of 6 weeks.

Qualitative research methods were used to evaluate the impact of the mentoring. Semi-structured interviews were used to evaluate the impact of the mentoring experience based on a small sample of mentees who took part in the study. The sample size is proportionate to the number of mentors and mentees who were engaged in this small-scale study. The initial group who engaged with the programme was small and treated as a pilot. The sample is a random sample of participants, after a request was sent to participants to invite them to engage in the study. 5 mentors took part, and 8 mentees in the mentoring programme. Two mentees engaged in the semi-structured interviews to enable them to provide feedback on their experiences, and what the impact of their mentoring and coaching engagement were. All participants gave permission for the study to take place, and the full BERA (2018) guidance regarding ethics were followed to ensure that candidates were fully aware that they could withdraw at any point, and that all information will be treated in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (2018). All information was anonymised.

The questions used for the study were carefully developed, to ensure that it offers an opportunity for participants to respond as openly as possible to the questions. Questions were designed to ensure that bias was avoided. In addition, careful consideration was made to be mindful of candidates' perceptions of their situation and role to ensure that they were confident to respond to questions in an open and confident way (Oppenheim, 1998).

The two mentees were interviewed to evaluate how the mentoring support impacted on their development and how they progressed in relation to their aspirations.

Findings and Evaluation:

During the semi-structured interviews, mentees were asked to reflect on their experiences of the mentor sessions. Mentees, highlighted that the initial session was challenging at first, as they often don't find themselves in a position where they can openly discuss the challenges they face with like-minded colleagues. They shared that they opened up about institutional racism they have experienced, how they had to cope with unconscious bias, and at times situations where they were told they did not achieve simply because they were BME colleagues. One participant shared that she applied for a Head of English role, and was informed that she was not suited to the role, as she was not 'English enough'.

The second participant shared that she was asked to wait outside the school gate, for someone to see her about her documentation for her new role as governor. She waited for nearly 45 minutes, until she shared she was the new governor. Suddenly, she was invited into the building and offered refreshments. She reflected on how she felt that if she did not share what her new role was she would have been shown away, like any other BME colleague. However, her mentor conversations helped her to be braver, and insist on the appropriate support by staff the school.

Mentees greatly valued the opportunity to share their stories. These rare moments where they were able to open up, and find common ground was invaluable to them. One colleague shared, how she felt she had to be 'over qualified' for the roles she had to apply for to prepare for future headships. Fear of failure was another key concern that was highlighted during the initial conversations. Feelings of not belonging and not feeling that aspirational leaders are not entitled to leadership roles were explored too.

Participants also shared how they were viewed by other BME colleagues when they aired their ambitions to succeed. Views such as 'you are joining them' and 'you are going over to the other side' were shared, which left mentees feeling torn, and unsure whether they are doing the right thing, by applying for future leadership roles. By having an impartial mentor to support them, to listen to their concerns, helped them to continue to focus on their goals and targets to apply for leadership roles. One participant noted, that her mentor started using questions more often, which helped her to reflect on her learning more effectively. She explained how their meetings changes for where her mentor gave advice to starting to listen and ask good questions which helped her to make sense of her experiences (Blanchard et al, 2018).

From the feedback provided regarding the first meeting, it seems like the meeting provided an important opportunity for the mentee to 'let off steam' first, before they were able to focus on next steps.

During the interviews, it was shared that the second meeting shaped into a more focused and formal discussion regarding goals and aspirations, and next steps. From this feedback it seems like more than 3 meetings are needed, an introductory meeting might be a useful starting point, not only to contract the relationship, but to allow mentees to set the context, and to share their stories. This initial meeting helps to develop trust, limbic

calmness and a strong platform for the future mentor relationship (Rock, 2010). However, both mentees highlighted how the mentor relationships developed into sessions, where more questions were asked, and this enabled them to find solutions for themselves.

Mentees were asked to share how many mentor sessions they engaged with. Participants shared that their mentors offered more than the required 3 meetings, to enable them to apply for future roles, provide guidance on application forms, and offered support via mock interviews too. Career and Image coaching was also used to provide mentees with guidance to ensure that they were well prepared for their interviews.

Mentees were asked to reflect on how the mentor relationship helped them to move their ambitions forward. Participant 1, stated that she would never applied for a leadership role, if she did not talk it through with her mentor, and had the necessary support to see it through. Participant 2, highlighted how she drew on mentor conversations when she was doubting herself, when attending the recruitment day. The conversations and stories provided a focus, and motivation to help her see it through.

Both mentees highlighted how they felt that mentors were able to identify their personal needs and were able to support when needed or ask good questions, and move towards a coaching approach to challenge their thinking more when needed too.

From the participants who engaged in the project – 6 applied for leadership roles, and will be progressing to their next role in September. The 2 others decided to engage with a masters in Leaders to extend and develop their leadership roles further.

Conclusion:

The small-scale study highlighted the importance of supporting aspirational BME leaders to enable them to progress. The investigation deliberately focused on the mentees' experiences rather than the mentor to evaluate what the impact of the mentoring process was on their progress and experience. The participants interviewed for the study shared that their learning was positive, as their mentors were skilled in understanding when to mentor and when to coach as outlined by Blanchard et al (2018). The study highlighted the importance of investing enough time into developing mentors well to ensure that they are able to offer the effective support.

Mentees were able to draw on their mentor support to develop their own confidence and

self-efficacy to apply for leadership roles, and engage with recruitment days. They shared how mentors went beyond the remit of their roles to offer career coaching and image coaching to prepare them for these days. In this small study the success of the mentoring relationship, led to positive outcomes for the mentees. Mentees did not report any challenges faced during the mentor relationships, which does happen from time to time.

Mentees reported that mentors were highly skills and supportive which in turn motivated them to do well and progress. From this study it highlights the important need for effective mentoring, the importance of developing mentors well to understand their mentees and their contexts well. The study, though small highlights that mentoring can have an extremely positive impact on mentees. However, more time and resources are required to role similar projects out on a larger scale to ensure that it is well structured, coordinated and impacts positively.

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Coaching, Confidence, and Retention: Instructional Coaching and New Teachers.

A Research Working Paper by **Mia Pumo, Jason Korreck, Geralyn Hollis, Gina Childers, Barbara Zwadyk**

Abstract

Instructional coaching (IC) is a personalized intervention tool to assist teachers through sustained modeling and feedback; however, there are limited data on IC, teacher growth, and retention of lateral-entry teachers. Lateral-entry is a term used in certain regions in the United States for teachers entering the profession from another career field. They are also known in some areas as career switchers. They typically begin teaching in their field of expertise while simultaneously working toward their teaching license. The 3-D Model of Coaching: Discover, Develop, Deliver in the New Teacher Support Program addresses the need to retain Career Technical Education (CTE) lateral-entry teachers in the southeastern United States. CTE teachers teach courses in technical pathways that students can explore during their secondary education or high school experience. These include pathways in career fields such as engineering, information technology, fashion, computer science, business and finance, among others. The New Teacher Support consists of four days of professional development, four small-group webinars, and eight days of personal coaching in the classroom. Teachers (n = 24) in 22 different schools were invited to participate in a pre/post survey documenting their confidence associated with IC supports. Retention rate data (frequency counts, percentages, and description of support) were collected from schools (2013-2018) receiving coaching supports. Teachers reported significant increase in confidence in planning, instruction, and assessment with coaching support. Teachers cited sharing ideas and experiences (74%) and receiving feedback from an unbiased source (26%) were beneficial. The primary challenge was limited time with the instructional coach (80%). During the 2013-2014 year, there was a 47% retention rate (receiving no support) in comparison to the 2017-2018 year (80% retention rate with 3D support). There is a need for future studies to examine critical factors, such as administrative support and student-based outcomes, to understand the benefit of IC in primary and secondary educational learning environments.

Introduction

Instructional coaching (IC) is described as a form of on-the-job, personalized professional development for teachers. Because there are limitations to traditional professional development (i.e., there is often no follow-up support for teachers after the completion of professional development), IC has gained support as an intervention to assist teachers through sustained modeling and feedback (Knight, 2009; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2016; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015; Vangrieken et al., 2016; Fox & Wilson, 2015). However, given the variety of structures and strategies associated with this intervention, limited data exist establishing the impact IC has on teacher professional growth with a specific focus on lateral-entry teachers (Waring, 2014). Furthermore, the need to retain lateral-entry teachers in this location has been defined as critical, as lateral entry teachers have, on average, an "85% higher rate of attrition than their non-lateral entry counterparts" (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). The *3D - Discover, Develop, Deliver* coaching model addresses the critical need to retain Career Technical Education (CTE) lateral-entry teachers in 22 schools in the southeastern United States by incorporating research-based strategies to support personalized professional development, a sustainable practice and leadership culture, and incorporation of evidence-based supports. This study explored teacher perceptions (n = 24) of IC support and CTE lateral-entry teacher retention trend outcomes over a five-year period in 22 rural and urban schools in the southeastern United States.

Coaching Model and Design

The instructional coaching model in the New Teacher Support Program consists of four days of interactive, large-group professional development (PD), four small-group webinars, and eight days of one-on-one coaching in the classroom, using the 3-D (Discover, Develop, Deliver) model engaging first-year CTE lateral-entry teachers in experiential learning activities using research-based instructional strategies focused on three areas: 1) planning, 2) instruction, and 3) assessment. Specifically, instructional coaches build relationships with each teacher and visit their classrooms at least once a month during their first year of teaching. The coaching cycle includes the following steps: 1) pre-visit to discuss upcoming lessons, co-plan, and share strategies for learning; 2) class visit to collect data for the teacher on student engagement in the content and instructional activities, and

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3) post-visit to reflect on the data collected and the lesson overall.

Instructional coaches utilize the 3-D coaching model to guide their one-on-one work with teachers, and build strong partnerships. Specifically, instructional coaches partner with teachers to *Discover* teacher needs, interests, and values; *Develop* learning goals, success criteria, and plans for teachers; and *Deliver* shorter cycles of on-the-job coaching.

These shorter cycles of on-the-job coaching are focused on developing teachers' skills in implementing research-based instructional strategies such as questioning, feedback, classroom discussion, and collaboration (Hattie, 2009). Throughout the coaching cycle, coaches use the core skills of questioning, active listening, and feedback to promote teacher reflection and adjustments as teachers work toward specific goals for improvement in instruction and student learning.

Figure 1.
3-D Model and Examples in Practice

3-D Model	Example in Practice
Discover: Coaches partner with teachers to gain and deepen their understanding of the current needs, interests, and values of teachers.	The IC meets with a new teacher for the first time during her planning period, and afterwards visits her classroom for the first time. Through conversation and observation, the coach discovers that the teacher has a need and desire to practice feedback strategies in order to improve student learning and motivation.
Develop: Coaches partner with teachers to set goals, identify success criteria, and create learning plans.	**Set Learning Goals:** Coach and teacher, identify the following learning goal: The teacher can deliver effective feedback to students in the form of questions.
	Define Success Criteria: Coach and teacher define success in terms of student impact: Students will reflect on teacher questions in discussion with their peers. During discussion, students will justify their responses by citing evidence from readings, lectures, videos, and prior knowledge. Sample phrases to look for include: "On

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	page…." "When the teacher said…" "I disagree, because…"
	Develop Learning Plan: Coach and teacher develop the following job-embedded learning plan: ● Pre-Visit: Coach and teacher co-plan an activity utilizing questions as a form of feedback to students. Coach and teacher will decide on the data the coach will collect. ● Visit: Teacher will deliver the activity, while the coach collects data. ● Post-Visit: Coach and teacher discuss the data. Coach will share the data they collected, and use questions and active listening to guide the teachers' reflection about the data and determine next steps.
Deliver: Coaches partner with teachers to deliver cycles of job-embedded learning.	**Pre-Visit:** Coach and teacher co-plan an activity utilizing questions as a form of feedback to students. Coach and teacher decide that the coach will transcribe student conversations.
	Visit: Teacher delivers the activity, and coach collects data of student discussions based on teacher questions.
	Post-Visit: Coach shares the data, and uses questions and active listening to guide the teachers' reflection about the data and determine next steps.
(Re) Discover and Repeat: Coaches partner with teachers to gain and deepen their understanding of the current needs, interests, and values of teachers.	After one or more cycles of job-embedded learning, the coach and teacher reflect on their progress toward the teachers' learning goal of delivering effective feedback through questions. Coach and teacher determine that the teacher needs more work on this goal. Coach and teacher move to the Develop phase to refine goals, success criteria, and plans.

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Methodology

CTE lateral-entry teachers (n = 24) teaching in 22 different schools in the southeastern United States region were invited to participate in a survey (pre/post design) to document the teachers' confidence in planning, instruction and assessment as well as perceived benefits of challenges in working with an instructional coach. Additionally, yearly data (2013 – 2018) of CTE lateral-entry teacher retention rates in the specific schools supported by the New Teacher Support Program, which includes the 3D - Discover, Develop, Deliver IC model were collected to explore the trends of retention rates and support offered to CTE lateral-entry teachers.

Analyses

CTE lateral-entry teachers responded to components related to planning, instruction and assessment on a 5-point Likert scale (scale range from *I do not know what this component is* to *I can teach others about this component*). Survey responses (collected before and after IC support sessions) were compared utilizing a Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test (alpha level of 0.01, two-tailed). The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test is a nonparametric statistical test that compares two related samples. This test is appropriate for comparison of data that is measured at the ordinal variable level. Open-ended survey items were read and reread by two (2) researchers. Following initial readings, codes were developed and one round of an inter-rater review was conducted with an overall reliability score of 97%. Data on CTE lateral-entry teacher retention rates (frequency counts, percentages and description of support) were collected from schools (2013-2018) receiving coaching support for CTE lateral-entry teachers.

Findings

Significant changes in perceived confidence (survey items) over time was reported in the following areas: planning, instruction and assessment. Furthermore, all survey items were documented as increases over time – no decrease in confidence scores was observed in the data. Lateral-entry CTE teachers' scores significantly increased over time for specific planning for instruction statement including the following survey items: *provide opportunities for students to solve problems* ($p < 0.009$); *post student work products* ($p < 0.004$); and *plan engaging activities that motivate students to learn* ($p < 0.009$). The items related to instruction, *model out-loud thinking processes* and *create opportunities for student self-assessment* were significant from pre to post ($p < 0.004$; $p < 0.005$,

respectively). The assessment survey item, *provide students a role in collecting and analyzing their data*, significantly increased from pre to post ($p < 0.008$).

Furthermore, Lateral-entry CTE teachers shared the significant benefits of instructional coaching as the ability to share ideas and experiences (74%) and receiving feedback from an unbiased, non-judging source (26%) were beneficial. The primary challenge was limited time with the instructional coach (80%).

Lastly, Lateral-entry CTE teachers who participated in the New Teacher Support Program had a retention rate of over 72% for years 2016 and 2017 in comparison to the years 2013 – 2015 that had limited or no support provided for lateral-entry CTE teachers (see Table 1 below).

Discussion

In this study, there was an increase in retention rates of CTE lateral-entry teachers participating in a holistic, coaching cycle dedicated on research- and evidence-based strategies. Because of the current landscape of connection and the understanding of the impact coaches may have on teachers, students, and the school, it is imperative for educators to be supported to enhance the

learning environment of all students. We believe the addition of one-on-one coaching is a significant factor in the improvement of teacher performance and teacher retention. This is supported by the confidence scores reported by the CTE lateral-entry teachers as over time, these teachers were more confident in planning, implementation, and assessment of lessons and activities with students with the guiding support of personalized coaching services. We also believe that the professional partnerships and trusting relationships that can only be created through a significant investment of time are critical to the success of coaching, teacher development, and teacher retention. Evidence of this was shared by the teachers in this study regarding the one-on-one coaching support as the majority of teachers cited sharing of ideas with a coach whom they perceive as a non-judgemental figure. This non-judgemental perception is helpful in building and maintaining trust between the coach and teacher. The 3-D model, as described in Figure 1, focuses teachers on achievable and measurable goals for their own development. When teachers see the impact on student learning from new strategies, they increase their sense of efficacy and reinvest in the coaching partnership. This specific aspect directly

relates to previous studies that sustained modeling and feedback of the coaching supports enhance teacher confidence and ability (Knight, 2009; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). Although the retention rate for CTE lateral-entry teachers for this specific population has increased to 80% in 2018 from 47% in 2014, future studies should be conducted to examine such critical factors as instructional practices, administrative support, student-based outcomes, perceptions of instructional coaches, and the relationship between teacher retention and their sense of connection to a community, which may enhance the understanding of how instructional coaching is viewed, perceived, and utilized in primary and secondary learning environments.

