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CARNEGIE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Issue 14

CollectivED Working Papers

Extending Practices in Coaching and Mentoring Special Edition

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

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

2022

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Introduction to CollectivED and Issue 14

by CollectivED Director Rachel Lofthouse

CollectivED The Centre for Mentoring, Coaching & Professional Learning is a research and practice centre based in The Carnegie School of Education. We form a community of professionals, academics and students with shared interests. Our aims are to

- Encourage and enable collaborative conversations which create powerful professional learning
- Build capacity of educators to create contexts which support inclusive career-long and profession-wide learning
- Remove barriers to professional development
- Increase opportunities for educational change through enhanced professional agency and well-being

The research undertaken by the CollectivED community relates to formal and informal professional learning and practice in all sectors of education. Our research focuses on

- teacher education and professional learning at all career stages
- learning through mentoring, coaching, digital pedagogies, workplace and interprofessional practices
- teachers' and leaders' professionalism, identity, wellbeing, self-efficacy and agency
- educational policy and partnership

You can find out more about CollectivED here https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/collectived/ where you can access each issue of our working papers and other activities.

In Issue 14 we have selected papers which extend our understanding of the value, applications, structures and support for coaching and mentoring across a range of educational sectors and settings. We conclude Issue 14 with notes on our working paper contributors, and information on submitting papers for future publication.

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Are we instructional coaches or simply coaches now? The changing role of instructional coaches during unpredictable times.

A think piece working paper by Antony Winch

By the end of March 2020, 110 countries had shut down their education systems as a result of Covid-19 (Thierworld, 2020). For those with the technological resources, schools ceased to exist in the physical world and moved to an online one instead. To those less advantaged, schools just ceased to exist. As I write, a quarter of a billion young people around the world have had their education affected (UNESCO, 2021), and the negative impacts have been widely reported, but what about their teachers? During this time of lockdowns, I have continued to work as an instructional coach, but my role has changed – teachers now have very different needs. Rather than just "collaborate with teachers so they can choose and implement research-based interventions to help students learn more effectively" as Jim Knight (2007) stated is the role of instructional coaches, I have found myself moving more towards coaching by "unlocking people's potential to maximize their own performance" (Whitmore, 1992). Instructional coaching and coaching were different, but Covid-19 has blurred those lines, and made me ask whether we should all be simply coaches now.

The goal of coaching is to lead a client towards her/his preferred future (Hook et al, 2006). Whereas, instructional coaching's goal is to ultimately benefit the client's (teacher's) students. This has never sat easily with me as I often felt that *any* change a teacher makes which moves them towards their preferred future will have a positive impact on *that* teacher. This would result in improved teaching which will in turn benefit the students too. Since Covid-19 disrupted both teaching and teachers, I have believed this more than ever.

Over the last nine months, I have perceived a subtle shift in the perceived role of instructional coaches, and I have heard that we should now be coaching for instruction *and well-being*. During an online 'History of Coaching' conversation (2020), two of the leading lights in instructional coaching, Jim Knight and Christian van Nieuwerburgh, discussed a teacher's optimal performance being a balance of well-being and performing at a high level. I agree, however I would argue further that effective instructional

coaches should no longer just coach for instruction and well-being, instead they should just coach.

Instructional coaching concentrates on the student's learning through the medium of the teacher. In the US, Knight (2007) focuses on his Big 4 of Behavior, Content, Instruction, and Formative Assessment. In Leverage Leadership, Bambrick-Santoyo (2012) prioritizes a "specific action step [for the teacher] to increase student learning." While in the UK, Broughton and Beere (2013) state, "We must challenge and support *all* of our teachers, whatever their characters and capabilities, to be the very best they can be and to deliver consistently good and outstanding learning", with a focus on teacher professional improvement. I fully support all these viewpoints, but if we use a word that we often use in education with regards to students, I believe that we need to take a more 'holistic' approach. And by holistic I mean, "promoting growth in all areas of the human experience: intellectual, emotional, social, and so forth" (Loveless, 2020). The more I work with teachers, the more I feel that there is so much outside of their teaching that contributes to good and bad instruction, and which therefore has an impact on student learning.

In their book, 'Stress Management', Herman and Reinke (2014) write, "Effective classroom management begins with a calm, warm, and affirming teacher who can deliver high rates of positive attention to students… When teachers are stressed, they are less able to provide the type of environment we know is conducive to learning and to support children's social and emotional development." Stressed teachers, "report the lowest ratings of confidence and efficacy in the classroom, the highest rates of student disruptive behaviors, and the lowest rates of student adaptive behaviors. Perhaps most concerning, this translates into worse academic performance for their students on standardized achievement tests." Therefore, I would conjecture that happy and positive teachers would have happier and more positive students which would result in better learning - the goal of instructional coaching.

