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Note that this is the near final version – all errors are my own.

What is new in Coaching?

We welcome you, our readers, to the first issue of 2013. The past year was clearly an exciting one for coaching research and practice, and this current issue of *Coaching*, an International Journal of Theory, Research and practice reflects this.

Happy Anniversary AC

This has been a special year for the Association for Coaching (AC), celebrating its 10th Anniversary – may there be many more to come! Gladeana McMahon reports from the successful AC Edinburgh Conference.

Our new case study template

We have been engaged in much constructive dialogue with our readers and contributors. We are excited that there is a growing interest in generating and sharing case studies! In order to facilitate contributions and provide you with a clear template, this issue contains an article that introduces our new format. The template is meant to be a blue print and a helping tool, rather than a 'straight jacket'. So if you have case studies which you'd like to share would work better in a different format, get in touch with either of the editors. We are always happy to give informal feedback.

In this issue

There has been much call for more robust evidence in coaching, and we hope that this issue contributes just that by including both studies that consider the outcomes of coaching and also a survey of what coaches actually do, for the latter see the article by Jenkins and colleagues in this issue.

Knight and Nieuwerburgh report on instructional coaching, an approach pioneered in the USA, arguing strongly for an evidence-based approach, and setting out seven clear principles and the process in detail.

Gregory and Levy discuss feedback orientation, drawing on a large sample of nearly 500 employees, showing that this accounts for much variance in the quality of the coaching relationship. Coaching is all about relationships, so we welcome this contribution from across the Atlantic.

Many of us have been eagerly awaiting more evidence on executive coaching from organizational contexts. Moen and colleagues do just this, by presenting evidence on external executive coaching and attributions and self-efficacy, notably using a design including a control group.

Many coaches will have experienced through their own practice that organisations commissioning coaching are have a vested interest in hitting the bottom line e – does it pay to invest in coaching? Grant in this issue argues that calculating return on investment may actually be misguided, and that we might be better advised to consider well-being and goal attainment.

Developments in Coaching

Now let us know turn to recent developments in coaching drawing on a dialogue with our associate editors. Let me share some thoughts from a recent conversation I had with Professor Jonathan Passmore.

“Jonathan, what is the most exciting recent developing in coaching in your view?”

“Over the past five years we are starting to gradually increase the quality of research studies and the number of randomised control trials. All of this is starting to provide us with a better understanding of coaching and related interventions, and hence evidence that it has specific benefits for individuals. However we are still at the start of a long journey, we need to work over the coming decade to start to better understand what coaches do that creates positive affect and secondly where coaching is a more effective intervention than other organisational or personal development methods. “

“Which challenges, if any, do you foresee for coaching?”

“There are two specific dangers to highlight based on lessons from other communities. The first is that the research becomes ever more complex and we create an academic – practitioner divide. I believe all research needs to be relevant to practice in a domain like coaching, rather than knowledge for knowledge sake, which sadly is often the view of many academics in university settings (I know I have worked there). Secondly, we need to ensure we do not stay at the level of repeating case studies and survey based research. While these have a place, we need to also see more sophisticated research methods to better explore the psychological processes and the wider organisational impact of specific behaviours, models and ways of assessing clients. “

“Given that so many individuals are keen to go into the field, what is your top tip for someone who is just starting out as a coach?”

Good coaches need both lots of practice and strong evidenced based training. I would suggest following a post graduate level programme, which is accredited by a university or a professional body such as the Institute of Leadership & Management. Also go to lots of events, these are great for expanding knowledge but also for networking. Finally try and link the new knowledge with what you already know and do, so you can play to your existing strengths. “

These comments are welcome food for thought. We hope to do 'our bit' by extending the evidence base through communication via our journal. And do share with us: which articles speak to you? What kind of contribution would you like to see more of? Last but not least, don't forget to share your experience for the benefit of others. We look forward to receiving your case studies in due course!