Table 1.
Lateral-Entry CTE Teacher Retention Rates from 2013 to 2018

Year hired	# hired	Returned year 2	Returned year 3	# completed license	Retention %	Support Received
2013-14	30	22	16	14	46.67%	No CTE support provided
2014-15	40	33	27	24	60.00%	Four days of cohort pedagogy training
2015-16	51	40	31	22	43.14%	Four days of cohort pedagogy training
2016-17	61	55	46	44	72%	New Teacher Support Program
2017-18	41	34	33	33	80%	New Teacher Support Program

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Metacognitive Minds: Contextualised Specialist Coaching.

A practice insight paper by Kirsty Davies, Hannah Munro and Claire Barnes

How is it possible to encourage a culture of coaching in the primary sector?

'Effective coaching distributes leadership and keeps the focus on teaching and learning.'
(Aguiler, 2013)

Background

The Swaledale Alliance Metacognition project resulted from a successful first round DfE Strategic Schools Improvement Fund (SSIF) bid and ran for five school terms from September 2017 to April 2019. It brought together ten primary schools in North Yorkshire, with a high proportion of children from service families. The purpose of the project was to address an acknowledged weakness in KS2 outcomes (below national average) in maths. A contributing factor was seen as the marked levels of pupil mobility.

'The aim of the project was to empower pupils to understand their own learning and develop skills to enable them to take more responsibility for their own progress and be able to transfer learning skills to new settings when they inevitably move schools.'
(Lofthouse & Rose 2019)

To achieve this, three Lead Practitioners (LPs) were appointed in January 2018 to work alongside a Lead Teacher (LT) in each school one day a week. In some cases, this model was adapted to take account of the needs and constraints of the school.

This practice insight working paper details the project from the perspective of the LPs.

One size fits all …

The journey began with visits to each of our project schools, meeting with senior leaders and LTs (where they had been identified), to understand the needs of those schools. Although these initial meetings allowed us to explore the context of the setting, they did not always give us a clear outline of what headteachers hoped to achieve through the project. This was because knowledge of metacognition, at this stage, was generally limited.

From the outset the notion of 'done with, not done to' was embedded in every aspect of our approach. However, an interesting paradox was the fact that in order to ensure each school received a highly contextualised offer,

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it was necessary to draw together common threads and use collaboration to build a collective understanding of metacognition. This led to a model described as 'contextualised specialist coaching' by Lofthouse & Rose (2019). We adopted the ethos of 'Think big, start small' as an essential element in beginning to develop a coaching culture within our schools.

Responding to the needs of our LTs

As we built relationships with our LTs, and better understood their varying levels of experience, expertise and motivation, we realised that our coaching approach (see figure 1) needed to be highly individualised in order to be effective. Some of our LTs had the confidence to co-teach from the outset; working in partnership with us as LPs to develop a new effective teaching methodology. Others however needed more scaffolding before feeling comfortable enough to co-teach with us.
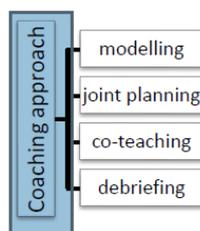
Figure 1

Facilitating a culture of collaboration

Early on, we identified the need for a forum to allow LTs to develop expertise around metacognition. Consequently, half-termly Lead Teacher Network Meetings (LTNM) were set up: we could not have known how instrumental these would become in developing productive professional dialogue.

Our first LTNM raised more questions than answers for both ourselves (as coaches) and our LTs. This collective endeavour was hugely beneficial particularly for those teachers who came from small schools.

Successful LTNMs required a balance of the following:

- input from LPs covering evidence-based pedagogy in order to upskill LTs;
- exploring in detail, aspects of practice highlighted by LTs;
- time for reflection.

These meetings allowed us to build and expand a supportive professional network.

Using cluster observations to build coaching capacity

LTs were given the opportunity to observe other LTs delivering lessons using a

metacognitive approach and then provide constructive feedback. This took the form of a 'reflective discussion', chaired by the LP and held immediately after the cluster observation. Contributions were recognised as equal and expert; encouraging a critical discourse. In a time-poor situation these observations served a dual purpose: to improve LTs' understanding of metacognition and to allow LPs to model necessary coaching skills.

In some schools LTs, in conjunction with senior leaders, decided to repeat this process 'in house' and invite other members of staff, including support staff to observe them delivering a lesson using a metacognitive approach. This ensured that a collective language and understanding of metacognition developed rapidly, stimulating whole-school change. The LTs were adopting the role of coach, gaining confidence and credibility.

A wider audience

As LTs developed their practice the impact that a large-scale event could have on facilitating whole-school change led to a half-day conference presented by the LPs. Teaching and support staff from all project schools were invited. Through presentations and workshops, aspects of metacognition

were explored: feedback was extremely positive.

As a direct result of feedback gathered from the conference, most schools followed up with staff training. How it was delivered in schools was dictated by the LTs, who adapted the training to suit their setting. Some were confident to deliver independently; others wished to have the support of LPs.

In small schools this increased the number of active participants (increasing the coaching culture) and allowed for a wider-ranging dialogue. It also meant that we, as coaches, were able to deepen our understanding of the different approaches to metacognition being adopted in each project school.

Challenges

The primary challenge for this project centred around levels of SLT engagement, which had significant impact on outcomes.

School priorities (often influenced by pressures around school inspection) had a major bearing on how much scope the LTs had to develop their coaching repertoire.

Some LTs experienced 'resistance' from staff to new ideas and had to focus on changing mind-sets.

Conclusion

A 'culture of coaching' can indeed be encouraged through a real insistence that all activities, conducted in non-contact time serve multiple purposes and also by facilitating critical discourse between practitioners, without judgement or consequence.

Utilising the elements described in this paper we managed to exploit the effective commonalities between approaches in different schools, whilst ensuring that each LT benefitted from a highly contextualised coaching model. This was affirmed by the fact that, at the end of the project, several LTs were appointed as Specialist Leaders of Education. Their role will be to develop a metacognitive approach to learning for schools beyond the original project.

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Report on a coaching and mentoring project for middle leaders in The Tapscott Learning Trust.

A practice insight working paper by Mark Quinn

Although The Tapscott Learning Trust (TTLT) engaged me to deliver a programme to their middle leaders on coaching and mentoring, it could be argued that I did nothing of the sort. That is quite an admission to make for someone who works where I do. So this paper may be viewed as something of a defence, in which I try to contend that we did after all do something valuable for those middle leaders and we did learn something meaningful about conditions supportive for professional dialogue to take place.

The programme ran as two face-to-face sessions (September 2018 and January 2019), with a follow-up review meeting in June 2019. I worked with 25 teachers across the four primary schools of the Trust, who had varying degrees of experience but all with some responsibility for the quality of teaching of near colleagues. The brief was to prepare them to use coaching and or mentoring to help them to improve teaching and learning. It was not a coaching course *per se*: there was no explicit training in coaching, although I did share and suggest some coaching models. I planned the sessions around these organising questions:

> How do we know when a teacher needs to improve?
> How do we know what it is they need to improve?
> What do we know about sustaining improvement?
> Why do teachers teach the way they teach?
> What is our experience of being observed?
> Why is it so hard?
> The essential skills of coaching – practising them
> How do we achieve a commitment to improve?

The starting point was to recognise that there is a lot we don't know when it is our job to help others improve their practice. We don't always have the privileged access to know that someone needs help, or what they need help with, or what help we can give them, or what difference the help we do give them makes. We could get all of these things wrong. Horn and Little (2010) remind us that it is 'difficult for teachers to engage in interaction [with each other] with sufficient frequency, specificity, and depth to generate new insights into teaching dilemmas or to foster [teaching] innovation'. It is difficult

because of what we don't know, and we don't know because there are all sorts of barriers to knowing: the time we lack to spend finding out; the mutual trust which is hard to build, because appraisal exists; the professional pride our colleague has, which they need to protect; our own lack of insight, empathy or emotional intelligence, however we might prefer to imagine otherwise. There is a lot getting in the way.

We do know quite a lot about professional development that makes a positive difference to teachers and children. Stoll (2012) and colleagues from IOE claim from their research that 'effective professional development is strongly enhanced through collaborative learning and joint practice development.' Coaching, mentoring, structured professional dialogue and JPD are all forms of collaborative professional development and, they remind us, 'many teachers involved in focused collaborative professional development subsequently change or substantially develop aspects of their teaching which improves their pupils' learning.' They gain greater self-confidence; they become more committed to changing their own practice because they have renewed belief that they can make a difference to pupils' learning; they actually get more enthusiastic about receiving feedback.

I told the TTLT middle leaders all of this in September and they immersed themselves into this thing we called coaching. We talked about the power of listening and asking powerful questions. We explored a form of incremental coaching, which seemed to be the most propitious for their circumstances. They selected a colleague willing to subject themselves to being coached and, in January, we met again to talk about how they were getting on.
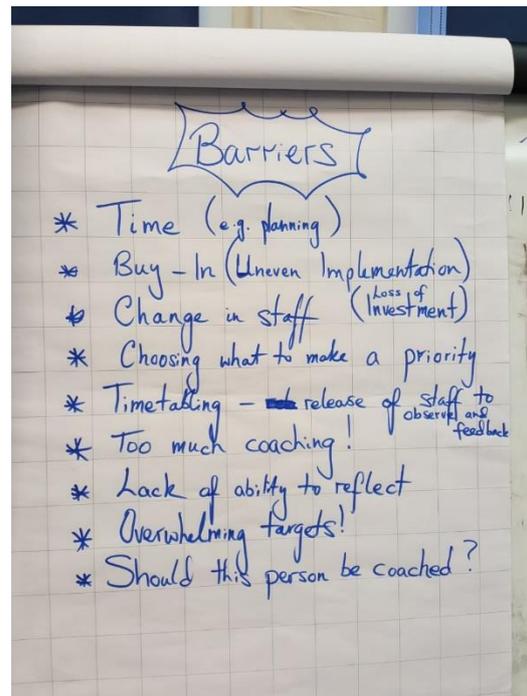
Many of the barriers they were experiencing were the same we had anticipated at the start. Time was tight so they were meeting their colleagues after school or over lunch or during PPA time. Some had begun with one colleague (for example a trainee teacher) but

had had to pick up another when they left. A few felt that their coachee lacked the ability to reflect, or were somehow 'wrong' for coaching. Several had identified targets for their colleague to work on but were struggling to decide what ought to come first. What became clear was that, in all but a small number of cases, what was happening was not coaching – at least not by any textbook definition. This may have been because we had not imposed a single coaching model from the outset, but more likely it was due to the realities of a normal day in an east London primary school. Every middle leader wanted to persist with the programme, not because they thought it was working perfectly, but because they could see the potential still for it to be the key factor in improving their colleague's practice. We still called it coaching but in fact a range of professional dialogue was occurring. Many were engaged in recognisable mentoring, watching teaching, talking about it, offering feedback in the form of advice. For some, the discussions that were taking place were closer to straightforward line management, with the important difference that none of it was being recorded for appraisal purposes. We agreed that we were not concerned for the purity of coaching as an approach, but focused rather on creating the conditions for professional

dialogue to place, so that teaching could improve, so that learning could also.

The 25 middle leaders came together again in June to look back on their experience and to take forward their own learning. I listened in on their conversations to get an idea of what their triumphs had been and of what was still troubling them.

Teacher 1

[Have you noticed a change in her behaviour?] Absolutely! Now I don't have my trainee, my TA is feeling more connected.

[Have you achieved what your vision was for coaching her?] I wanted her to use her own initiative, and she does. She comes to me for feedback, and shows independence.

Teacher 2

When I coached a peer, it was fine. But when I took on a newer colleague, he found it hard to talk to me about himself. He would always talk about negative things. He finds it hard to work with me because he perceives me as senior. So I have tried to script it for him – tell me three things that went well, one thing that didn't, one thing you want to work on. It was the only way I could get him to talk. I see myself as approachable, non-judgemental.

I was hard for me to go from someone open to coaching, to someone who could not speak. I hope I am not working with him next year; he needs another person. My skills are wasted.

Teacher 3
I was working with a really strong, reflective teacher. I have wondered, what value I have added to her – she already identified things before I got there.

Teacher 4

I would sit in their classrooms helping with pupils, then afterwards chat and question about general issues, such as seating plans and challenge. They would suggest issues themselves, and choose the area where they wanted support. We started with little things.

It seemed to be working but, when we looked at assessments, their pupils were not making enough progress. An Assistant Head advised me to drop into their lessons without telling them – and I noticed that they didn't teach in the same way when they knew I would be there.

Teacher 5

You need to take the time to know the person you are coaching. Before, I coached someone I

didn't know and I thought it was going fine, but we got to a point and realised, if I'd known her better, I would have taken the coaching differently.

In my team next year, I have one member of staff whom I know will be hard to manage – I have asked SLT for information to help me.

So… everyone else has worked with her and failed – so I am going to take the time to work out what works best for her. I'm going to nail it!

Analysing all of these conversations, and taking feedback from the whole group about what went well and what could have been even better, I arrived at what appear to be 8 key conditions for effective professional dialogue to take place across the Trust:

1. Have frameworks which support long-term goal-setting
2. Have and take the time to know the person you are coaching
3. Create opportunities for coaches across the trust to support and learn from each other
4. Match the coach carefully with the right person: close, but not too close
5. Value the effort that coaches make, and dedicate time for it to take place

6. Allow a variety of coaching approaches and don't demand extra work from it

7. See, and be uplifted by, the impact it has on pupils

8. Keep reflecting on you own practice.

The Trust are going to continue with this work next year, mindful of the lessons they learned this year. They have learned a lot already.

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Peer Learning Facilitates Inclusion of International Students in Higher Education.

A research working paper by Trang Nguyen and Anne Temple Clothier

Abstract

Support is needed to assist international students to assimilate into their institution of choice, and the broader community. The traditional structures and pedagogies of higher education, specifically teacher-centred approaches to classroom management, fail to maximise on the peer resources within the student group itself. This paper proposes that peer learning is an effective tool to develop communities of learners, by moving the locus of power from the teacher. By facilitating peer learning opportunities, it is possible to create more meaningful engagement and enable international students to develop agency in their learning.

Introduction

Over the past decade, the global nature of higher education has resulted in students having a greater choice as to where they elect to be educated, however international students choosing to study in the UK still face many unexpected challenges. This paper explores the value associated with using peer learning as a tool to reduce some of these difficulties.

International students usually encounter a wide range of problematic situations when adjusting to a new learning environment, these include (but are not restricted to) language barriers, culture shock, loneliness, financial stress, and discrimination. Much research emphasises that it is crucial for the host institutions to promote activities that foster the interaction between international and home students, to enhance the integration and transition of international students. In addition, a wealth of research also suggests that individuals learn best in an environment that encourages social interactions. We suggest that peer learning is becoming an increasingly popular effective and student-centred approach to address both the adjustment issues of international students and enhance their learning experiences.

Whilst we suggest that peer learning occurs when people share ideas, resolve problems, or make decisions within a group, we also

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note that it can occur in either formal or informal settings.

This paper identifies the diverse meanings, and different forms of, peer learning in an educational environment, it also explores the benefits of peer learning for international students. First, we present some of the diverse theoretical stances, and perspectives, on peer learning. Then we examine the different expectations from formal and informal peer learning in an educational context. The third section of our work presents a comparison of peer learning and the more traditional teacher-centred approach. Finally, we outline the benefits of peer learning for international students in higher education, and recommendations are given for practice.