As instructional coaches, I believe it is our role to help through "the act of humble inquiry" (Stein, 2009). Therefore, if helping is listening to a teacher's concerns regarding Covid-19 and leading them towards ways to alleviate this, or finding ways to help them keep healthy, or discussing how to balance home life and professional life while working online, then instructional coaches should be prepared to engage in these conversations. We should do this firstly because "the client is the star"

(Hall, 2015), and hence we should "follow a client's agenda" (Whitmore, 1992). And secondly, because it shows we care, and it has been proven that an employee who has someone who cares for them at work is highly engaged and more productive (Buckingham & Coffmann, 1999). For some teachers, an instructional coach may be one of the few people inside school, or outside it, who does care. This builds relationships and trust and, I believe in the long term, will result in a teacher being more open to and more motivated to change in other areas too.

Coaches within non-academic organizations look to create professional change in the client in order to improve her/his performance. To boost performance, the coach will have to work within the norms and framework of the company. Instructional coaches aim to help teachers change in ways that will benefit the students. To boost performance, the instructional coach will have to work within the norms of the school. If we stick rigidly within these norms, then this raises the argument that, "Coaching can be a tool for conformity and control" (Shoukry & Cox, 2018), and if we are unwilling as instructional coaches to widen our mandate to a more holistic approach, we are in danger of being this tool. This is a stance that could have an adverse effect on students, if a teacher is stressed or run down, and their

well-being is not addressed. As Nieuwerburgh et al. (2020) discovered: school leaders receiving coaching appreciated having time to reflect, felt safe to explore, focused on what was important to them, and experienced positive emotions. These benefits will only happen for teachers if they feel comfortable to explore and focus on what's important to them rather having conversations that are continually driven back towards direct instruction and student learning.

Effective coaches, whether instructional, health, executive or leadership, adapt with their clients. They are aware of the ethics of coaching, their remit and the people they work with. As instructional coaches, we must recognize that education changes, and our role as coaches must change to, especially during unpredictable and testing times. During difficult periods, a sole focus on instruction may be detrimental to the teachers we work with and student learning. By widening our remit to move beyond what happens within the classroom, we are taking a holistic view of the teacher that may well strengthen our relationships and be genuinely more helpful. Anyone working with a coach voluntarily is doing so because they want to journey towards their preferred future and logically the future they are striving for is going to be more positive and better than the present they are currently living in. A more

positive person in life will be a more positive person in the classroom which ultimately benefits the students. In November 2020, the Association of Coaches ran a webinar by Anthony Eldridge-Rogers entitled "Are we all health coaches now?" I would borrow from this and ask about instructional coaches, should we all be simply coaches now?

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An exploration into the links between coaching practices, coaching cultures and the emergence of ecological agency in schools.

A research insight working paper by Jasmine Miller

This work is the summary of the author's dissertation as part of the requirement for the MRes in Educational Research at Stirling University (Miller, J. 2020). Supervisor – Dr Joe Cowley

Abstract

Purpose – This research adds strength to our understanding of what coaching approaches and cultures and the emergence of ecological agency looks like in schools.

Design/Methodology/Approach – This study focused on the experiences of nineteen teachers, including three who have become professional coaches. It uses a phenomenological approach through semi-structured interviews to discover how they conceptualised their experiences of using coaching. The participant's experiences were analysed thematically using Thematic Analysis and through the theoretical lens of ecological agency.

Findings – This research reports on five themes based on the experiences of teachers who participated in this study; fear of the unknown, empowerment, time to think, equality of relationships and transferable skills. The findings of this study share insights into how teachers experience coaching practices, coaching culture and ecological agency in schools.

Research limitations/implications – These findings are distinctive to the participants who volunteered their time to take part in this research study and therefore not representative of the general population of teachers.

Practical implications – This research highlights the importance of coaching practices in school to enable teacher ecological agency. The extent to which this can be achieved is dependent on a number of different factors, it is recommended teachers act as agents of change when introducing and developing coaching cultures in schools.

Originality/Value – This research fulfils an identified need to understand the links between coaching practices, culture and the emergence of ecological agency in schools. It adds to the increasing research base for coaching in education.

Keywords – Coaching, Ecological Agency, Schools, Thematic Analysis

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Introduction

Research into the area of 'coaching in schools' is still relatively new, however, the practice of coaching in schools has been evolving over several decades (Lofthouse, 2019). Personal characteristics of teachers explain, to a large extent differences in the way and the extent to which they enact professional agency in order to influence or change education. This research uses the framework of ecological agency to consider the opportunities that coaching practices contributes to teachers and therefore schools (Priestley et al, 2015 & Lofthouse, 2019). This study is contributing to a field of knowledge that is particularly new around coaching and ecological agency. A recent publication in a similar area argues that "the goal for teacher coaching should be for teachers to be able to exercise agency in response to the complex needs of students and school communities" (Andrews & Munro, 2020, p.1). In education, there is broad agreement that coaching is a conversation that is:

"focused on the enhancement of learning and development through increasing self-awareness and a sense of personal responsibility where the coach facilitates the self-directed learning of the coachee through questioning, active listening, and appropriate challenge in a supportive and encouraging climate (van Nieuwerburgh, 2012, Adams, 2016)".

