

Measuring the Effectiveness of Career Coaching in Increasing Higher Education Students' Career Self-Efficacy and Job Search Behaviors



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

Joanna Molyne & Professor David Gray - Business School, University of Greenwich

Introduction

Is coaching effective in raising career self-efficacy of HE students?

What aspects of career coaching relationships are perceived by students and coaches as most effective in increasing students' career self-efficacy?
Is self-efficacy a significant factor in changing job search behaviors of HE students?

What are the self-efficacy beliefs of HE students? Are they different for different groups of students?

This study will investigate whether career coaching is an effective tool within a Higher Education context in increasing HE students' levels of career self-efficacy and, as a result, in their job-search behaviors.



Study Background

Source: <http://img.ehowcdn.com/article-new/ehow/images/a04/bk/qm/become-career-coach-800x800.jpg>

Increasing the employability of graduates has become a very important issue. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have been facing increasing economic, political and environmental pressures. As a result, governments have imposed increasing graduate employability as a central part of HEI's agendas (HEA, 2012).

This is being met with some scepticism by academics concerned that the erosion of academic autonomy is turning education into training (Harvey, 2000).

Academics are reluctant to teach employability skills and attributes as they feel that the employability agenda is driven by government policy and employers (Lees, 2002).

There is, however, a worldwide concern that undergraduate programmes do not give students life-long learning and professional skills that they need to succeed in the workplace (de la Harpe *et al.*, 2000).

Study Rationale

Multiple studies confirm that coaching has a significant positive effect on self-efficacy (Baron *et al.*, 2011; Baron and Morin, 2010; Evers *et al.*, 2006). As the coaching industry reaches its maturity phase it is necessary to develop coaching effectiveness measurements to sustain coaching credibility (de Haan, Culpin and Curd, 2011; Gray, 2011).

A shift in the educational approach is needed due to higher fees and, subsequently, higher expectations of students. Coaching has been recognized as an effective learning tool (Griffiths, 2005) - and has been used in most corporate sectors - but not to any significant extent in education.

A recent launch of the *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* is indicative of coaching entering the educational sector.

Increasing the employability of UK graduates has become a very important issue in recent years (HEA, 2012).

Van Hoyer (2013) proposes that self-efficacy should be examined in further research as to its effect on individuals' job search behaviors.