The concept of peer learning

There are many interpretations as to what is meant by "peer learning", whilst Boud (1988) described peer learning as mutual learning which changes from an independent to an interdependent studying approach, Topping (2005, p.631) defines it as "the acquisition of knowledge and skill through active helping and supporting among status equals or matched companions." Boud, Cohen and Sampson (2001, p.1) considered peer learning as a strategy of "learning from each other"

which can happen in either a formal or informal way at all the times and levels of daily life. However, Capstick (2004, p.47) defined peer-assisted learning as:

> an open, informal, cooperative environment, in which students are able to set the agenda and raise their concerns, which is overseen by a trusted and approachable individual, and is of value in adjusting to university, understanding course material, enhancing the ability to do well in assessed work and building confidence.

Although there is no single model for peer learning the overarching characteristics of those presented are that it is based on the concept of collaborative learning, i.e. learners become actively engaged in developing their own knowledge by working with others to attempt to accomplish a task or solve a problem.

Whilst recent writers such as Astin (1993, p.398) maintain that peer groups are the most significant influence on a learners' experiences, their influence on development has been well documented by learning theorists (Dewey, 1916; Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1981) throughout the last century. Dillenbourg (1999) suggests that the current notion of collaborative learning is primarily derived from Vygotsky's (1981) sociocultural theory which emphasized that social

interaction plays a crucial role in cognitive development. In other words, effective learning occurs through social interactions and therefore the social contexts of learning are significant. In addition, Behroozizad, Namibia, and Amir (2014) emphasise that collaboration fosters positive learning outcomes because when learners work together, and combine their efforts, they are likely to be confronted with fewer challenges than when working individually.

Peer Learning in Formal and Informal Education

Peer learning in a formal educational context is generally described as a structured and intentional process in which students have opportunities to participate in peer group activities to discuss their ideas and gain their own knowledge. This type of work is often utilised (and assessed) in universities, with students being required to prepare group presentations, or complete pre-set group tasks. However, Blanc and DeBuhr (1993) emphasize that the key approach to successfully managing formal peer learning is to identify and utilise skilful and experienced students to guide less able students in a structured way. This could involve the pairing of year-one students with more experienced year-two students, but it could equally include

the pairing of international students with home-students, who could assist with their assimilation in to the institute and the broader community. Thus, if formal peer learning only occurs within a classroom, the access to more skilful and experienced students is limited to cohort content.

In contrast to the formal peer learning (within educational settings), informal peer learning is primarily considered to be the voluntary interactions that occur in the informal settings of the university and extend beyond the formal social structures of the course. These types of interactions tend to occur between students who find themselves in similar situations and use each other to try and work out solutions to challenges. This type of interaction often takes place outside of formal role allocations, and without the interventions of teachers or instructors. Examples of this type of activity include student trying to work out how to use the photocopier, how to access public transport, discovering places to eat, and working out how to read an 'originality report' online. In these instances, the student may be learning things without realising how they are doing so. However, these interactions reveal the students' agency in developing their independence from the formal provision of the award and the institution.

We would suggest that there are limitations to viewing peer learning as part of the traditional teacher-centred delivery model, and as something that occurs in the students' social domain. Whilst clearly there appears to be a benefit to removing hierarchical status from the relationships, especially in terms of promoting open, flexible communication, both formal and informal peer leaning needs careful consideration, if an institute wishes to maximise their impact on student assimilation and educational outcomes.

We have revealed that peer learning occurs in both formal and informal education, and sometimes the learning contexts overlap and are interchangeable. However, the following section focuses on a comparison of peer learning as opposed to the wide-spread teacher-centred approach to learning most commonly associated with higher education.

A Comparison with the Teacher-Centred Model

Given the diverse nature of international students in higher education, classroom layouts, pedagogical and instructional practices can prove challenging to both teachers and students. In a traditional teacher-centred classroom, the teacher is viewed as the primary source of knowledge and commands the most attention. However,

this leaves students with fewer opportunities to communicate between themselves and share their ideas with others. Using this teaching method alone, learners are significantly dependent on their teacher as they listen and passively gain new knowledge. In addition, this conventional educational approach may ignore or suppress students' responsibilities. We are not suggesting that this is the experience of students accessing higher education in the UK, indeed we expect all practitioners to be constantly searching for innovation in their teaching and learning. However, we would maintain that, in general terms, this remains one of the expectations associated with university lectures.

Freire (1996) compared this teaching method to a "banking system" in which learners are considered "empty vessels" to be filled by absorbing the material presented rather than constructing knowledge through their own abilities and experiences. The power relationship is such that the locus of power is the teacher, and the learners are subordinate. However, an alternative power relationship is advocated by Freire, whereby a more democratic approach is adopted within the learning community. Using a student-centred model will provide the opportunity for learners to develop agency in their education, as they direct their own learning with the

teacher adopting the role of facilitator rather than being the primary source of knowledge or control.

DuFour (2004) suggests that the core mission of education is to not only to ensure that students are taught, but also to ensure that they develop the students' capacity to learn independently. As such, the paradigm shift from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred model could have profound implications for many university students, and we would suggest it is becoming increasingly necessary.

Whilst higher education institutions in the UK battle with the financial pressures of austerity, they must still ensure that exiting students leave with the vast range of skills and abilities required to satisfy the recruiters in an international labour market. Researchers such as Levine, Glass, and Meister (1987) suggest that peer learning provides a cost-effective, flexible, and successful learning strategy. They advocate that strategically utilising it offers considerably more learning opportunities for students, and both Rogerson (1994), and Boud, Cohen and Sampson (2001) emphasise that collective forms of peer learning are more suited to meeting the needs of different students than the more conventional individualistic teaching approaches.

The Benefits and Limitations of Peer Learning for International Students

The benefits of peer learning for international students have been widely recognised in terms of giving and receiving feedback and promoting lifelong learning skills (such as working collaboratively with others, critical thinking and sharing information). Burdett and Crossman (2012) indicated that peer learning not only develops a cooperative learning environment, but that it also promotes social interactions between international and domestic students. This is hugely beneficial for the international student as their linguistic competence and communication skills are developed, which in turn assists with assimilation into the university requirements and the social systems of the course. Developing an effective working community allows social networks to develop, and if successful these will transcend the formal collectives of the cohort and extend into the broader community.

It is crucial that educational institutions embed pedagogical practices that have an orientation towards developing the freedom, independence, and responsibilities of learners. In the context of modern

international higher education, peer learning is an effective collaborative approach in which communication between different students facilitates the transmission of information and ideas, and the development of empathy and acceptance.

Whilst many institutions are mindful of international students' needs to develop connections, a variety of opportunities are provided, these include international student support offices, societies, clubs and special interest groups. We acknowledge that these facilities do go some way to supporting international students, however, if these opportunities take place *outside* of the classroom there may be a danger that what takes place *within* the classroom has less of a role to play in terms of assimilation and support. By this, we mean that until the specific needs of international students are met – to the same extent as the home student – within the classroom, we will not experience full inclusion. Therefore, we advocate that

institutions consider peer learning as an effective pedagogy that can be utilized in both formal and informal university learning opportunities. This involves the strategic establishment of social systems where international students can elect to participate, but it is equally important that specific attention be given to the classroom experience so that traditional power relationships can be evaluated, questioned and adapted to empower international students to develop agency in their development. Attention needs to be given to ensure that peer learning can be linked to the general goals and learning outcomes of the institution, and consistency is needed between the peer learning strategies and the assessment tasks. It is only by acknowledging the power relationships between international students, home students and the institutions themselves can we begin to create more equity in the student experience.

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Judgement Calls in Teaching.

A think piece working paper by Mark Dawes

Two anecdotes to begin with:

1. When I watch a football match, whether it is a premiership match, a league two game or my son playing for his local team you can guarantee at some point half of the supporters will be yelling "shoot" while the other half shout "pass the ball". The footballer in the thick of the action has to make a judgement call about the best thing to do in a split second.

2. One Christmas my grandmother sent my father two ties as a present. On Boxing Day we arrived at my grandparents' house, my father dutifully wearing one of his new ties. My grandmother opened the door and the first thing she said was "didn't you like the other tie?".

Teaching is a series of decision. The US researcher and teacher Deborah Loewenberg Ball found that in an 88-second section of one of her lessons she had to decide how to respond on 20 occasions (Ball, 2018). That is a decision every four and a half seconds.

- Deciding which pupil to call on to give an explanation? A judgement call.
- Selecting the numbers to use in a particular problem? A judgement call.
- Deciding whether to move on to a new concept or to spend more time on the current task? Judgement call.
- Deciding how much homework to set? Judgement call.
- Deciding how to respond to a pupil who has forgotten their book? To a comment from a pupil? To an irrelevant question? To the tone of voice being used? Judgement calls, all.

When I am teaching, what happens when I can see a pupil has written an incorrect answer? Do I talk to them about it one-to-one? Do I check the work of those pupils sitting nearby and see whether they also have the same error? If not do I ask one of the other pupils to do it? Should I listen in while they do so, or should I leave them to it? Might this be a small mistake, or is it a bigger misconception that needs to be dealt with? Should I talk to the group of pupils about it, or see whether it is an issue for the whole class?

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If I do stop the class should I use the pupil's work as an example (perhaps under the visualiser), or ask the whole class a related question? If I use an example, do I pick a standard example, or one with a particular feature? Does the size of the numbers matter? Calculator or non-calculator? Do I get the pupils to write in their books or on mini-whiteboards?

With these sorts of questions there might be a clear right answer. But in many cases there are judgement calls to be made.

When observing a maths lesson it can be easy to assume the decisions the teacher makes are either right or wrong (or perhaps very good/poor). I want to suggest that, as per the two anecdotes, there is more going on.

Often we need to decide which example to use. If we use one type of example an observer might wonder why we didn't choose a particular alternative. That is a "Dad's tie" scenario.

In the midst of a lesson an unexpected issue might crop up. Do we stop and deal with it? Or do we continue with our plan and return to the issues in a future lesson? That is a judgement call related to the "shoot or pass"

scenario. And these judgement calls: some of them might be 50/50 decisions while others might have a more objectively better or worse way of doing something. The crucial thing is that we make a decision and make it quickly. Returning to our footballing metaphor, neither passing nor shooting probably means being tackled and losing the ball.

Post-lesson discussion

In both of these scenarios it seems reasonable for an observing teacher to ask why a particular decision was made and to offer alternatives. Questions like: "Why did you phrase the question like that?", "Why did you choose that pupil to answer the question?", "Why did you pause (or not) after asking that question?", "Why did you want the pupils to write in their books rather than on a whiteboard?", etc, seem to me to be extremely reasonable and helpful questions, which might cause a teacher to reflect on and revisit what they did. I would encourage observers to ask questions such as these, but not necessarily to suggest that the original decision taken by the teacher was wrong.

Equally, I would encourage the teacher not to be defensive. Please do not assume that because your way can be justified that other

decisions should not be considered. Even if alternatives would not have been better in that particular situation they might be more appropriate in a different lesson and thinking about and discussing alternatives with a colleague can only be helpful.

This seems to me to be an important part of the professional dialogue that can follow all sorts of lesson observations, whether a performance management observation carried out by a line-manager, a trainee observing an experienced teacher, a mentor observing a trainee or two colleagues carrying out peer-observation. It also shows the difficulty (futility?) of trying to give a lesson a grade.

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Making most of the spectrum of mentoring and coaching in education.

This is an edited transcript of the dialogue keynote speech given at the first CollectivED Knowledge Exchange on the 4th July 2019

A think piece working paper by Rachel Lofthouse and Christian van Nieuwerburgh

RL Christian and I are going to share some thoughts about making the most of coaching and mentoring and recognising it as a spectrum. It is unrehearsed, but we do have some questions that we will discuss.

CJN When we were planning this keynote, we thought how interesting it might be to have a dialogue. I'd love to hear your thoughts on this question **Why do you describe coaching and mentoring as being on a spectrum?**

RL Most of us would probably think about coaching and mentoring as on a spectrum and there's obviously a relationship between them. One of the interesting things is that we tend to wrap the two terms together but we may well mean different things. For some of us, the use of the word 'and' in the term 'coaching and mentoring' suggests that these are very similar processes and relatively interchangeable in their form and characteristics. For others, the use of the word 'and' differentiates between the two. Some of us use both terms in both ways and at different times and in different contexts, and maybe haven't even thought about it that hard.

Some of you here today will be particularly experienced in mentoring, particularly novice teachers, trainee teachers. At some point in the past, we will all have been mentored and it has allowed us access to a profession and it has kept us in the game. Many of us see ourselves as mentors, whether that is by designation, by role, by responsibility or by stance, or tendency, working alongside other people and thinking about how we can support them, help them and enable them to do the very best work they can.

In our English education context, we tend to use mentors as 'gatekeepers'. Mentors are part of the process of training, and the process of judgement. They help us understand which of our new teachers are capable of joining the profession by meeting a set of standards. The mentor plays quite a key role in that.

But, mentoring is a diverse practice, as is coaching and we get ourselves into all sorts of interesting arguments and discussions about what we actually mean when we say coaching. Many of us will have had an opportunity to train, or to read or experience a particular model of coaching and this means we are very inclusive in our use of the word coaching, but sometimes we may lose definition.

We could spend a lot of time unpacking the spectrum but for me it is an important starting point to recognise that a spectrum suggests all sorts of variability, all sorts of connections and relationships, but also an opportunity to be distinguishing and distinct about what we are doing. A spectrum is made up of individual colours, and that's not to say that we nail our colour to the mast and say that is *my* definitive model but at a particular point in time we know the colour of our work when we do it well. So that is partly what I mean when I talk about a spectrum.

RL *Coaching is a buzz word in education, but it seems to mean different things to different people. How do you view it?*

CJN Is coaching a buzz word? Yes, I think it is. I've been fascinated by coaching in education for a little while and I've noticed the word is in use more. I have this view that something really amazing is happening – people are talking about it, it's part of the conversation, it is being used more and more, so on the one hand I'm very excited that we're all using the same language. The downside to it being a buzz word is that it might begin to sound like a fad. Maybe the word itself is going to be a fad, but the idea of educators having quality conversations with each other about

encouraging others, their well-being, that is here to stay. The other downside is I have spoken to schools where people are saying they want some of that 'coaching thing' and my worry is that we just waltz into it without a clear understanding of what it actually is.

What is it that you would like to be different? If coaching is the answer, what is the question? It's so important to know why you are doing coaching: maybe the question is 'How can we engage and empower our people?' Or it might be 'How do we improve the well-being of our people?' Or the question might be 'How do I connect better with the community?' I don't like the checklist mentality that says we should do coaching because everyone else is. The worst thing for me to hear is 'Oh, we did coaching. It didn't work'. Also, there's a risk that we get too evangelical about it, that we think coaching is the answer to everything. It is our collective responsibility to make sure we are using coaching in a way that is most impactful.

A group of us worked together to bring some sense to the coaching spectrum – we call it 'helping conversations'. We wanted to bring together a common language about the different approaches to coaching:

Three Conversational Approaches to Helping in Education (van Nieuwerburgh, Knight & Campbell, 2019)

	Facilitative	Dialogical	Directive
Metaphor	Facilitator	Partner	Expert-apprentice
Teacher knowledge	Knows what they need to improve	Has valuable knowledge but may need other knowledge to improve	Must implement new knowledge to improve
Decision-maker	Teacher	Teacher	Expert
Approach	Sets aside expertise	Shares expertise dialogically	Shares knowledge directly
Mode of discourse	Inquiry	Balances advocacy with inquiry	Advocacy

There are facilitative approaches to coaching, where the metaphor is the coach as the facilitator. The coach believes the teacher already knows what s/he needs to do to improve. That then allows the coach to set aside their expertise intentionally in the service of the person with whom they are working. The model is one of inquiry, working on it together.

The dialogic approach to coaching is not often discussed in the UK, yet it is a tried and tested method. What is important here is Jim Knight's 'partnership principles' between the coach and the coachee, whereby the coach *does* share their expertise as a suggested way of working for the coachee. Both are contributing knowledge, both are asking questions to elicit the best approach.

Directive coaching, whilst still a positive intervention, does involve knowledge exchange and is much more like the mentoring process. The grid of course does not include all coaching approaches, or the complete spectrum, it just focuses on the ones we are most interested in.