Similarly, within coaching in education there is little overt research or theory development on the influence of educational policy contexts shaping and reshaping teacher agency (Priestley et al, 2015; Toom et al, 2015 & Vongalis-Macrow, 2007). Past research highlights a view on agency as something people possess. Biesta et al (2015) combine their ecological concept of agency as something that can be achieved and along with the ideas from Emirbayer and Mische (1998) created a model of ecological agency (see below):
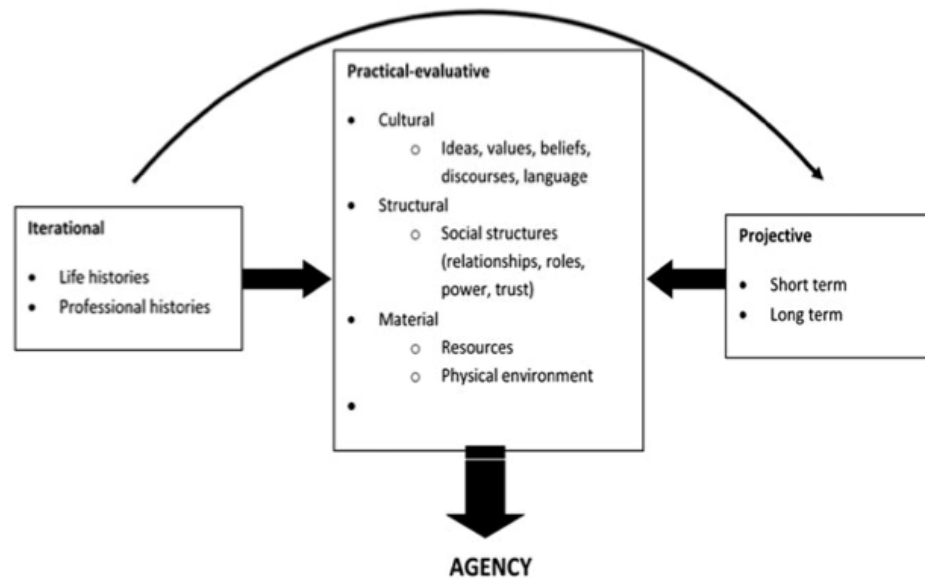
Figure 1.   A model for understanding the achievement of agency.

Within the model, 'Iterational' captures an individual's past experiences. There is evidence to suggest those with a wide repertoire of experience may achieve agency more readily than those who don't (Priestley et al, 2015). Secondly, agency is always 'projective' towards the future through goal setting and an ability to foresee future possibilities. There is evidence to suggest that individuals that can imagine a number of different ways forward are more likely to achieve agency than those with a limited number of ways. Finally, given agency is acted out in the present the 'practical and evaluative' element of the model highlights factors that influence existing resources and constraints and judgements that will influence the possibility of agency existing (Priestley et al, 2015).

One study by van der Heijden, (2015) suggested teachers are personally driven to initiate change in their classrooms and at school levels. In this study, we are using the focus of coaching practices and cultures to understand the emerging links of ecological agency and connection to this picture for teachers participating in this research.   The rationale behind this research stemmed from insignificant research into coaching's efficacy in schools (Lofthouse, 2018 & 2015) and links that had been made to ecological agency (Priestley, 2015 & Lofthouse, 2018).

> "Coaching is not teaching at all, it is about creating the conditions for learning and growing (Whitmore, 2017, p.6)".

It is these 'conditions for learning and growing' that connect with the research aim of this study and are explored further with the participants of this study.

Methodology

This exploratory study was carried using a phenomenological approach and through the theoretical lens of 'ecological agency' (Priestley et al, 2015). This single method research design used semi-structured interviews because this approach had strong correlations to elements of a coaching conversation and enabled participants to explore their experiences of coaching. Experiential thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was chosen for this study due to the following reasons:

1. Flexibility to qualitative analysis which enables determination of themes (and prevalence) in a number of ways.
2. Allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006:97).
3. Focuses on how the participant makes sense of the world (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Participants were located in Scotland, England and Australia and were all either primary or secondary teachers with the exception of three, who were former teachers and now professional coaches who worked with schools. Ten of the participants were female and nine

were male and their teaching experience ranged from ten years through to forty years in length. The type of schools ranged from state primary and secondary mainstream, special and independent schools. Participants in secondary schools taught a variety of subject specialists including Physical Education Art, Music and languages. Most participants were class teachers a couple were middle leaders, three were Deputy Head Teachers and two were Head Teachers. Participants experiences of coaching in schools ranged from recently introduced through to well established use of coaching practices. They had themselves been coached by either internal or external coaches and some had gained additional qualifications with coaching providers and leadership courses provided by local authorities.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out virtually through Zoom due to the global pandemic and the national lockdown in May and June 2020. An interview guide supported conversations with each participant enabling additional issues to be discussed. Open ended and non-directive questions were used to encourage participants to share as much as they could of their experiences uninterrupted and with time to think. The questions asked of participants included the following:

- What are your experiences of being coached and using coaching skills?
- How would you describe coaching?