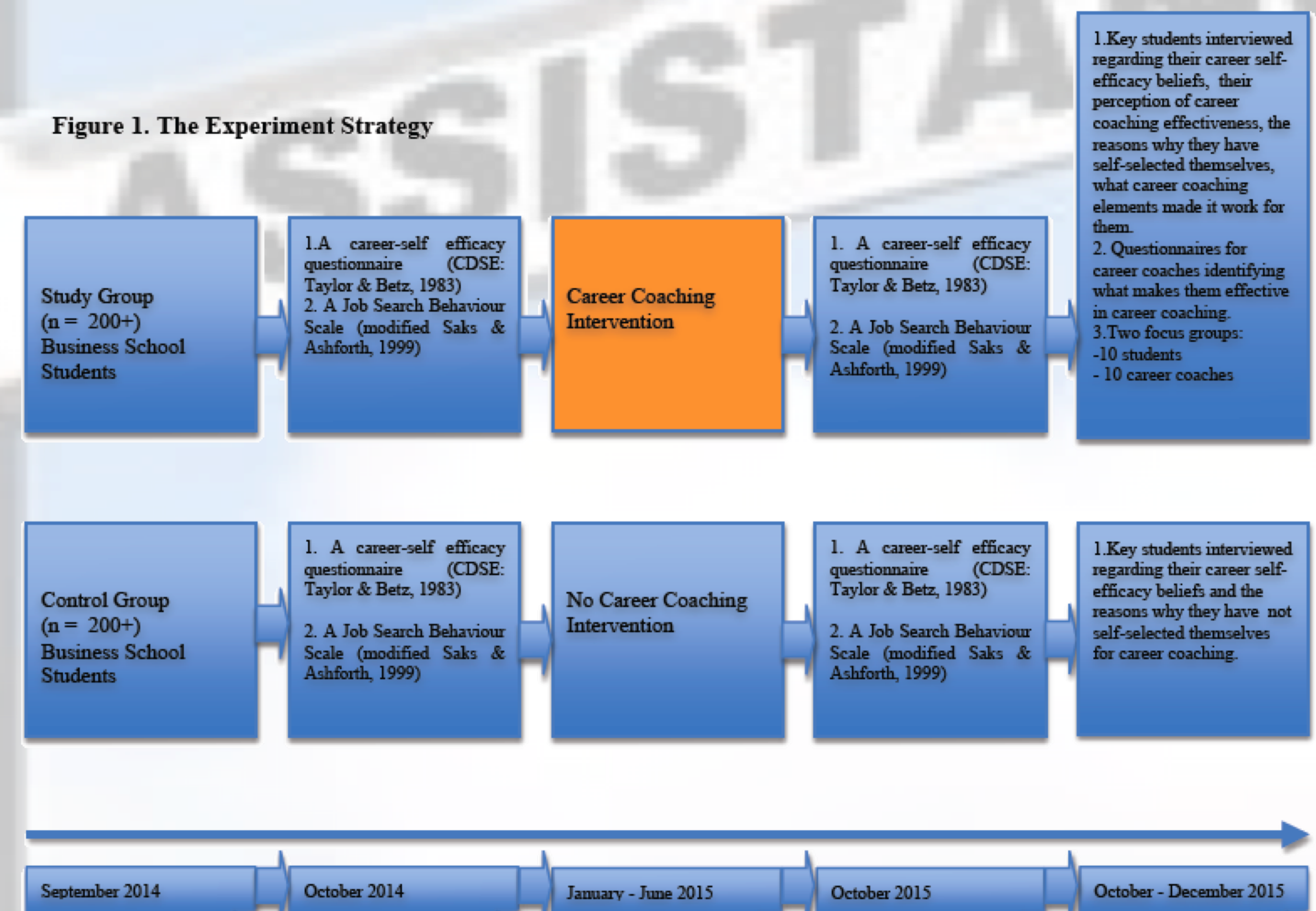
The results from the study may inform future intervention programmes that seek to promote the self-efficacy of disadvantaged and marginalised groups such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, elderly people, disabled people and female offenders (Betz *et al.*, 2005).

Research Design

The study will use a quasi-experimental mixed-method design, with data consecutively triangulated through the use of quantitative and qualitative techniques.

Two samples: experimental and a control sample - predicted 200+ students in each sample - will be selected from the 'University of Greenwich' Business School students' Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 populations of approximately 1800 students.

Figure 1. The Experiment Strategy



Data Analysis

Quantitative Methods

Comparing Two Means (systematic variation)

Independent means t-test

A bivariate correlation for an experimental group

A simple regression for an experimental group

ANCOVA analysis to compare the pre-test scores of two groups

Qualitative Methods

Interviews will be conducted to discover what aspects of career coaching relationships are perceived by students as most effective in increasing their career self-efficacy; to explore any transitions in students' self-efficacy; to establish whether coaching is effective in raising career self-efficacy of HE students and, finally, to explore the self-efficacy beliefs of HE students.

Conclusion

It is expected that this study will confirm the impact of career coaching on career self efficacy and job seeking behaviors of students. This research will contribute to the coaching literature, as it will empirically examine the effectiveness of coaching in increasing career self-efficacy levels of students. It will investigate the aspects of career coaching relationships which are most helpful to students and its findings will have an impact on university policy with regard to selection criteria and training of potential career coaches. It will also examine the role of coaching in the HE context and its role in enhancing students' job search behaviors. This study will contribute to the research on the relationships between career self-efficacy beliefs and job search behaviors.

Selected References

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