So, Rachel, *Is mentoring more important than coaching for new teachers?*

RL When do we support our new teachers with behaviour management, planning? How do we help our new teachers 'become', rather than just expect them to 'be'? We are really struggling to recruit and retain new teachers. There are many reasons for that, and we cannot lay the blame solely at the school door, or the DfE's. This generation of new teachers is younger, desperate to pay off their student debt, often still living at home, and it feels almost as though they have not yet had to become adults. That is not to say they should not be there, but when I was a new

teacher, I had been living two hundred miles away from home for the last four years, I was doing my own washing, my own cooking, cleaning, I timetabled everything and actually, I felt like an adult and made adult decisions. That doesn't mean I always made the right ones, but walking into school as an adult felt perfectly natural.

I think we have different generational expectations coming through, so we have to be very careful about what we offer. Mentoring is very important because it says to the mentee, I have your back, I'm on your side. I can offer you expertise, guidance. But, it can also be dangerous, especially if the mentor feels as though they have to be perfect, and so desperate to help that they have to make all the decisions. That doesn't help anybody grow and flourish.

So, I would say mentoring is critical and essential, but I don't think it is easy. I would also say that coaching is critical. One of our jobs as mentors in that early career stage is to help new teachers start to find themselves, to imagine the future so that they become committed to the education sector, so that they can play a major part in it. It is really critical that we have those conversations which allow them to develop not just in the here and now, but help them think about their future through formative and imaginative conversations.

So, Christian *Are we just saying that teachers need to talk more or does the nature of the conversation matter?*

CJN The real question here is about the quality of the conversation. What we bring from the fields of coaching and mentoring is that we help people to have better conversations. Those conversations help us to

be of better service to others, especially if you're a newly qualified teacher, you're just into the profession, hopefully you are there because you too want to be of service, you want to make a difference. For me, coaching and mentoring is about improving the quality of conversations in schools. If a school were to ask me what would be different if we did coaching; that would be my answer: the *quality* of the conversations.

From the research point of view, it looks like coaching is having a positive impact on well-being, helping people to achieve their goals better, making people more aspirational, and my niggling doubt is this: is it the coaching that is doing this or is it that there is simply more talking? Could it be that someone is taking an interest in them? That people feel valued, heard, appreciated?

So, Rachel ***What do we know about how to sustain coaching and mentoring is in educational settings?***

RL The first thing to say is it can be a challenge. The main challenge is lack of time and it is the first thing that goes in the life of a busy school. We also have a challenge around workload and the demands on a teacher's time. Until this is fully acknowledged, we

won't make any great strides culturally – how do we view the nature of the work that we do as educators, the time that we spend doing all those different things and the way that we work together as a community in the time that we have? *That* is our greatest challenge. The real way we can sustain this is from the ground upwards – we are used to new ideas coming at us left, right and centre, but the majority of them do not fulfil their potential. We all play a part in creating that landscape; all of our interactions that we have, whether with a new teacher, a school leader, a governor, a parent, can help create an understanding of what we can shift in teaching and learning, and the quality of relationships with each other. This is based on trust, and an acceptance to approach things differently when stuck for new ideas. It is the quality of relationships that will sustain coaching and mentoring.

Thanks to Ruth Whiteside for preparing this transcript and thanks to the participants at the conference for their attention to our dialogue after the extended fire alarm episode!

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A Reflection on BELMAS Conference 2019.

By Mayamin Altae

BELMAS, *The British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society* conference 2019 was the best opportunity for me. Being an early career researcher to meet scholars and colleagues from all over the world was a great experience.

The three day conference from Friday morning 12th July to Sunday afternoon 14th July, had incredible energy and terrific buzz. It was packed with programmes covering a broad range of extremely exciting sessions from keynotes to entertainment. All the sessions were extremely well attended, involving high-profile international speakers along with a range of national experts' speakers.

The registration process at the beginning was well organised and I got to know delegates over tea and coffee, which made me feel not isolated but with friends. After lunch, delegates had the chance to meet the editors of MIE and EMAL Professor Tony Bush, Dr Jacqueline Baxter and Dr Stephen Rayner. They went through the process of writing and submitting papers, which was very useful. There were lots of questions from colleagues who were anxious to start writing and submitting to BELMAS's prestigious journals.

The first day was fantastic, starting with a presentation of a summary report on Review of UK Education Project, which Professor Philip Woods led with his colleagues from England, Wales, Scotland and North Ireland. Everyone was beyond impressed with their presentations, the content could not have been more spot on with the project's aim "to develop a shared understanding of the current state of educational leadership and administration in the United Kingdom. Delegates wanted to hear and learn about the similarities and differences among policy and leadership approaches in use in each of the four jurisdictions and their trajectories, which the 5 presenters clarified fantastically.

The day ended with a terrific cool atmosphere in the international karaoke. My colleagues and I had lots of laughs. Singing along with delegates from all over the world, from USA to Iraq, was great fun. The best part was getting a BELMAS karaoke badge put on your lanyard.

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Saturday morning, I had the honour to chair two presentations, the first one was on Collaboration - the ubiquitous panacea for challenges in education by Mr. Paul Campbell who is an Ed.D student at the University of Glasgow and a teacher leader at ESF Sha Tin Junior School, Hong Kong. Paul explored the complexity of collaboration conceptually and the implications this has on education in Scotland and beyond. Paul's great interaction, engagement and connection with the audience were full of energy.

The second presentation was on Examining Collaborative Leadership Development across a U.S. High School by Professor Philip Woods who is former Chair and current Council Member of the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society (BELMAS), Professor of Educational Policy, Democracy and Leadership at the University of Hertfordshire where he is also the Director of the Centre for Educational Leadership, and the author of over 120 publications. Professor Woods was joined by Dr. Jill Bradley-Levine who is an assistant professor of educational studies at Ball State University. They both explained how to explore student and teacher perceptions on how a leadership workshop affected school leadership structures and practices across the school. Both presenters

where excellent speakers and the study was fascinating to listen to, I could see this through the audience eyes when listening to Philip and Jill, and through the questions that the audience asked at the end of the presentation. The presentations were wonderful! I couldn't wait to share my insights with my colleagues at the University of Leicester.

Sunday, the last day of the conference, was when we had our symposium *East meets West.* My colleagues and I presented our papers that we have been working on with help from Dr Alison Taysum, who is a PhD supervisor and MSc Educational Leadership Programme Leader at the University of Leicester. The *East meets West* presentations were presented jointly by different colleagues. It started by Dr. Janet Orchard who is the Director of the School of Education's EdD programme in Hong Kong and her MA student Sally Wan. Then followed by Dr Alison Taysum and her PhD student Hong Qian form China who talked about "value, hope, and scepticism in teacher leadership". The third part was on "Using drawing methods in studying teacher leadership: A systematic review" presented by Sally Wan and Suzannie Leung Kit-ying, MA students from Hong Kong followed by a

presentation on "Teacher Leadership in South Korea and China" by Yoonjeong Lee a lecturer in MSc Educational Leadership Programme and Nan Wing a PhD student at the University of Leicester.

Finally, it was my presentation on Empowering Inclusive Iraqi Teacher Leadership; Languages of New Technologies Opportunities and Risks. I was so happy to be presenting my paper that I have been working on for over a year in front of experts in teacher leadership and I am thankful for their feedback. The paper is on Iraqi teacher leaders, Mosul teachers to be more precise, who are struggling to find their identity as professional educators and make their voices heard in a post-war context. The teacher leaders are finding barriers in modernising Iraqi curriculum with inclusive processes and practices regardless of race, ethnicity and faiths. I loved the way the audience interacted with my presentation and it was lovely to see their tweets. I am grateful to all of them as their tweets are read by people from all over the globe. People had the chance to see what we teachers had to go through when ISIS occupied Mosul in 2014 and the curriculum that we were forced to teach or face death penalty. When ISIS left the city in 2017, teachers like me have been racing against time to bring back the children to school and to make schools environment safer and suitable for the children to pursue their learning.

The conference was great and extremely useful. I would like to thank the organisers for all of their hard work in ensuring the conference was a big success.

When I say Coaching, I don't mean performance review.

A think piece working paper by Kerry Jordan-Daus

Being alert to the potential conflict and tension inherent in developing coaching in our current performativity contexts (Ball, 2003, Woods, 2007, Lofthouse and Hall, 2014) has never been far from my mind in the last year as I have undertaken leadership coaching. The look of fear as my coachee came to the first session, with the performance target set by their new Multi Academy Trust CEO, of introducing coaching and then slowly revealing they didn't really know much about coaching and they were very apprehensive about having a coach, perhaps sets a too familiar scene perhaps being acted out in too many of our schools.

As I write this piece, as I think about and reflect on my coaching, I acknowledge my worldview and how this impacts on my coaching practice.   I want thus to begin with something written by Ruth Whiteside which frames my starting point; "coaching should be based on relationships rooted in mutual respect, where the participants are equals, and there is a genuine willingness to share practice" (Whiteside, 2017, p5). So, how do I take the f word out of coaching, FEAR, or indeed the p word, PERFORMANCE?

Coaching and mentoring feature prominently on schools' organisational development plans. Indeed, research (Cordingley, P, Higgins, S, Greany, T, Buckler, N, Coles-Jordan, D, Crisp, B, Saunders, L, Coe, R, 2015) highlight that coaching and mentoring as effective professional development and, it would seem, there are few schools which are not adopting some form of coaching model. But I come to this reflection seeking to engage in professionalisation of coaching, not a dumbing down anything will do model. Coaching practice can sometimes appear an unregulated field. Indeed, one of my concerns was that the Women in Leadership coaching pledge site seemed to have no quality assurance criteria, any one could sign up and offer their coaching services? This is where my own coaching journey started. Actually, it began by completing my own *learning to coach* professional development and training programme. Any one coming into coaching needs to know, and ask, what is your qualification to coach? There are many Coaching Development Programmes, for me this is so important.

From my own professional background in initial teacher education and mentoring of novice teachers, I know how little investment there has been in high quality development of knowledge, skills and understanding of colleagues coming into this role. As part of my own PGCE Programme, we had to adopt creative models to ensure all our teacher mentors could participate in mentor training. Schools CPD budgets are forever stretched to the limits. So, perhaps it is not surprising that coaching is done on the cheap, or with a somewhat naive or arrogant belief that because I am a successful leader, I can coach with no training for coaches and no time for coachees.

The request to coach a newly appointed Head Teacher four years ago, saw me reflecting on my own competency to undertake this role. I saw this as a personal development opportunity. What did I know about coaching? What did I know about primary school leadership? In agreeing to take in this role, I concurrently undertook my own coaching professional development programme. This both involved developing my own coaching skills, reflecting on leadership and significantly also being coached. I experienced as a coachee the feelings of fear, uncertainty, self-doubt but also the release of a safe space to unburden, to be honest, to acknowledge my own leadership journey. Throughout this first coaching relationship I shared with my coachee my own reflections. The Head Teacher knew I was learning to coach too as she was learning to be a new Head Teacher.

I believe to be the most effective coach professional development is necessary. I also believe that the best coaching development programmes involve experiencing being coached.

The criticality of a coaching relationship is not disputed in the literature, but there are few empirical studies examining what makes a good match (Boyce, 2010). As I go into any new coaching relationship, I clarify my understanding of the model of coaching and thus aim to develop a mutual compact for our coaching relationship. For me, a professional distance from the coachee, not being part of their organisation, not being their manager, is very important. What we discuss is a confidential conversation that is never shared by me outside of the coaching context. But my creditability as a coach and as a leader, an empathy with the coachees lived experience is paramount.

At a recent Tunbridge Wells BrewEd event (2019), I presented on my construction and conceptualisation of Coaching. One head teacher acknowledged, honestly and bravely, that coaching had been 'bastardised' in their School. This echoes Whiteside's (2017) evaluation. In her role as a new Deputy Head, seeking to introduce coaching and being responsible for quality teaching and learning, created a conflict. It is this tension that we must be aware. Is this a conversation that senior leadership teams are having: namely what is the nature of their school-based coaching programme and to what extent has this been confused with performance management? So, let's commit to a coaching framework which sets out both what coaching is and what it is not, how it is separate from performance review and has as an underlying principle the creation of safe spaces to learn. This is my focus for 2019-20.

I say to my coachees, what do you want and need from this relationship. This is your space. Each week my yoga teacher thanks me for taking this time to commit to my yoga practice. Similarly, in committing to coaching, the coachee is coming autonomously and with self-interest. Coaching is a space to examine, explore, learn, develop. And no one is watching.

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Collaboration: A super power we can harness for the good of education.

A think piece working paper by Stefanie Wilkinson.

Creating positive cultures in the classroom and through leadership to maximise the potential of students and staff

Over recent years, it feels like there has been a gradual but positive move to a place where Teaching and Learning is acknowledged for its key and central role in FE andHE education, but more importantly to a place where it is debated inquisitively and collaboratively. This is not yet the norm, but there is a sense of movement in that direction, where colleges are starting to recognise the power of collaboration and reflective thinking.

The power of collaboration has always been something that I have been inquisitive about, recognising that the 'more heads together', the more ideas and debate and challenge happens, in the interest of coming to a better outcome than working alone. This natural intrigue may be because I like to talk my ideas though to consolidate them and I am interested in different perspectives to explore the best possible outcomes or ideas for any given situation. I feel a positive energy when I connect with others meaningfully and with

the interest of making a bigger difference and so I have sought to make those connections and opportunities to collaborate. Importantly, it has not been with the interest to better myself, or grasp at other peoples ideas in order to improve my own performance, they have been secondary consequences. My main intention has always been to be better together, develop expansive open and honest relationships with people who want to also support me.

Over the last year in particular, as I have consciously spoken about my interest in collaboration and shown interest in collaborating with others, the interest has come back to me 10 fold and I have met some wonderful creative people. They say like attracts like (they also say opposites attract) but I mean in terms of energy that we put out there. We tend to attract others that have a similar energy, interest or purpose to ourselves. I get frequent requests for conversations and online calls to debate and discuss Teaching and Learning, with a key focus on supporting each other. I always welcome every conversation with an open

mind and heart, because I recognise the occasions where it sometimes feels like a lonely place in Quality Improvement, when actually there are many of us across the country working on similar issues, all in our own colleges. All of this has got me fascinated with culture and collaboration, where I am eager to learn and think about how we create and foster positive cultures in the classroom and through leadership to maximise the potential of staff and therefore students.

In listening and talking to lots of other people in similar roles to mine, there are several common themes that have emerged and fuelled my intrigue into building better collaborative cultures in colleges. In these discussions there is usually the desire to move away from the negative cultures of blame and lack of support. Where staff feel blame or shame, they steer away from experimentation and risk taking. Their creativity is stifled as they focus on how to tick the boxes they feel they need to tick, how to make sure with certainty that they will achieve the things that have been set as the goals. Staff tend to stick to what they know in these situations, they feel a lack of ownership and also feel restricted. This may well be perception, but we have to acknowledge that perception if it is someone's reality, in order to nurture

personal development and growth. I am focusing a lot of my current efforts on building an expansive collaborative culture, by this I mean helping to coach and support people to a place where they become much more reflective, open to discussion about teaching practice, self critical and well as self recognising, willing to share all aspects of their practice and become researchers and explorers within their classroom. I am also encouraging the practice of collaboration and trying to promote the power of collaboration but I have realised that it needs to be informed, maybe scaffolded, to get the most out of it, until staff have experienced the power of engaging in meaningful collaboration.

I found myself wanting to know the intricacies on collaboration was something maybe I just had a hunch about, but I recently came across a book called Big Potential by Shawn Achor where collaboration and positive cultures are discussed in detail, showing the benefits of creating a culture where people feel valued, there is positive focus, teams pull together to support each other and a feeling of togetherness is actively cultivated.

Research

COLLABORATION – research shows that creating true collaborative teams yield better performance and satisfaction than creating teams who compete with each other (Achor, 2017). Therefore, the key messages need to be about supporting each other to be their best selves, sharing, collaborating meaningfully, altruism and effort. It is less productive to create competitive teams or reward for best performance. As managers, we need to create the spaces and then facilitate meaningful discussions. The narrative around collaboration has to come from the leaders first.