- What do you notice in others when you use coaching?
- What do you notice about yourself when you use coaching?
- What else would you like to add?

The interviews ranged from between ten minutes and thirty-five minutes in length. Additional field notes captured the researcher's reactions to each participant, important features of their responses and ideas for data analysis. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis and a thematic map of themes were developed (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Findings and discussion

The findings highlight the importance of coaching practices in school to enable teacher ecological agency. A number of implications

may be helpful to teachers, school leaders, coaches and policy makers in light of the core themes that arose from the analysis.

Theme 1: Fear of the Unknown

Coaching was often described by participants as lacking in transparency or being invisible within organisations.

> "…literally coaching almost got kind of threw onto me…turned up one day in school head teacher and the depute head gathered their staff and said, 'right all the teaching staff you are having coaching once a month' and we've got a coach coming for our training… I was confused I didn't really understand it didn't know what it was…". (Smithy)
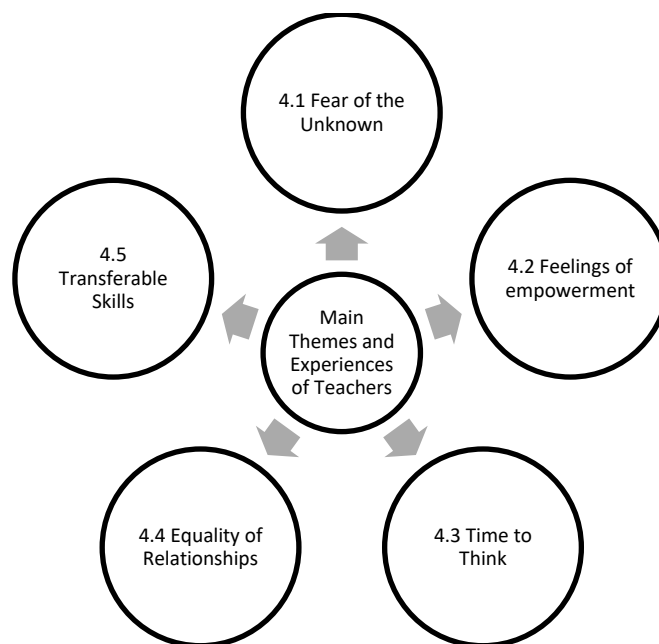

Figure 2. Main themes and experience of teachers who participated in the study

The implication of teachers not having a clear understanding of what coaching involves from the outset in schools is that coaching could be easily dismissed or disregarded before it has even started. One commonality in implementing change is that all involved have a clear understanding and explanation of the new concept, so defining what coaching is and more importantly what it looks like in schools could go a long way in addressing this issue. One of the participants described a contrasting view on how coaching was introduced at their school:

> "Teachers were provided with a framework for meaningful ongoing training. Concerted action shaped whole school training days which provided bespoke courses available to teachers across the year. Teachers choose their own focus and link it to benefits for their pupils and the school. Overall, the school's aim is to create a culture of active, ongoing engagement in professional learning in which teachers have a genuine intellectual curiosity in the craft of teaching". (Joel)

The ways of speaking and thinking (cultural) and the social structures and relational resources that contribute to the achievement of agency (structural) appear agency enabling in the comment above. Teachers are choosing an area of development based on consideration of their needs and interest.

Theme 2: Empowerment

The pattern of the data in this theme highlights the different life and professional histories (Priestly et at, 2015) that teachers bring to their roles and how coaching often reconnects individuals with these discourses and behaviours that they already possess and use.

> "…within forty-five minutes of that first session I was absolutely hooked it was almost like I didn't quite understand what was going on but I knew it was making me feel good…the power of truly being listened to someone actually properly a hundred percent there, listening to you being there for you being completely present to support…" (Smithy).

Coaching is a tool to aid the journey of your own self-development by bringing you into the present and setting achievable goals.

> "…it's an opportunity to talk about things that you don't normally get to talk about so for example as teachers, educators we talk a lot about education about the children how to move the children on, about data …

and I think for me coaching has given me that opportunity to be able to talk about myself as a practitioner and my journey and what I want to do next" (Anne).

An important implication of this theme is that teachers need to be seen as the whole person with their past experiences, emotions, commitment and concerns for their own well-being. Such constructions often also linked into theme three - 'Time to Think' in many ways, for instance this opportunity to have time to learn more about yourself can be a very unique experience for many teachers in schools.

Theme 3: Time to Think

An important implication of this theme identified the encouragement of independence of thought and independence in learning amidst busy school environments. Priestly et al (2015) describe teachers' aspirations and motivations within the model of ecological agency. They consider these deeply rooted in past experiences – professional and person. Similar to coaching principles, beliefs are usually the most key element to unpick, as they have a strong hold on how we see ourselves in the world and how we deem ourselves capable of achieving something or not.