Ways this can be implemented with staff:

Observation processes that focus on coaching, strengths, ownership of professional development. The movement away from observation as a measure to a professional development opportunity, placing staff growth at the centre of the process rather than data collection and quality assurance. In an attempt to build collaborative cultures, the use of peer observation needs to be carefully thought out. The structures and scaffolds that are placed around this process need to focus on the impact of collaboration, not on quality assurance or checking up that someone has completed the process. The effort needs to be focused on meaningful expansive conversations, which will require conscious planning and mapping in order to nurture positive development and growth. There are coaching scaffolds and questions that will give real power to this process.

Collaborative initiatives and fostering cultures of 'togetherness'. Examples might include teaching triangles or teacher learning communities, where structured autonomy supports personal growth and development in a non threatening way. Peer observations might fall into this initiative, but otherwise are initiatives where we create space for discussion that are meaningful and reflective. Where staff are encouraged to be vulnerable and discuss their areas for development, creation of a safe place to discuss the things that we are not very good at without judgement, but a collective responsibility to help each get better at those things and offer our advice, resources and experiences to support others' development. Again structured autonomy will allow for staff to be supported to engage in this process in a meaningful way.

Ways this can be implemented with students:

Methods of reflection can be built into almost any part of the teaching and learning experience, whether it be in a plenary section of the lesson, tutorial preparation, mid module review, mid year review, induction sign off, progress review week, to name but a few. As long as there is conscious effort to include meaningful reflection at as many points within the course as possible, we will nurture the skills and reflective abilities of our students, but with a strengths based approach to build confidence and self-belief.

The future of FE (and lots of other things as well) relies on creativity and innovation to move forward in an ever changing world. To cope with all of the demands and challenges that FE faces, we need to change the narrative, which is slowly happening. The focus needs to be on the strengths of the sector, the difference it makes, the things we can do and we can make happen. Of these, the development of people and cultures we build in our colleges is well under our influence and requires conscious effort and energy to be put into establishing the positive cultures that yield high performance. The impact is happy, purpose driven, supported and collegiate college workforces, who model those behaviours to our students. These skills are the the skills that will help students to go out into the world and make a difference, by recognising the strengths of themselves and others, rather than having a scarcity and competitive mindset. These are the skills that will help students to focus on an expansive future....

Coaching supervision.

A practice insight working paper by Mark Dowley

Whether supervising an individual coach or a team of coaches, we can benefit from the words of leadership expert — Michael Fullan. He says, leaders need to (1) provide direction, (2) create the conditions for effective peer interaction and (3) intervene along the way when things are not working as well as they could.

1. Providing direction

Coaching supervisors provide direction by ensuring there is clarity around the purpose, process and outcomes of a coaching program. The purpose of coaching is to build capacity and self-directedness in the coachee. This often includes identifying a clear picture of reality, learning a new skill and using evidence to determine if the new skill has led to an improvement. The process of coaching includes demonstrating the better conversation habits and the appropriate use of coaching skills including powerful questions, pausing and paraphrasing. Christian Van Nieuwerburgh's and David Love's Advanced Coaching Practice is a great resource for highlighting the next steps for coaches to move from novice to advanced.

The outcomes of coaching are directly or indirectly focussed on students and need to be measured. As part of this measurement, the coaching supervisor needs to collect data as part of a feedback loop for decision making processes for the team. Each semester, our coaches review the survey and I ask if there are any questions we need to change, remove or add, then send it to those who have been coached.

2. Creating the conditions for effective peer interaction

To generate the right conditions for effective peer interaction it helps to create time for these key components of the coaching system:

Time for coaches — either through less teaching time or by prioritising coaching over lower yield activities, such as admin, meetings or assemblies. This shouldn't mean that coaches miss all lower yield activities but it is beneficial if coaches can occasionally take 30–45 minutes to prioritise their coaching.

Time for coaches to improve — an important consideration for the coaching supervisor is to

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ensure the coaches have time to reflect on their own practice. This could include a coaching meeting where coaches video themselves coaching and identify strengths and weaknesses or providing time in the timetable for coaches to meet with staff: this could be either in a designated meeting time or time away from class.

Time for coachees — for those who volunteer to be coached, one mechanism to safeguard coaching time is to keep them off substitution/cover classes during their coaching cycle. Alternatively, setting aside time on staff days or providing time after school in lieu of a regular meeting is helpful.

Time to develop whole school coaching literacy — providing time for all staff to develop coaching and communication skills. This can be done via small workshops throughout the year, formal training for groups of teachers, holding demonstration coaching conversations or through showing videos. Ideally, this training is provided by the coaching supervisor. It also helps if leaders demonstrate a school wide investment in coaching by participating in coaching themselves. All of us need time to develop the habits and way of being that will improve the quality of our conversations, and relationships, in our schools.

3. Intervene effectively when things are not working as well as they could

There are many ways a coaching supervisor might know things aren't going well. Sometimes it's through 2nd hand information, sometimes it's via the coach themselves, other times it's through formal surveys and feedback. Like any manager, the coaching supervisor is responsible for the quality of work in their team.

There are a variety of things that can impact the effectiveness of a coaching relationship. For example, a lack of credibility or trust can damage the relationship. The quality of the coaching can also vary with new coaches or coaching conversations can losing their fidelity by not setting a specific goal, resulting in the coaching meeting becoming more of a casual chat. While these casual chats are nice to have, they aren't building capacity and driving improvements for our students — to use a John Campbell quote, 'if there is no goal, it's just a really nice conversation'.

If a coaching relationship isn't working, it's important for the integrity of the program that it's dealt with appropriately. Using Susan Scott's fierce conversation framework is a great place to start. Describe the situation and the impact it's having, give the person a chance to respond, provide clarity around the

expectations and then offer support to help the coach reach the standard. My experience is that the issue is generally a skills problem and the coach needs more time practicing their coaching with feedback, watching video of expert coaches, and viewing their own coaching.

Finally, If coaching done well is the best way to improve human performance (Atul Gawande), coaching supervisors must be responsible for it being 'done well'.

Happy Coaching,

This working paper was first published on Mark's blog.

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Coaching for improved student learning and achievement: Perceptions of questions used in the coaching conversation.

A research working paper by Brendon Marshall

Abstract

Coaching conversations between teachers have the potential to provoke significant learning for the teacher, and consequently improved learning and achievement for students. The purpose of this paper is to share the findings and implications of my research case study examining the perceptions of both coach and coachee on the impact of questions asked in a coaching conversation.

In this study, four participants (two coach/coachee pairs) took part in coaching conversations. The coachee brought along student achievement data and the role of the coach was to ask the coachee questions to encourage them to inquire into the data, leading to actions to improve the learning and achievement of their students.

Using a case study approach, data was generated using semi-structured interviews and influenced by the principles of grounded theory. During these interviews, meaning was co-constructed between myself and the participants, acknowledging the diversity of approaches and perceptions amongst coaches and coachees about the coaching process.

Three important themes were identified: the impact of powerful questions in a coaching conversation; the place of suggestions in coaching; and the significance of moments of insight.

Together, these themes highlight the potential of questions in a coaching conversation to challenge a teacher's underlying values and assumptions about teaching and learning. While these findings cannot be claimed to be generalisable to other contexts, they do point to promising directions for future research.

Methodology

This study involved four teacher participants from one high school in Auckland, New Zealand. Two of the participants were provisionally-certified teachers (PCT's) and the other two their respective mentor teachers. This research focuses on a coaching conversation within the mentoring framework, so we shall refer to the mentor as the coach and the PCT as the coachee.

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The research design for this study was situated within an interpretive paradigm, drawing on the principles of grounded theory. Situating my research within an interpretive paradigm using grounded theory, provided congruence with my philosophy of coaching and my philosophy of educational research.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for this case study. I established a set of guidelines to make a judgment on which participants to select including such aspects as experience, commitment to inquiry and relationship factors. As an insider researcher in my own school, I also took a number of steps to limit the power relations between myself and the participants, for example by ensuring I had no direct leadership responsibilities for any of the participants.

The study began with a coaching conversation in which the coachee was asked to bring along student achievement data. The coach was to ask questions to encourage the coachee to inquire into responses to further improve the learning and achievement of those students. This conversation was audio recorded but I was not present for these conversations. Subsequently, I transcribed the conversations, but did not attempt to analyse them in any way. Instead I invited each of the participants to an individual interview with me. These semi-structured interviews involved unpacking components of the conversation together, with both myself and the participants, identifying starting points from the conversation worth exploring in more depth. In this way, meaning was co-constructed together between myself and the participant. I then undertook my own thematic analysis of the dialogue from these collaborative interviews, giving preference to participant themes expressed for greater duration or in greater depth or voiced with particular conviction or body language. What follows is my discussion of the themes that emerged from this analysis.

Findings and Discussion

The three intersecting themes that emerged from the findings are the factors that contribute to powerful questions, moments of insight and offering suggestions in coaching. When considered together, these themes show that a coaching conversation using student achievement data has the potential to trigger significant learning for the coachee. In particular they highlight that a coach can take care offering suggestions, ask solution-focussed questions that probe into underlying values and assumptions and help foster an

environment conducive to insights. I believe these factors will help maximise the impact of coaching conversations for improving student learning and achievement.

Powerful Questions

A powerful question will have a significant impact on a coachee's thoughts, feelings and actions and lead to deeper thinking and reflection for the coachee. Building on the contributions of Clutterbuck (2013) and Rogers (2012), factors found to influence the impact of a potentially powerful question in this study were brevity, personalisation, the use of open questions, solution-focussed probing and challenging assumptions:

1.   *Brevity* - Some long questions appeared to be confusing and distracting for the coachee. A coach would do well to be cognisant of the clarity of their questioning, leaving a question brief to maximise its impact.

2.   *Personalisation -* In both conversations, coaches often asked questions which included the word 'you', which may have helped make the questions more powerful, by being more personal. Further research is needed to explore this hypothesis in more depth.

3.   *Open questions -* In both conversations, participants described the value of asking open-ended questions which stimulated the coachee's own self-reflection on the issues.

4.   *Solution-focussed probing -* this study highlighted that provoking more expansive thinking and stimulating the generation of new ideas on the part of the coachee, may require a coach to deliberately and rigorously ask further questions from a solution-oriented lens.

5.   Challenging assumptions - there were a small number of questions that encouraged the coachee to reflect on their own values or assumptions about teaching and learning from these conversations. This type of new learning can occur through moments of insight.

Moments of Insight

We have all experienced those 'aha' moments when suddenly a great idea seems to pop into our heads out of the blue. Sometimes they occur while we are having a shower, going out for a run or, as in the course of my research, during a coaching conversation.

An insight can be defined as: " an experience during or subsequent to problem-solving attempts, in which problem-related content comes to mind with sudden ease and provides a feeling of pleasure, the belief that the solution is true, and confidence in this belief" (Topolinski & Reber, 2010, p. 403). Rock (2006) explains that moments of insight often show visibly in the voice, facial expression or body language of the person immediately after they obtain the insight. Both the coaching conversations in this study showed evidence of the occurrence of insights, producing both positive emotions, and a sense of certainty. I was curious to learn what happened in the coaching conversation prior to the insight moment. What questions may have been asked by the coach to trigger the insight?

In one conversation, the insight appeared to arise out of a sense of urgency. The coach noted she thought the significant moment had arisen out of the coach's persistence with the issue, continuing to revisit and re-emphasise and looking to work around obstacles. It would appear the persistent probing and questioning helped challenge the coachee's assumptions.

In the second conversation, the 'aha' moment appeared quite random and not in response to the prior question that was asked. This fits with the category of insights that appear when the mind is in a relaxed state and appears to come out of nowhere.

Research cited by the likes of Kounios and Beeman (2014) have shown neuroscientific links between positive affect and the likelihood of solving problems by insight. Furthermore, Fredrickson (2001) has shown that positive emotions broaden a person's momentary thought-action repertoires, widening the scope of thoughts and actions that come to mind. As insight creation is characterised by an opening up of thinking and the generation of new ideas, positive emotions promote a greater occurrence of moments of insight in a coaching conversation.

The findings from this study, taken together with previous research into insights, point to two factors that a coach could focus on to improve the likelihood the coachee will generate a eureka moment:

1. **Positive affect:** grounding the coaching relationship in a positive mood, building rapport and affirming the coachee.

2.   **Persistent questioning:** probing an issue or response, digging deeper, and broader, persisting with the issue and not moving on too quickly once the first question is answered.

Offering Suggestions

Much of the coaching literature cautions against the giving of advice or suggestions in coaching, instead promoting the use of open questions which stimulate the coachee to develop their own solutions for themselves. The conversations in this study included excerpts where the coach asked leading questions or what Megginson and Clutterbuck (2015) describe as quegesstions (suggestions disguised as questions) and where the coachee specifically noted the advice given was neither relevant to her needs or helpful to her issue. However, there were other instances when the coachee reported that such suggestions were relevant, helpful and worth following up.

These findings together point to the place for cautiously offering suggestions in coaching, such as when they are used to meet the coachee's agenda and to complement the asking of reflective questions in which the coachee is given the opportunity to explore solutions for themselves. Asking the coachee for permission to offer one or two carefully thought out suggestions, to which the coachee can choose how they respond, may however be more effective than disguising such suggestions as leading questions.

Conclusion

A person's assumptions about the world around them can be described as a box that defines their thinking and actions (Kounios & Beeman, 2015). Firstly, when a coach provides advice or suggestions to a coachee in a coaching conversation, this could be analogised to the coach working to push out the boundaries of a coachee's box. Secondly, when a coach asks powerful, open-ended, solution-focussed questions to challenge the coachee's thinking, the analogy here is that of the coach supporting the coachee to enlarge the box *for themselves.* Thirdly, moments of insight in which the coachee spontaneously breaks out of their existing beliefs and assumptions, might be like causing the coachee to 'jump right out of the box'. Providing focussed questioning and positive affect in the coaching relationship, helps insights occur more often. While these insights may occur during the conversation itself, they could also be an expected

consequence that occurs when the coach is absent, having being 'set in motion' by a coach who encourages an inquiring and reflective mindset in the coachee.

In summary, using achievement data as a starting point for a conversation on student learning and achievement, has the potential to lead to deep inquiry and behaviour change on the part of the coachee. However, sustained change will only come about when a coachee is able to explore and challenge the underlying feelings, values and assumptions behind their behaviour and where appropriate, create new core assumptions or mindsets. It if this 'out of the box' thinking that has the potential for truly transformative change in student learning and achievement.

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A Reflection on The Concluding Moments of the CollectivEd Conference.

by Lizana Oberholzer

Teacher Educators were introduced to Tom last week at a CollectivED Conference. Tom is a teacher in his mid-forties. He loves teaching - he's been doing it for years. He says that he just wants to stay in the classroom - that is where he belongs. That is what he loves. He is not interested in leadership or moving up the ladder - he just wants to work with his kids and teach them well. He is not keen on gimmicks or strange new ideas. He just wants to teach well.

Tom, like every other teacher, needs to attend twilights - for personal development. He is sceptical about what the next great big thing might be - he's seen it all come and go, making no impact, maybe a glimmer of an impact to start off with, but in many cases very little impact is made. Tom finds himself trapped between his passion for teaching, his wisdom as a teacher, and tensions between the new, the old, the ambitious, the exciting, but he does not want to be part of that. He just wants to teach. He wants to work with others like him to make a difference to the learning and lives of young people. He reflects on the previous insets he attended as he is trying to find himself a seat. He remembers insets where all staff had to use creative teaching approaches. He remembers a pupil, one of the challenging ones asking what is going on, and whether there was an inset. The pupil reminds him, with great amusement that - he can tell, as he had 3 lessons this morning in which he had to rap. Tom smiled to himself, as his mind drifts off to that inset – they won't see him rapping any time soon! Tom finds himself a seat at the back. He is amused by the scene that plays off in front of him. He listens to the frustrations caused by the IT Support person's lack of support as he stomps around with his ponytail slapping him on the back, shaking his head, stressing that people need to tell him about insets in advance to ensure that he can support them well... The cleaning staff are dismayed too as no one told them there was an inset, and they now need to work late too.

Tom knows that it is best not to get involved in the chaos and observes quietly form the back of the room. He finds himself drifting on

his experienced boat of teacher vulnerability, on the lake of education waiting for more pressure to be applied in the inset, once IT is sorted, and the overload of more requirements and must dos are shared!