The projective-evaluative dimension of the ecological approach to agency applies to all stakeholders within schools including pupils, parents and staff. Priestley et al (2015) suggest that promotion of teacher agency is "not only a matter of teacher education and professional development but also requires attention to cultures and structures (p. 35)".

"...a chance to self-reflect on my practice and I think that has stuck out for me most I think because being a teacher is quite busy everything is hectic". (Anne)

"I believe it's very powerful to give people some thinking time that they don't usually have and I believe that coaching can really impact on their "mobility of thinking" I witness it time and time again you just watch the penny drop". (Brynn)

Coaching is very much 'acted out' in the present and focuses on an individual's goal and how they want to work towards it. A critical part of this being successful for the coachee is how the coaching conversation is conducted by the coach. A school culture where coaching conversations can occur in a safe space that is uninterrupted, collaborative and promotes self-reflection will create achievement of agency.

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Theme 4: Equality of Relationships

The implications for this pattern in the data is the importance of the equality of the relationships in schools and the significant impact this will have on achieving agency at all levels, for pupils, teachers and the parents. Participants noticed a change in the way that pupils processed their ideas through using a coaching approach in the classroom:

> "It allows for a nice relationship because we're not on the same level as a teacher, but it does allow for that feeling it allows for more of a collaborative processing of ideas" (Sarah).

Participants often described their conversations with a coach as very different to any other conversations they might have in schools. This was often highlighted as a change from more directive commands i.e. "do this" to collaborative dialogue i.e. "how can I best support you?"

All participants in this study identified that having your voice heard by someone who you trust/have a good relationship with important and makes a difference to what they can then go on to achieve. This is fundamental to the success of a coaching becoming a validated tool that builds trusting relationships that bring an equality to conversations in schools.

Theme 5: Transferable Skills

In considering the implications of the patterns captured from participants in this section, it is clear that the coaching practices that teachers experienced, went on to have a greater impact on themselves, children and young people they taught, their families and their colleagues.

> "I'm more aware of what I say and how it may come across and how my own thoughts my own principles my own experience as a teacher might influence someone else". (Anne)

A number of participants described how learning about coaching skills had meant that they had changed some of their teaching approaches.

> "Bite your tongue just before your about to speak and allow for that little bit more from the pupil because usually I found that's where they sort have that light bulb moment…I noticed that the pupils - there was less 'unnecessary dialogue and more actioning and I think the pupils are the ones almost lead the conversation with me". (Sarah)

> "…how good your teaching became when you realised how limited some of your questions perhaps were, a lot of closed questions or 'guess what's in the teachers head' type of thing so

actually instead of asking questions that prompted thought". (Joel)

These examples highlight how teachers learning about and gaining confidence in using coaching practices could take these and apply them in practice to improve outcomes for children and young people in their schools in relatively short spaces of time. There is another correlation to the benefits to themselves in doing so and the wider school community.

Conclusion

This study adds to the increasing research base for coaching in education and provides a differentiated picture of teachers as change agents when using coaching practices in schools.

Coaching in education can be applied at all levels of the school community ranging from pupils, staff, parents, and other stakeholders. Through coaching, barriers to teacher

development are being removed and coaching builds the trust and support the capacities of teachers to respond.

These findings are distinctive to the participants who volunteered their time to take part in this research study and therefore not representative of the general population of teachers. Further qualitative research could be conducted in the following areas:

- Evaluation of the generalisability of the themes that emerged from this study.
- Additional research into the relative importance of the themes identified in this study could contribute new information for educators' strategic decision making in relation to introducing coaching initiatives in schools.
- Additional factors that influence the development of ecological agency in schools through adopting coaching practices and culture.
- Further research in into teachers leading implementation of coaching in schools would be of interest.

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Teaching about sexual and social consent through peer-coaching dance

*A practice insight working paper by **James Underwood, Truc Thanh Truong, Dorcas Iyanuoluwa Fakile, Beatrice Balfour Sogol Zaman, Nguyen Huong Tra and (Elly) Li Tai***

This working paper comes from a series of related projects involving teachers and lecturers from Vietnam, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. These have included projects on: empowering young women leaders, developing critical thinking and in this case on embedding sexual and social consent within the wider curriculum. All these interlinked projects have at their core the practice of young people working together using coaching strategies, especially peer-coaching.

Teaching about sexual and social consent: the current context.

Teaching about the importance of consent is an important part of sex and social education curriculums in many countries including in the United Kingdom. These lessons often beginning in primary school. There are acknowledged models of excellence coming from the United Kingdom for all school ages. These include resources from the '*schools consent curriculum'*, and the *'national*

association of head teachers'. However, it is also an area that teachers at secondary school find challenging. We are not suggesting in this short paper that sex and consent education are moved out of their usual context of the biology and PSHE classroom. However, we are suggesting that a cross-curricula approach including the peer coaching of dance can strengthen teaching and learning in this area.

Consent education is often, although by no means always, embedded within the sex education aspects of biology lessons, which can be an uncomfortable place for teaching about this topic to sit. Consent is a bigger concept that stretches beyond sexual consent. An alternative approach, in schools with a broader understanding of the relevance of consent, is that consent education is taught within - personal social and health education (PSHE) lessons rather than within science lessons. However, PSHE lessons are already a crowded and contested space in curriculums in the United Kingdom and in other countries, with competing demands for the teaching of a

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wide range of life skills. Teachers teaching consent in both these subject contexts report that consent can be hard to teach didactically yet they feel that it should not be taught in a way that implies that such an important concept is up for discussion.

As regards the teaching of sex education. This strand of education at its best aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives. However, world-wide too many young people receive confusing and conflicting information about relationships and sex, as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. The absence of such sexual literacy can be the source of many health and social hazards, including sexually transmitted diseases, stress and anxiety. At its best sex education can also interlink with age-appropriate education on human rights, gender equality and relationships; emphasizing values such as respect, inclusion, non-discrimination, equality, empathy, responsibility and reciprocity. This is especially the case when sex education involves the teaching of consent.

Positively, schools and teachers that we have worked with have stressed the importance of teaching about consent. However, even so, this important area remains a particularly challenging one for teachers and schools to address. Secondary school teachers, in particular, have told us that while the concept of consent itself is very simple and its importance evident, somehow conventional desk-based discussion lessons get bogged down. Even when teacher-led discussion lessons go well the stories that come out can complicate by their personal nature. We have been told of lessons in which - a story about a beautiful natural kiss, that was mutually spontaneous, became mis-interpreted as challenging the importance of asking for consent; and of other occasions when the story of an aunt who asks to be hugged and one feels one should out of kindness and does even if it is against one's own feelings - was similarly mis-construed. These stories although enriching of life's complexities, in the narrow confines of the one-hour lesson fail to fully address 'consent' and instead confuse this important and simple principle.

This therefore found us (the authors' of this piece) collectively thinking if alongside desk-based lessons, consent could be taught in other ways and also had us discussing how we had done this. One way that emerged through these discussions was teaching consent via

enabling the peer-coaching of dance. For some of the authors this was practice that they had previously developed, for others it resonated with concepts and ideas that we were developing in other contexts.

Teaching through peer-coaching.

Teaching through peer-coaching, whether it be dance or other skills or subjects, is an area of practice that had engaged all the writers, prior to working together to write this article. We had all at some point used this approach to teach. Therefore, the step to using peer-coaching to teach about sexual consent seemed fitting to all of us, even those who had not taught this topic in this way before. Essentially peer-coaching is a method of teaching that requires the teacher to take a step back and guide students to derive their own answers through attempting to learn a skill or subject together. It is therefore clearly distinct from traditional lecture style teaching. However, it is also distinct from conventional teacher led discussions because all sides of the learning conversation are being led by the students. And it is also distinct from pair-share or other similar strategies because of the length of time over which peer-coaching is the main form of learning.

Peer-coaching will often involve the learning of a specific skill, such as dance. However,

because it involves an ongoing process of negotiation and agreement it also equally often facilitates the learning of more broadly applicable life skills. In this way peer-coaching functions to facilitate learning via the illustrative power of lived examples. This can be clearly seen through using 'dance' to teach about sexual consent. In this case dance becomes a well-suited lived analogy to help young people visualise the concepts of sexual and social consent. Sex education needs activities and discussions with which to teach concepts such as 'respect' and 'consent' in real world contexts, not just the biological aspects of sex. However, as even open discussions about sex are problematic in many cultures, teachers need a tactful and a culturally appropriate way with which to explore these concepts, and this may be achieved through 'dance'. The peer-coaching of consent via dance is a powerful teaching approach in all cultures but especially in cultures where perceptions of vulgar or inappropriate language limit open discussion about sex. In these contexts, the three concepts of sex, consent, and dance can be interlinked via the thread of peer-coaching.

Other important aspects of peer-coaching are that it is distinct from being coached by an expert as it involves less power distance and more equal role division. If skilfully planned, by the teacher, it can also involve variety in

the pace and structure of lessons. An important component of peer-coaching can be facilitated group work. Group work when used as a way of peer-learning can enable rich discussions and the gathering of diverse thoughts and experiences. This can then be followed by deep individual reflective sessions and by peer-coaching in pairs, In this way a series of lessons involving peer-coaching can be varied, interesting and engaging, whilst students can also tailor the concepts learnt in that lesson to their own needs. It is an approach that involves considerable planning even if at the point of delivering the lessons the teacher appears to have let go of their central position in the classroom. We have also used this peer-coaching approach with other courses such as one on empowering young women leaders, and participants received it well, even beyond our expectations. In this instance, once we had modelled the coaching approach, participants had the chance to practice it in groups with heightened bonding and confidence.