But this twilight is different. This time someone pulls Tom's drifting boat to shore by allowing him to talk to colleagues like him. Sharing ideas, sharing practice - having teaching conversations. Tom's fire and spark for teaching slowly flickers to a full blaze. In this collaborative circle of ideas and passion for helping children - he feels like he belongs, can contribute and life has new meaning. These conversations remind him of why he turns up every day - what has meaning and how he can make a difference... He feels as if he can see the light again. Gone is the pressure - it is just great teaching that is left! Great collaborative practice, collaborative professionalism (Hargreaves and O'Connor, 2018). Life feels safe again in teaching – and Tom can focus on what really matters.

Tom's story is not an unfamiliar one. The CollectiveED conference allowed many Toms' to dock around tables to discuss great teaching. It allowed teachers to explore new ideas in a safe way, and exciting way - and each learning conversation made a difference, an impact, and it allowed for an opportunity to allow us to be reminded of why we love what we do (Maslow, 1943 as cited in Cameron and Green, 2012). It inspired and encouraged us to learn more. It allowed us to be brave, take risks and reflect on the value coaching and mentoring can bring to our, and our children's lives.

Coaching as a conversational tool, empowered the room, and each individual to creatively share, reflect and dare (Van Nieuwerburgh, 2017).

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Reflections on a new teaching and learning strategy at Derwentside College

A practice insight paper By Zac Aldridge

Background

In summer 2018, our college changed the way it observes teaching and learning. In fact, out went 'observations' altogether. In came Coaching, Learning Visits, Action Learning Sets, Peer Support and Reflective Practice.

Our long term aim is to support a team of outstanding practitioners to be risk takers in their learning environments. We want them to know that if they try something new, they won't be punished if it doesn't work. This will take time. Years of being subjected to one graded observation a year (as long as it was a 1 or a 2) or performance improvement plans (if it was a 3 or a 4) had eroded trust; we had to win that back and that's something that will take longer than one year to be fully realised.

The challenges

It was difficult to sell the value of an ungraded policy to our Board. If we didn't know how many percentage points our good or better grade profile had improved by, how would they know whether teaching was getting better? In the end we decided that we don't need to discover a new way of measuring the quality of teaching - we already have those measures, and have done for years: are we getting better at helping our learners progress while they're with us, achieve their qualifications, and, ultimately, get a great job, or a better job? Our governors are firmly on board. Our move towards discussing teaching and learning as a narrative instead of a percentage in Board meetings has proved far more valuable to our college.

What we got right

Action Learning Sets

Every single member of our teaching staff was part of an Action Learning Set last year. We didn't tell them what their Action Learning Set should be about. We didn't tell them when they had to meet. We didn't tell them how often they should meet. All we did was provide them with a coach, a framework to work to – including paperwork developed by our Teaching and Learning Manager – and tell them we would love to hear their feedback at a teaching and learning celebration day at the end of the year.

Action Learning Set discussions drove teachers towards a demonstrable way of doing something better. At the end of each Action Learning Set's work, the group members conducted peer observations on the other members. We know from research that

teachers get more out of observing others than being observed and this is definitely our experience; we want to do more of this in future.

Coaching

Every member of teaching staff was coached. We have 15 people doing their ILM Coaching qualifications now – and we'll have 15 more starting this year.

What we didn't get right

We're only one year in and we've got more to do and much more to learn. We need to come up with a better way of supporting our apprenticeship delivery staff by getting out to see them more often. We need to find a way of supporting staff to talk about teaching more, the craft of teaching. Having read recently Birmingham University's project report for the FETL, 'The role of leadership in prioritising and improving the quality of teaching and learning in further education,' it's clear that the leaders of successful teaching and learning organisations make time and space for teachers to have informal conversations with each other. We will be adding this to our development plan for next year.

We've done lots of Learning Visits. We themed them at times and we had paperwork that included space for identifying strengths, areas for improvement and 'shining lights'. The best thing about Learning Visits is the sheer number we've done – we've 'seen' more teaching this year than when we actually did observations. And between term 1, where we identified that we weren't seeing enough learner-led learning, and term 2, where it became a strength, we could see the benefits of our Learning Visit feedback in practice. But what we're acutely aware of is that something being identified as a strength doesn't necessarily remain as one for the long term. We haven't cracked learner-led learning; we've just flagged it as an issue, teachers have focused on correcting it and it was a strength straight afterwards. How we embed it as a strength long-term is something we need to work out.

Our new strategy had provision for teaching staff to undertake unseen observations, essentially observing themselves, also supported by coaches. We didn't manage to get any of these done last year and that's fine, it's too soon.

Is it working?

So, are we in a better place now than a year ago, when we were able to say that 92% of our observations were good or better? Yes. Undoubtedly. We have rafts of qualitative evidence of what our teachers did to improve. We have lots and lots of strengths and areas

for improvement from our Learning Visits. We have 15 coaches who have supported our teachers to improve. We have concrete actions that we will standardise as a result of our Action Leaning Sets. And, at the end of the year, we will have a day where we share our findings, talk about what we did well and what we could do better, and where we say thank you to our staff for coming with us at the start of our journey.

Would we have made better progress if we still graded our teachers? Would we have improved faster? Would we have understood any better how good our teaching is? Categorically no.

And this takes me back to the start and to trust. We trust that our staff want to do a great job and that they want us to give them the tools to get better. We think we've made a decent start and are excited about what's to come.

Growing coaching through partnership

A conversation with Rachel Bostwick and Rose Hegan-Black

In October 2019 Leeds Beckett University launched a partnership with Growth Coaching International (GCI) which will see CollectivED, a research and practice centre in Carnegie School of Education build further on the collaboration that has developed between Professor Rachel Lofthouse and GCI. Here Rachel Lofthouse talks to both Rose Blackman-Hegan (GCI) and Leeds Beckett colleague Rachel Bostwick about the new partnership.

Welcome to Leeds Beckett University Carnegie School of Education and CollectivED Rose. We are excited about our new partnership with GCI and thrilled that you are part of that team. Can you tell us something about your new role?

It is a very exciting time and I am really delighted to be joining the GCI team and of this new partnership with you and your team. I studied at Leeds Beckett some years ago and actually lived at the Headingley campus as a first year degree student so it is very strange to be back now. I have many happy memories and loved being there, I am looking forward to getting to know it again.

My role is a new one for GCI in England and is part of a focused move to offer more

opportunities for schools and those involved in the wider education sector to access high quality coaching provision. This builds on the great work a GCI colleague, Margaret Barr, has been doing in Scotland. There are three key elements to my work. The first is to have a strategic and leadership overview of GCI in the UK but also with a future eye to Europe. Secondly, drawing on my former teaching and school leadership experience, I will work closely with clients to build and develop courses and programmes. For example, a school may wish to develop a coaching culture and are looking for some guidance on how best to implement this. Or they may already have determined how coaching will support their school development and want a high quality coaching training programme. The third element is face to face delivery and of course coaching, both of which I love.

Rachel Bostwick you were instrumental in enabling this partnership. What is it about the values of Leeds Beckett and our school of Education that made this possible?

The key to a successful and effective collaboration is ensuring that both organisations' values are aligned. Developing partnerships can be a lengthy process due to a

range of processes that both organisations will undertake such as due diligence. Our partnership with GCI International was one of our easier partnerships to develop as we had worked with individuals from the organisation prior to the partnership being established. Both organisations have a belief that professional dialogue and quality conversations are key to supporting the wellbeing of both students and staff and are committed to supporting individuals and organisations in developing a culture of coaching and mentoring within their own and others' educational settings.

Rose, you have lots of experience working in education, can you tell us some of the highlights of your career so far, and how they have influenced your current work?

I have been very fortunate to have worked in some great schools. I came to teaching late following some years working in commercial settings. My first job was in a fantastic school in South Wales. One highlight from this time was when I was Head of Textiles and managed to secure sponsorship for a very flashy and professional fashion show. This captured the imagination of some of our, let's say, less engaged pupils and my lasting memory is of one boy proudly dominating the cat walk in a Welsh Rugby outfit holding the Welsh flag aloft. This experience taught me that everyone has a spark inside and if you can help them find a way to capture it and bring it to light you will see the very best of them. I see this similarly in coaching. It is simply being able to let people recognise their own spark and as a coach you help guide them in lighting it.

Another highlight is from my most recent role with an educational charity. In this role I worked on several training programmes for school leaders that incorporated coaching as a key element. Both through offering one to one coaching for participants as well as coaching training programmes. The latter was my first introduction to GCI. I was immediately engaged as GCI had a deep understanding of the specific needs of educators which is so evident in every element of their work. In particular the language of a Coaching Approach that focuses on enhancing the quality of conversations, informally as well as formally, in educational settings. And importantly for me, the message that by enhancing the quality of conversations so that it there is then a direct impact on teaching and learning which will of course impact on pupil outcomes. It is explicitly this that excites me about the work we will be able to do.

Rachel, how do you see this new partnership evolving over the next few years?

With all new partnerships it is important to invest in getting to know how your partners work and gain an understanding of their provision and offer whilst establishing processes and procedures to ensure an effective working relationship is developed. Longer term, I hope that the partnership will grow and collectively be recognised as a partnership that individuals and education settings wish to partner and engage with. CollectivED and GCI will continue to have and build on their own provision but in the current Educational climate, both organisations believe that we are 'stronger together' and I hope to be able to support joint research, initiatives and projects being delivered. Our Knowledge Exchange that was held in July last year was testament to the relationship we have already but I am looking forward to taking this further with our 2020 conference and future developments.

Advice for New or Old Heads

A think piece working paper by Andrew Mears

Twitter is to blame for this. Whilst trawling through time-wasting vexations I came across a request from a new Headteacher, asking experienced leaders to provide their top tip for the upcoming challenge.

Now I'm not a regular Twitter user or reader, but I was intrigued by the helpful epithets either thoughtfully or casually offered. As a school Head of many, many years I scrolled through to see how many contributors had proffered a version of my personal one-line useful epithet. I was surprised to find that amongst the more than 100 replies, I could not see one which chimed with my own. Indeed, I found a few which positively jarred.

Those which seemed most out of kilter with my view of School Leadership slipped easily into the clumsy category of "you won't find this easy or enjoy it, but you will have to do this". I was left wondering if there were really that many Heads who couldn't find things that might enthuse our innocent designate. I've mixed with many Heads who love the job and say so, but many more who actively discourage aspirants, accidentally or not, from applying to what is being painted as the most pressured, lonely job that could be imagined. Ouch.

Of course, unless a Head is blessed with extreme good fortune, Zen-like calm or blissful ignorance, there will be days when an alternative profession, any alternative profession, would be a persuasive attraction. Some days pan out like some malevolent game of bingo. They do. There are days when you just have to speculate that 'surely nothing else can go wrong', and we all know how that ends.

So how can a Head prepare for days, weeks, or even years which even a goat would find hard to swallow? Days where the responsibility to make a decision, to carry one out or to observe the out of control environment would challenge all but an adrenalin addict. Days that don't balance.

So, what's my advice? What can help a Head to feel that no matter what hits, there is a way to cope and maintain one's mental health?

It's this. If Headship always feels like a lonely job, then you are probably doing it wrong.

I remember trying to help a colleague who was struggling with the emotional toll that the job sometimes inflicts, and he was reflecting

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on his need to bolt stuff onto his life to help him relax through the stress that was his and his alone. I walked with him through corridors of the school and couldn't help noticing that whilst his presence was acknowledged by people passing, nothing was 'friendly'. The interactions were best described as business-like; professional. And short. Very short. A smile not given or received. When I mentioned this during our discussion later, he confirmed that he did not feel the need to be friendly, as these people were not his friends. Incidentally, I was reminded of the comedian R.D. Hunter who, when asked why people always smiled at him, replied that it was because he was smiling at them.

I'm not suggesting Cheshire Cat lessons for all, but a smile is an indication for students and staff that a school is a happy place to be, or that all is ok. It also chimes with a model that encourages others to see leadership as a happy job. Most importantly if reflects a particular value-base which enshrines that how people feel at work is important. Apparently it is still not commonly accepted how vital emotional engagement is for learning and resilience and this works at all levels in school.

These days there are leaders who separate themselves from others with a perceived dour aloofness. They profess to be immune from stress, partly because they feel they should carry out their duties in a cold and mechanistic fashion, not realising that their lack of symptoms of stress could mean that they are *carriers* of the condition in the school, or often nowadays, schools. These leaders often justify their emotional separation by regarding it as being essential to their ability to cope.

Those of us who favour school environments which manifest a symbiotic learning culture quietly shrivel when we come across leaders who get through by ensuring that staff are always reminded who is the top of the food chain. That's a lonely place, which discourages people popping in to check if the predator-in-chief needs to see a friendly face.

Working back from a need to avoid loneliness involves trying to envision just what it would feel like and look like to be leading a symbiotic school. It does not involve ducking the responsibility of unpopular decisions, but rather fostering an environment where displaying warmth is not a vice or a chink in the professional armour. The benefits are massive in sustainability, approachability, communication and the all-powerful emotional engagement. The development of a culture of inter-dependency by listening and asking for help and support should surely be modelled by the people who carry the most

responsibility for encouraging teachers and leaders to do those very things. Many school leaders do this outside of their school, but whilst this might be incredibly useful or even essential, there is something lost if these activities result in distance growing from the hive of their own school. Leaders should understand that people need a "best friend" at their workplace in order to thrive, but there is less information out there about how happy leaders can be if they choose not to apply this to themselves.

#NewVoices19

A conference review by Andrew Keegan

The New Voices conference was set up by Jane Manzone, Ruth Luzmore and Kathleen Gilbert, with the aim of bringing unheard voices in education onto the conference circuit.

Last year, I was fortunate to be one of the first people chosen to speak at the newly formed New Voices Conference at the CLPE, Waterloo. The experience was an amazing one, which set me on a path of further research, conference attendance, and genuinely being interested in education once more.

October 12th 2019 saw the second instalment of the #NewVoices conference, and these are the talks I attended.

1. How I was a 'disruptive' voice – Mary Hind-Portley (@Lit_Liverbird)

It is not often in schools that you get people who ask the question 'why?' Why are we doing this? For what purpose are we doing it? Who is it actually going to benefit? In her talk, Mary demonstrated the power of being the 'disruptive' voice within a school, empowering people to question, validly, why senior leadership teams (and others) ask so much of teaching staff, without considering why they

are actually doing it. The word 'disruptive' itself was discussed, looking at the negative impact such a word can have on a member of teaching staff who is looking out for themselves, and who is brave enough to raise the issues and push back against inappropriate and irrelevant workload, pedagogy and indeed behaviour from the powers above.

A really good start to the day, accompanied by Amanda Spielman, chief HMI doing PowerPoint slide duties!

2. How I approach Curriculum Design – a "Box Set" approach – Neil Almond (@Mr_AlmondEd)

I first met Neil at #BrewEdLeics, and was fascinated by his curriculum discussion both in person and online, so this for me was an obvious choice of talk to attend. Although on slide duty myself, the talk (as a summary of a longer, more detailed look into curriculum design) gave me much to think about in terms of my current practise of lesson and knowledge progression across all subjects. The idea of a "box set" approach is so simple, yet so perfect for educational progression that it just makes sense. And before anyone

pipes up with ideas of it being a "fad" or potentially flawed, Neil backs everything that he says up with well informed research. The trends towards dropping rates of attainment are concerning, and the "box set" approach sets out clear progression potential for EVERY SUBJECT in the curriculum – you just need to be careful with your planning. Start at the end, make it a good final episode, then lay the foundations of how to get there.

3. How to use pupil voice to improve wellbeing – Iro Konstantinou and Jonnie Noakes (@IroKonstantinou)

Iro Konstantinou and Jonnie Noakes are from Eton College, and delivered an interesting look into how they run regular research programmes with the boys in their care. The key point from this talk was all about involving the pupils in the research, affording them a voice in choosing (within reason) their curriculum direction, amongst other things. A large part of the talk then looked at how wellbeing through pupil voice is improving, because campaigns and techniques are being suggested by the students themselves, rather than being imposed by somebody else who is simply reeling off poorly informed research and "faddy" ideas.

4. How I avoided becoming research mis-informed – Tom Rattle (@mrrattle)

In the age of social media, it is very easy to have a quick read of something, take it onboard in your classroom, then assume that you're being "research informed". However, as Tom pointed out, blogs, Twitter and Facebook are not research! In his talk, Tom gave 5 clear points about how we should be looking further as teachers into the validity of data and research presented to us. Reflection was a key word in the talk, asking us as professionals to consider other opinions, to try to avoid confirmation bias, and look for evidence that potential points to an opposite of what we may have initially thought. If any numbers are given to you, interrogate them. Don't just look at higher numbers and think "that must be better, I'll do that," because the data may not be massively reliable. A very thought provoking talk, and one which I will definitely pay more attention to when reading online about "the next big thing."

5. What I do about kids who don't want to know – Mark Goodwin (@MarkGoodwin8)

Mark Goodwin kicked off my afternoon with a brilliantly simple talk, but one filled with actionable advice and personal evidence. He spoke frankly about the difficulties of working with permanently excluded children and

young people, and how the simplest of things can have the biggest of impacts; the cookie jar. Mark reminded us that we should always be looking for the small achievements made by the children in our classes, and keep a record of them in a jar, or a list, or something simple that reminds us that our children are achieving. He made the case for not giving up on any child, because everyone can be taught, and helped, and brought into the mainstream (if desired) through patience and faith. One of the key messages I took from Mark's talk was "think of the work from the eyes of your most difficult/disengaged child. How does it look to them?" How does the worksheet, or the textbook, look to the child that doesn't want to know? What can we do to make it more appealing, or accessible to them?

6. How I bounced back from a career failure – Kristian Shanks (@HistoryKss)

Kristian gave a very frank, open and honest talk about his career, how it had fallen apart at one point, and how he brought it back to a point of enjoying the job once more. I'm sure his story isn't an exception (I know it isn't, because I myself have left a job with nothing to go to through sheer exhaustion and lack of support), but the manner in which he delivered the talk was inspiring! He was honest about his shortcomings, about the

mistakes he made, and about how he potentially aimed too high too soon, and found himself way beyond his experience to deal with the job he was in. It was great for me to know that there are others out there like me that have experienced difficulty in their career, yet found a school that has allowed them to thrive and find their love for a subject once more.

7. Why mental health comes first: a personal journey from headship and back – Laura Masson (@lmeducational)

My final talk of the day was a difficult one to listen to, but my word it was brilliant. Laura gave a beautifully heartfelt and brave talk about how her mental health deteriorated through continued and excessive working as a headteacher to help to improve a school. After months of extremely long days and taking on task after task after task, and having been told by the LA that the school was good, Ofsted gave a satisfactory outcome. Laura's frankness about how this was so hurtful and damaging was difficult to listen to, but it needed to be said and taken on board. She shared the personal difficulties she faced, and how she has come to turn herself around through a range of health and wellbeing strategies. There were many tears, and I feel it was a fitting way to finish a day where

"reflection" has been at the forefront of all the talks I visited.

This year, like last, was a fascinating, thought provoking and inspirational year. Everyone who I got to hear spoke with passion and knowledge about their topics, and gave me plenty to take back to my own practise. It was also a great opportunity to catch up in person with many of the people that I have the privilege of calling my #EduTwitter friends.

This working paper was first published at https://musicularium.wordpress.com/2019/10/12/newvoices19-nmp-non-musical-post/

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"A place to explore issues without judgement"; the significance of specialist expertise in coaching headteachers

A research insight paper by Rachel Lofthouse and Ruth Whiteside

Introduction

This research based working paper offers a snapshot from an evaluation undertaken by CollectivED, of a year-long headteacher coaching programme. The coaching was provided by Integrity Coaching and funded in 2018-19 by the National Education Union (the NEU having taken this on from the NUT when it was formed by amalgamation). 39 headteachers requested to join the coaching programme. Coaching is undertaken by 10 professional coaches with two-hour sessions once per half term forming the main core of coaching activity. The coaching is confidential and bound by a contract. The evaluation drew on three questionnaires across the year responded to by the headteachers being coached (with 79.5% completing the first questionnaire), telephone interviews with headteachers (at the mid-point and at end of the programme) and two focus groups with headteachers at the end with 41% of the headteachers participating in either interviews or focus groups or both. The final data came from interviews with coaches and the programme leader (also a coach), with six of the ten coaches being interviewed.

Amongst the research findings were strong indicators of the value placed by the headteachers on the expertise, independence and quality of the coaching provision and this paper explores that aspect specifically. The wider key findings are summarised first.

Key findings

- ✓ The headteachers deal with specific challenges and complexities associated with the role which between them have a significant impact on their resilience, wellbeing and work/life balance. This coaching programme provided a means to support headteachers both personally and professionally.

- ✓ There was a positive impact of coaching on headteachers' self-belief and confidence, and it helped them to place greater priority on their physical health. Coaching also helped to address the feelings of isolation commonly felt by headteachers. These gains had a reciprocal benefit in managing the demands of the job and reducing the 'erosion of resilience'.

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✓ Coaching supported headteachers to develop and maintain effective management approaches, giving them time to prioritise the issues that need resolving, to develop their competence in decision-making and to work positively with and to empower colleagues. It also supported their strategic leadership, giving them a chance to develop a 'clear road map' and 'clarity in direction.

✓ The coaching conversations were productive. They provided space and time and allowed focused, supportive and supported reflection. This was dependent on the skill of the coach and also the acknowledgement of the importance of 'identity work' which explored personal values as well as professional challenges.

✓ Coaching of headteachers has the potential to help maintain sustainability in the school workforce. This can be seen as building medium to long term capacity in the profession at individual and collective levels. Some of this comes from the direct impact of coaching on the headteacher (as indicated above) as well as an impact on how they work with colleagues and the wider school community. There was evidence that this coaching programme had a positive impact on retention for headteachers at risk of leaving.

✓ This coaching programme was successful because of the quality and independence of the coaching provision. Coaches brought depth of experience and strong understanding of how to enable headteachers to engage in productive thinking which then enabled them to develop new approaches in their professional and personal lives. The coaches also supported them to explore their values and seek opportunities to align these with their leadership roles.

The unique and bespoke qualities of coaching

As outlined above this research evaluation was of a very specific programme of headteacher coaching. This matters for two reasons: firstly, to clarify that the evidence of the impacts of this coaching should not be assumed of other models, and secondly, to draw attention to the characteristics of this specific programme which the headteachers had stated had assured its quality. Their recognition of the quality and value of coaching was illustrated during one focus group discussion where the headteachers all confirmed with each other that they had prioritised the coaching, ensuring that they had not missed sessions. It was further reinforced by the statement made by one

headteacher which the others agreed with that "There should be a protected grant for new heads to be coached."

There are several key characteristics of this coaching programme that are worthy of elaboration because the evidence from the headteachers was that they had created the quality of the practice and the degree of impact. A genuine success of this coaching programme was that it created unique opportunities for headteachers to talk about their work and themselves as professionals as well as on a personal level. Some of this was made possible because of the time allocated to it (each coaching session lasted two hours), the one-to-one face-to-face interaction of the coaching conversation, and the maintenance of the relationship between half-termly coaching conversations through occasional phone calls. The location and venue of the coaching conversations was also relevant. While a couple of coaches met their headteachers at their school to be shown around, the coaching conversations all took place off-site in a place where the headteacher felt comfortable. These venues included coffee shops, hotel lounges, dedicated coaching spaces at the coaches' own setting, including garden studios, a converted windmill, and even walking both in countryside and urban areas. All the headteachers travelled some distance for their coaching sessions (they were never in the local area) as this contributed to the confidentiality of the conversations. This travelling time, either by train or car, was seen by the headteachers as part of their thinking time both prior to and following on from the coaching conversation itself.

The importance of coaches' independence

Headteachers particularly valued the fact that their coaches were not connected to their school in any way and had no vested interests. Four headteachers in the first interviews mentioned the importance to them of this independent space so that they could get to the bottom of difficult issues. They talked about the significance of this being that confidentiality and 'head space' was maintained. Coaching had been a supportive process that had allowed them to talk openly and honestly. They stated that this does not happen with anyone else, e.g. with union rep, governors, other head teachers in the area, because of the vested interests involved. The importance of the coach independence was reinforced in the final interviews.

The convergence of these ideas from headteachers in interviews was significant as they could only realistically be drawing on their own experiences. The focus group gave a chance for a wider group of headteachers to

share their evaluation of the coaching and these statements written at the start of the focus groups at the end of the programme confirmed these qualities:

> "Skill of the coach at identifying the issue"
>
> "Coach has no vested interest – important"
>
> "Blue-sky thinking without judgement"
>
> "A place to explore issues without judgement"
>
> "Safe space"
>
> "Confidential space to have honest and open conversations that lead to clarity in direction"

The importance of coaches' expertise

To better understand how these qualities were generated and sustained in the coaching it is important to know more about the coaches, their skills and backgrounds, and how Integrity Coaching maintained these standards. There were three key dimensions:

- the coaches had a depth of knowledge and experience that they brought to bear in coaching practice;
- they were skilled coaches and had a refined understanding of what coaching is;
- they recognised the importance of coaching being individualised.

The interviews with the coaches and the programme leader offered evidence for how these qualities were achieved. The coaches were not simply recruited from other fields and then trained as coaches for this programme, but instead have all been practicing as coaches for some time (between four and twenty years) and they all also practice as coaches beyond this specific funded programme. The coaches recruited to this programme did not all have the same professional background or coaching qualifications and many of them also had portfolio careers, with their other roles being quite diverse (see table 3).

Characteristic	Examples from the coaches
Professional background	• I taught in primary schools for 10 years in the 70s and 80s. I was acting headteacher in one school. Then I had roles in the local authority. • I've been in educational leadership and I work as a consultant. I have experience of working with headteachers especially around behaviour management. • I have been a teacher and a headteacher in secondary comprehensive. I have experience of being a school leader but that finished in 2001. I have been an education consultant since then. I have expertise in learning power research. • I have experience of senior local authority work around provision for children out of school and those with SEND. I was a tutor for the NUT.
Other current roles (in addition to headteacher coaching)	• Part of the CFBT team focused on behaviour support and excluded children and work on school improvement • I coach staff in local authorities. I also am a volunteer coach in a Cancer support centre and do some voluntary mentoring in not-for-profit organisations. • I also practice as a counsellor and therapist.
Coaching accreditation or other relevant qualifications	• Certificated through the Academy of Executive Coaching • Member of International Coaching Federation (ICF) • Trained as transactional analysis psychotherapist

Table 3. Professional background, qualifications and wider roles of the coaches.

The professional diversity and maturity illustrated in table 3 contributed to the collective depth of knowledge that the individual coaches brought to coaching and working as associates with Integrity Coaching. As one coach said "I enjoy coaching - especially school leaders. I do quite a lot around behaviour and this leads to exploring their own behaviour. I use applied psychology and transactional analysis. These are useful frameworks." Their breadth of skills ensured that the nature of coaching offered through this programme was not formulaic. When reflecting on working with the different headteachers, one coach noted that "their individual preference for this kind of work makes a difference to the nature of the coaching I practice, for example, with one it is very practical and with another it is deeply psychological, almost spiritual". It is also interesting to note that while many of the coaches had direct experience of school leadership, this tended to be over ten years ago. This perhaps allowed them to hold the coach stance (rather than a more advisory stance) but did not seem to diminish their credibility as coaches for current headteachers.

The importance of coaches' ongoing professional development

The coaches were aware of their own development of practice, and how their skills had developed over time. Some sought formal acknowledgement of this, for example through certification with the ICF which one coach said had kept her "on track and makes sure I am performing at a high level" and

noted that as a result she was "much more aware of coaching skills". In particular they have developed skills at asking deep questions - not to generate a battery of responses or quick solutions but to develop deeper, more critical thinking to support headteachers in their leadership role, as testified to by the headteachers. They were particularly aware of how their work as coaches differed from their work in other fields and where the boundaries lie with other forms of support. One coach said "It is a different skill set to being a consultant. As a consultant I am telling people. As a coach I ask powerful questions and I am getting the client to have the solutions. Sometimes I ask would you be interested in me putting my consulting hat on." This clarity of purpose was essential, as one coach said "A few headteachers understand what coaching is but more often they are not sure what they have volunteered for. In the first session we spend time understanding what coaching is on the spectrum. It is not counselling. I point out where it gets close to mentoring and sometimes people do ask for advice. And I help people work out what can inform their options." The programme rested on a model of coaching which started with 'contracting' and this helped to develop a shared understanding of what was to come, including when a coach might signpost to a

headteacher when and how their other needs may be addressed beyond the coaching.

As an organisation Integrity Coaching also ensured that the coaches in this programme had opportunities for professional development and personal reflection and one way that this was managed was through supervision. Their team of associates (coaches) met several three times during the year to discuss a mixture of business matters and also undertake group supervision which was provided by a supervisor external to the organisation.

"It is good practice for the coaches to have separate supervision. Professional qualification is important but does not guarantee credibility. It is about sharing our values. My coaches have to have a good understanding of life in the education sector and what life is like for school leaders. They have to show depth in coaching as a reflective process. They have to be able to conduct long conversations and ask key questions." Viv Grant, Director of Integrity Coaching

Conclusion

A range of supportive mechanisms may be made available to headteachers, such as school improvement partners, peer-

mentoring, networking meetings, supervision and coaching. When considering the specific practice of coaching in supporting school leaders it is essential to reflect on how it can meet its potential and have a positive impact on the lives of the headteachers. Our research illustrates the significance of careful recruitment of expert coaches to the role and the significance of their own professional experiences, and opportunities for development and support. It does not indicate that all coaches need to be using a singular approach or that they all needed to have been former headteachers. The headteachers were in agreement about the need for coaching to be an independent process through which they experienced no fear of judgement.

This is a summary of one focus area from a full research report which will be published on the CollectivED website.

Never mind the mindset? An investigation of teacher mindset in relation to perceptions of attainment.

A research working paper by Jess Mahdavi-Gladwell

This research paper is a summary of a project conducted through the Chartered Teacher programme.

Getting started

Everything was in place: I was about to start a new job; my new headteacher and I had agreed the focus of a research project I would be conducting as part of the CTeach course I was participating in through the Chartered College of Teaching. At the headteacher's suggestion, it would be an evaluation of a Growth Mindset intervention that I was planning to write involving series of books centred on a character called Squarehead. The focus on Growth Mindset (Dweck, 2007) was the headteacher's suggestion as she was planning to implement Growth Mindset work across the school. The idea of creating resources related to the Squarehead books was my suggestion. I had used them in a series of English lessons the previous year and had realised how the way they stories and characters encourage children to dream big, respect differences and value themselves and others would be an excellent basis for Growth Mindset resources. In light of the new Ofsted Inspection Framework, their potential to link to English, PHSE, maths and geography also seemed helpful. I spent the first term planning resources and reading around the topic. I was excited to get the project underway.

Dissonance

Just before the Christmas break, we were told a new leadership team would be taking over in January. My research was paused while I worked out how my research focus would fit in with their vision and direction. While I waited, an interview appeared in TES with behavioural geneticist Professor Robert Plomin (Severs and Henshaw, 2019) . He vigorously challenged Growth Mindset theory and reading the article made me think much more deeply about the questions I was asking about Growth Mindset. Though I had not chosen the focus of my research from personal interest, encouraging children to have a positive attitude to learning and about their own potential was something I believed in.

Growth Mindset theory claims that learning is shaped by an individual's belief in their

potential to change their intelligence. Its originator, Carol Dweck, describes it as the belief that one can change one's abilities through effort, whereas those with "fixed" Mindsets believe intelligence is innate.

Plomin described Growth Mindset as "bullshit" and proposed that intelligence is instead predicted by genetics. The idea that encouraging a Growth Mindset would improve outcomes was plausible. However, as I read Plomin's opinions I began to reflect on whether I agreed with what Dweck was claiming or simply how I had interpreted it. Did I think that Mindset could affect ability or just attainment? I was certainly not approaching the research with a strong idea of what I expected to find!