Peer-coaching dance

The fundamental principle of dance is that it is as an art form or an activity that utilizes the body and the range of movement within the body's capability. It is a way of perceiving a body of knowledge, and a personal and social experience. It is a pathway to creativity, self-consciousness and awareness about other

cultures and the development of expressive capacity. Dance can transmit values and attitudes which make it possible to share emotions and ideas with other individuals. It is therefore a powerful tool for social-educative action and intervention as it opens up a space for students to be actively involved with the learning process, encouraging them to take ownership of their education through the use of the expressive languages taught within dance education. Through dance, students can become actively engaged in learning to use movement to communicate and express their ideas, feelings, and thoughts, which correlates with elements that are central to the teaching of consent.

From our own teaching, our work together, and our work with practitioners, two concepts from the teaching and learning of dance have emerged as especially useful for enabling the peer-coaching of consent. These terms are firstly 'agreement' and secondly 'response'.

'Agreement' is seen in the process of either learning or designing a dance. Agreement is heard in any dance studio in conversations such as: 'I need to hold your hand to make this turn', 'I need to hold your waist to guide you on this spin', 'you need to push me by the bum to drive me into that lift'. Then 'is that Ok', and the reply 'yes' or 'no, but can we do

this instead'. Watching students learn or choreograph a dance is watching young people have sophisticated, sensitive, open, honest conversations about consent, without perhaps even realising that they are. These conversations are not didactic or even discursive in a traditional sense but instead involve a peer-coaching approach amongst the students. The role of the teacher becomes that of monitoring and ensuring the boundaries of these conversations: whilst the students teach each other through the process of asking, suggesting, answering and developing in order to find their own solutions.

The second concept is 'response'. This is seen in improvised, social dances. Many of these dances involve a couple: one of whom leads while the other follows. However, the concept of leading is mis-understood by non-dancers. The lead is not shoving the follower around the floor, rather by subtle moves of their body the lead provides space for the follower to move into or equally possibly to not. They might also hint at the move they want. A dance is a conversation in body language, a lead suggests but does not force. Any good lead has, on some occasions, offered a space for their partner to turn into them and their partner decided not, and the dance proceeds smoothly and respectfully even so.

To return to the learning of consent. The lead up to the 'spontaneous beautiful kiss conversation', that many of us have heard brought into a lesson was, even if the kissers did not know it, in fact a dance. A dance of eyes, expressions, body language and initial touches. And at any stage it could have taken another direction and proceeded respectfully and kindly. Through combining the ideas of 'agreement' and 'response' - the idea that consent is agreed in language but also continuously negotiated, with a right to withdraw at any stage, can be established. A dancer in an improvised, social dance has a right to agree the boundaries of a dance prior to dancing but also has a right to change the direction of the dance or stop dancing at any point and a right to have that respected.

Concluding thoughts

We are not suggesting in this short paper that sex and consent education are moved out of the biology and PSHE classroom, rather we are suggesting that a cross-curricula approach including the peer-coaching of dance can strengthen teaching and learning in this area. This is because of the potential for peer coaching to empower the young people involved in a way that teacher led learning never fully can. Empowerment is core to developing a mindset by which a young person has the capacity to understand and enact consent. An older teacher didactically

explaining the concept of consent is a great improvement on 50 years ago when consent was not even on the curriculum in the United Kingdom, but it is limited; whilst a classroom discussion on consent, while it still has its place, risks derailment. However, a student within the safe space of a classroom, asserting their boundaries and negotiating different wants, with their peers, within the physical but non-sexual context of dance - becomes someone who is more practised and skilled at such assertion within the complex young adult world that they are entering.

Sustaining internal coaches: the role of supervision

A practice insight working paper by Rebecca Raybould

Now is a time when there is much interest in developing coaching in schools and many opportunities to do so. As in the business world there have been some moves to adopt 'internal coaching models' where school staff participate in training to enable them to coach their colleagues. These models can be valuable as they have the potential to enrich the everyday practice of those involved and can be more sustainable when budgets for funding external coaches are limited. However, the models do of course bring challenges particularly in terms of supporting the coaches with their ongoing professional development in ways that develop coherence in practice. In this thinkpiece I explore the role that supervision can play in overcoming these challenges and the way in which the process can be adapted when working with internal coaches.

What is coaching supervision?

A simple working definition for supervision is "a formal and protected time for facilitating a coach's in-depth reflection on their practice with a trained Coaching Supervisor' (Association for Coaching, 2019). Within the literature there is some debate about the purpose of supervision but formative, normative and restorative elements are often mentioned (Hawkins, Turner and Passmore, 2019). Formative elements relate to supporting the professional learning of the coach, normative elements relate to enabling the coach to align with coaching expectations and restorative elements relate to supporting coach wellbeing. Just as there is debate about the purpose of the supervision there is also debate about the way in which it is carried out. However, within the diversity of approaches there is always an emphasis on the use of a coaching style.

To what extent are coaches engaging in supervision?

Engaging in supervision is a coaching body expectation (Association for Coaching, 2018) yet research suggests that many coaches don't participate (Hawkins, Turner and Passmore, 2019). My experience is that it is particularly often overlooked when setting up internal coaching programmes in schools and therefore the benefits it can offer are missed. There is a growing awareness of the potential of supervision more widely for those in educational leadership positions and indeed Leeds Beckett itself now houses the National Hub for Supervision. It seems that now is a good time to focus on considering the role of supervision for internal coaches.