Research dilemmas and decisions

I really wanted to find out something worthwhile about Mindset in the primary classroom, but I couldn't use children as research participants as the new leadership team weren't planning to introduce Growth Mindset as a whole school focus in the timeframe I was previously working to. Additionally, primary-aged children (massive generalisation coming) anecdotally, want to please their teacher. Could this lead to a version of the Hawthorne Effect – where the results/impact seen is due to participation in

the research study and not the change in variable which the study aims to measure?

This led me to wonder whether following the path of pre-testing Mindset, implementing intervention on 'experimental' group, complete post-test may simply provide results which say 'my-teacher-said-that-if-I-try-harder-I-can-become-cleverer, so that's the correct answer'.

The option to wait was taken out of contention by a deadline; I was determined to complete the research project in time (assuming I passed) to graduate with my cohort.

Asking volunteer teacher participants to speculate on the Mindset of children in their class and analyse anecdotal evidence wasn't something I felt comfortable with. I didn't believe that subjective discussion of Mindsets which were assumed rather than measured or assessed was valid, ethical research and wasn't confident that findings would be without bias, so I decided to investigate the Mindset of primary teachers and try to find out about its perceived impact.

99 participants, recruited through social media and personal contacts, completed an

online questionnaire, which included items looking at:

- Primary teaching experience
- Mindset: Measuring Students' Mindsets (Dweck, 2007)
- Belief about intelligence as a predictor of attainment
- Engagement with CPD related to Growth Mindset and perception of its impact on own and pupil Mindset
- Engagement with research and beliefs related to the potential impact of evidence- based practise.

Findings

Data from 87 participants were analysed. Those who reported having experienced CPD related to Growth Mindset additionally participated in a retrospective pre-test, where they assessed (retrospectively) their Mindset at a point prior to taking part in any Growth Mindset CPD. Participants were asked if they had experienced CPD external to their school, in their own school but delivered by an external training provider or in their own school delivered by a colleague (No further information was collected about the CPD undertaken.) They then evaluated the

perceived impact of awareness of Growth Mindset on their classroom practise.

Between one third and a half or participants gave responses which allowed them to be allocated to Growth Mindset (GM) or Fixed Mindset (FM) groups, so further analyses were carried out on 24 participants with GM and 12 participants with FM. The other 51 participants did not fit into the GM or FM groups. Beyond this distinction (made by looking at responses to six questions), some of the differences in responses between the two groups are not what may have been predicted.

Differences in experience of training between the two groups were apparent: 17 participants with GM and 6 participants with FM reported having participated in CPD related to Growth Mindset. None of those with FM used GM resources without having experienced training and none had attended training outside of their school.

Although the potential for generalisation from small participant numbers is limited, there is a clear shift between the "now" responses and the retrospective pre-test: we can see that around a third of participants in this category report a shift in attitude, indicating that six of

the GM group would have been allocated to the FM group in a pre-test.

When reflecting on the impact of GM training on their own Mindsets, 20 of the 24 responses from GM participants reported a perceived impact. In the FM group, 3 of the 12 participants reported a perceived impact.

When considering impact of GM training on pupils, all 24 responses from the GM group were positive, while there was an even split of opinion in the FM group.

One question asked: "Do you believe that intelligence is the only or most important predictor of academic achievement in primary school children? Please explain your answer." All participants in both GM and FM groups said no. A similar proportion in both groups mentioned background or family. Those in the FM group were more likely to mention effort or attitude and those in the GM group mentioned Mindset more frequently.

Conclusions

To conclude, I don't believe that Growth Mindset intervention can influence actual potential to learn in terms of biology. I do, however, believe that it can influence engagement with learning, enjoyment of learning and self-concept. And I believe that these things can influence attainment.

I initially expected to create a new set of age-appropriate Growth Mindset resources and assess their efficacy. Instead, I've reconsidered my views on Growth Mindset as a concept. Coming to the conclusion that I don't believe Growth Mindset affects intelligence or potential hasn't changed my classroom practise because I believe that encouraging a Growth Mindset can encourage children to realise their potential fully. Furthermore, having teachers remind pupils of their potential can reduce temptation for teachers to label children by ability and, thus, limit expectations.

The experience of carrying out this project has made me think more carefully about how to approach concepts generally accepted as 'true'. It reminded me to return to reading in a more critical way rather than simple accepting a concept and expecting to learn more about it. It has made me reflect more on how research is used to inform practise within the teaching profession and how important it is to encourage teachers to engage with research so that we are doing more of what works and less of what doesn't, (and also less

of what works, but not well enough to justify the time it takes).

In response to the question, 'Do you think evidence-based practice can improve educational attainment for children in primary school?', only three participants from the whole cohort answered no (2 GM group, one in the other Mindset group).

This, I think, is perhaps the finding from this study that I find most exciting in terms of its implication for the profession, and most importantly, for those we teach.

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LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
CARNEGIE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

From training to development: Experience as the basis for the professional development of teachers in Higher Education

A Practice Insight Paper by Kevin L. Merry

Introduction

Perhaps one of the most frustrating things for an educational developer (ED) to experience, is the assumption that their role is purely about 'training'. Unfortunately, there are times when senior academic managers believe that the teaching practice of their staff can be immediately improved via a workshop or training session on a specific aspect of practice. Requests for training tend to be at their highest following the outcomes of various quality assurance/enhancement initiatives such as Module Level Feedback (MLF), or National Student Survey (NSS) feedback, when there is a desire to plug identified gaps. However, the nature of learning and teaching, with many aspects possessing intricate interrelatedness and interdependence, means that 'one off' training opportunities are rarely beneficial in bringing about desired change. Take summative assessment for example. It would be challenging to improve summative assessment practices without concurrently addressing related issues such as learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities, formative assessment, and feedback practices. Therefore, training alone, with its short-term focus would be inadequate to affect significant enhancements in practice in this instance. Instead, a long-term, continuous approach bringing together several related elements is required to better support ongoing development. The aim of this practice insight working paper is to discuss how De Montfort University (DMU) has approached the development of its academic staff by focussing on their long-term growth, using experiential learning with elements of coaching and mentoring as the basis for an ongoing cycle of learning of which training is just one aspect.

Development or Training?

Development is an educational process that focusses on the overall growth of employees. It has its roots in an institution's mission, goals and values and is linked to important outcomes including employee retention and the creation of an agile, talented workforce (Noe, 2017; Mone and London, 2018). Focussed on the long-term, development supports preparation for future challenges and the changing nature of work from a career, rather than job role perspective.

Development takes several forms including formal education, job experiences, and relationships forged through membership of various formal and informal learning communities. Critically, development is an individualised process, personalised to meet individual needs (Noe, 2017).

Supporting student learning in Higher Education (HE) takes multiple forms and happens in wide and varied contexts. For example, it is possible to be a technical instructor, module leader, programme leader, personal tutor, research supervisor and several other things, all under the broad banner of 'academic'. The nature of each of these aspects also varies dependent upon context. For example, it is likely each of these aspects would play out very differently for a colleague teaching accounting, versus a colleague teaching performing arts due to the differences between each subject and the students that gravitate towards them. Finally, supporting learning in HE is not a static role. Technological changes, shifts toward more flexible forms of delivery and the changing nature and expectations of students means that the role of an academic evolves continuously. Hence, development with its individual focus, and emphasis on futureproofing individuals against new challenges, makes it a far more appropriate

option for enhancing staff capability than training.

The Nature of Development

Teaching in HE is unlike other occupations. For example, there is no dress rehearsal when it comes to teaching. No period of practice, no mock environment within which to develop capability or experience, and up until recently no apprenticeship to serve. For many, the first taste of teaching is a real one. Thrown in at the deep end with real students who are hoping (sometimes expecting) for a good degree. Such an entrance into HE teaching often occurs with no prior development. Subsequently, most new teachers in HE tend to teach according to the way they were taught, irrespective of its effectiveness.

Despite the pitfalls of being thrust into teaching in HE with no real preparation, there are noticeable benefits – the opportunity to engage in experiential learning, with concrete experiences on which to reflect occurring in abundance. Furthermore, learning is situated in the most authentic of contexts (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Hence, it seems logical that the very foundation of development for HE teachers should be experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) accrued on the job. Previous research has demonstrated that for the majority of

professionals (Mintzberg, 2019), particularly teachers in HE (Knight, Tait and Yorke, 2006), the most powerful influence on learning how to do their job is actually doing the job and learning through experience. Hence, our approach to development at DMU is centred around on the job experiential learning.

70-20-10

At DMU we have a strategic programme of activity entitled Developing for Success (D4S) which is underpinned by its own strategy. The strategy outlines the approach DMU is taking to develop staff and supports our staff development policy. An approach that has been adopted within the strategy is the 70-20-10 development model (Lombardo and Eichinger, 2006). The model suggests a proportional breakdown of professional development consisting of 70% experiential learning accrued on the job, 20% social learning through involvement in communities and networks, and 10% formal learning through formal courses and training. Hence, the 70% portion is the most critical, with colleagues encouraged to address identified areas of development through engagement with the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984).

The purpose of the 70-20-10 model is to enable staff to make their own connections between theory and its application in practice, and make their own decisions about their development priorities. Staff are encouraged to develop ownership over their own learning objectives, methods and outcomes, with the emphasis on facilitating and enabling ongoing development, rather than specific skill acquisition. The 70-20-10 model represents a shift from training to development, from accruing skills to developing skilfulness (Bigelow, 1995).

Support and the role of the Educational Developer (ED)

EDs are involved in facilitating the 10% portion of the model (delivering courses, workshops etc.), and are involved in facilitating aspects of the 20% portion too (facilitating networks and learning communities etc.). However, their most important role is to support the optimisation of experiential learning opportunities and subsequent self-directed learning as part of the 70% portion. EDs support engagement with the 70% portion by using aspects of situational leadership (Blanchard, Zigarmi and Zigarmi, 2015), as well as coaching and mentoring (Clutterbuck, Megginson and Bajer, 2016) to support colleagues with addressing identified areas of development.

EDs support colleagues with the 70% portion by assisting them with four critical processes:

- Goal Setting
- Diagnosing
- Matching
- Reflection

Goal Setting

Colleagues are supported in developing clear, meaningful goals that relate to their identified areas of development. The role of the ED is to help refine goals so that they conform to SMART goal setting criteria. Ideally, these goals are set and agreed with the colleague's line manager during the appraisal/objective setting process.

Diagnosing

Once goals are set, the ED supports the colleague in deciding on their current development level in relation to each goal. This is known as *diagnosing* and is a key aspect of the relationship between the ED and colleague because it determines the approach the ED will use to provide support.

Matching

Following the diagnosis of development level against each goal, the ED can then match an appropriate approach to supporting their colleague based on development level. For example, novice colleagues lacking competence on a goal may require a more directive style, where the ED may provide direction, resources and information, as well as frequently check in on progress and provide feedback. Conversely, a colleague with relatively high competence on a goal may require less direction, with the ED providing more of a listening role and sounding board for the colleague's ideas, and asking pertinent questions.

Reflection

With self-directed learning emphasised so strongly within the 70-20-10 model, EDs support colleagues by encouraging them to engage in documented reflection, conceptualisation and planned action in relation to accrued experiences (Kolb, 1984). EDs support reflections and encourage the colleague to explore a range of theoretical perspectives and practical applications as they move though the experiential cycle, which may encourage the colleague to act differently, thus informing future reflections.

Feedback on the 70-20-10 approach suggests that colleagues feel a greater sense of responsibility for their own development, increased motivation to enhance practice,

greater self-awareness, and an improved ability to deal with practice related problems.

Conclusions

At DMU we aim to develop colleagues rather than simply train them. Training may form a small aspect of this development (<10%), however, the emphasis of developmental activity is that it is individualised, ongoing and futureproofs colleagues to face upcoming challenges. Operationally, experiential learning is the key element of the developmental process (70%), with colleagues required to reflect on concrete experiences, and action plan accordingly. Through an approach that encompasses elements of coaching, mentoring and situational leadership, colleagues are supported with identified areas for development through the setting of goals, diagnosing of their development level against goals, supporting attainment of goals with an appropriate approach, and supported reflections. So far, the approach has positively impacted staff motivation, self-awareness, sense of developmental responsibility and ability to solve problems.

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CollectivEd Thinking Out Loud

An interview with Jeremy Hannay

In this series of think pieces educators talk about their professional learning and educational values.

Please tell us who you are and what your current role in education is.

My name is Jeremy Hannay and I am the Headteacher of Three Bridges Primary School in Southall, London. I am a doctoral researcher at the University of Exeter.

Please reflect on an episode or period in your career during which your own learning helped you to develop educational practices, which remain with you today. What was the context, how were you learning, and what was the impact?

The greatest learning experience I have ever had was completely unconventional and informal. I was working for the Ottawa Carleton District School Board in Ontario, Canada. As a 20-something educator, new to the profession, I was mentored by Charles Austin, my Principal. He took an interest in my growth & development and saw the leader in me before I saw it in myself. We would sit in his office for hours after school ended, discussing the day, the challenges, the

successes and struggles. I had a window in to the life of a school leader that no one else did and an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the complexity of the organisation, the decisions, the vision, the strategy and the relationships required to move the school forward. He would challenge me to see the importance of collaboration, collective responsibility and sustainable development. He was a master of nuance and detail, with a bold vision for the future of the school and community. I am the leader I am today because of his selfless service to both our school and me.

When you work with colleagues or other professionals to support their development what are the key attributes that you bring with you, and what difference do these qualities make?

I am a believer in professional led learning, social and decisional capital. Supporting educators to uncover the best within themselves is vital for the growth of any organisation. This means engaging in dialogic relationships with people and asking questions that elicit their own goals and aspirations for development. It is the removal of vertical

power relationships between leaders and leaders, or leaders and teachers, that catalyses true development. Once professionals feel compelled to their own goals, ensuing they have the right conditions to pursue it is my job. Placing professionals in social groupings to research and discuss the impact of action or inaction on their people, followed by giving them the ultimate decision over next steps is the soil in which the very best professionals grow. This is the difference between leading a professional for growth and managing them for compliance.

Who has influenced your educational thinking, and in what ways has this allowed you to develop?

There have been a number of avenues that furthered my educational thinking. The first has been personal reading and my own research. I think it is important to have a balanced diet of educational literature and personal interest. I have been reading great edu-thinkers like Michael Fullan, Andy Hargreaves, Ken Leithwood, Avis Glaze, Ben Levin and Pasi Sahlberg for years. Growing up in Canada as an educator, those names are synonymous with school and system level thinking – required readings of sorts. In addition to this, my own research in to the impact of learning and lesson study as a form of social capital on teacher self-efficacy and

school climate has firmed my understanding and beliefs in teacher-led learning, collaborative development and instructional leadership.

If you could change one thing which might enable more teachers to work and learn collaboratively in the future what would you do?

The abolition of high stakes accountability. This is now the root of all problems in our country. It elicits fear – which actively reduces innovation, collaboration, growth and sustainable development. Inspection and regulation are now seen as a mechanism for improvement. Inspection and accountability should serve the conversation, not lead it. The consequences for the system have been a mass confusion about the role of external accountability without acknowledging one's internal sense, corporate style management dressed up as leadership, and the deeply misguided belief that we can improve the system by focussing on individual schools. If we want our system to improve, we must design a system of improvement that focuses on supporting the growth and development of all schools, all leaders, all teachers. When we remove fear and competition between schools, this will make the space needed for deeper conversations and connections within and between schools.

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If you would like to contribute a research, practice insight or think piece working paper please see the guidance on our website http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/riches/our-research/professional-practice-and-learning/collectived/

Please follow us on twitter @CollectivED1 and Rachel Lofthouse at @DrRLofthouse

Email: CollectivED@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Upcoming events and more information

January 27th 2020

> Coaching and Mentoring in Education Research network meeting No. 4 – hosted by University of East London (Stratford Campus). please email Rachel Lofthouse for details if you would like to join us.

June 23rd 2020

> National CollectivED Knowledge Exchange Conference in partnership with GCI to be held in Birmingham. HOLD THE DATE and make sure you are on our mailing list for details.

To be added to our mailing list regarding these and other regional events please email CollectivED@leedsbeckett.ac.uk or keep an eye on twitter @CollectivED1.

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