Why supervision for internal coaches?

In a recent CollectivED event Dr Trista Hollweck shared how internal coaches in a teacher induction programme highlighted that it took them years to feel that they really understood their role. This emphasizes the time and practice needed to 'become' a coach. As in most forms of professional development it is not possible to participate in a training programme and emerge as a fully-fledged coach. Supervision offers the opportunity to continue the development process in a psychologically safe environment.

Part of the reason for the time needed to develop as an internal coach may be because the role sits in tension with other aspects of the teacher/ school leader role. Whilst many internal coaches find that the coaching approach starts to 'ripple' into other aspects of their role, in the early stages it may be a very different way of working from the more directive style they are using with pupils or colleagues. This was thrown into particularly stark relief at the start of the pandemic when heads felt that they were expected to provide answers about how their schools would operate. Supervision can offer a counter to the directive expectations and offer a chance for internal coaches to immerse themselves in the coaching approach, remind themselves of what this feels like and so refresh their own practice. Of course, it is much more powerful

to experience this through a coaching approach rather than simply being 'told' to be less directive in coaching.

Prof Rachel Lofthouse and Dr Trista Hollweck have emphasised the importance of contextualised coaching in the education setting - coaching which meets the needs of its context and where participants have a shared understanding of its role and features. Supervision which takes place within this context has the potential to help coaches develop their own practice and contribute to developing a shared understanding of the way in which coaching is best carried out across the setting.

How do we carry out internal coaching supervision in a way that secures the benefits?

Whilst supervision has many potential benefits for internal coaches it is important to consider how we carry out the process to make it as valuable as possible. Many of the supervision models and tools are applicable to this setting. So, Hawkins' CLEAR model can provide a helpful way of structuring sessions and his 7 eyed model can support consideration of the systems within which the coach and others are working (Hawkins and Smith, 2013).

But I believe it is also important to take into account some of the differences between internal and external coaches highlighted in

the previous section. In particular we need to address the fact that coaching is only one part of their role. My experience is that this means it is even more important to use a coaching style within sessions so that it provides a model for participants to use in their own coaching. It also means that live coaching practice sessions in group supervision can have even more value. These practice sessions enable participants to reconnect with the coaching approach, learn from observing each other and from gaining feedback, and work towards a shared understanding of practice in that setting. This approach to internal supervision was certainly echoed by a number of colleagues in the business sector at the Coaching in the Workplace Conference (Association for Coaching, 2020).

I believe it also important to address the sustainability of the coaching supervision

process within educational settings. I have been experimenting with some schools in running coaching supervision workshops that enable internal coaches to develop the skills they will use with their peers. Whilst some external supervision is helpful this model can help to develop the internal capacity of the school.

Next steps

Coaching supervision for internal coaches certainly has much potential. During these times when we are re-evaluating our practices as a result of the pandemic it is worth considering how we can enable coaches in schools to participate in supervision that helps them to develop individually and collectively. I will continue to work and learn with schools about this topic and hope to write future papers on the theme. I would be delighted to connect with others to discuss the issues raised in this paper in more detail.

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ONSIDE Co-Mentoring: *"Breaking down the last vestiges of hierarchy"* to promote professional learning, development and well-being.

A research insight working paper by Andrew J Hobson

Abstract

This paper discusses the nature and impact of the introduction of a school-based mentoring scheme that I term ONSIDE Co-Mentoring. Incorporating reverse mentoring into Off-line, Non-judgmental, Supportive, Individualised, Developmental and Empowering (ONSIDE) mentoring relationships that were initially established as uni-directional broke down remaining traces of hierarchy and resulted in stronger, more trusting mentoring relationships. This created a safe space within which teachers could openly discuss and tackle problematical issues which they might otherwise have struggled with alone, which, in turn, enhanced their professional learning, development and wellbeing.

Key words: *teacher mentorship, ONSIDE Co-Mentoring, reverse mentoring*

The significant potential of mentorship as a means of facilitating the professional learning and development (PLD), well-being and retention of educators (and others) has been well-rehearsed in the international research literature. Yet not all mentoring schemes are alike, and some have greater positive impact than others. Relating to this, Mullen (2016) highlights, firstly, some of the limitations of what she termed '*traditional mentoring*', which involves "*a hierarchical relationship of a senior (mentor) and a subordinate (mentee)*" (p.132), and secondly, some relative benefits and drawbacks of '*alternative mentoring types'* (or non-traditional approaches to mentoring), including *collaborative mentoring* or '*comentoring*'. In this paper, I extend Mullen's analysis through discussion of an additional alternative mentoring type I call ONSIDE Co-Mentoring. I define mentoring, in this context, as a dyadic relationship intended to support the PLD and well-being of both participants.

Traditional versus comentoring

Mullen tells us that whilst traditional, uni-directional mentoring relationships may have beneficial impacts on mentees, they neglect the potential for '*reciprocal learning and*

growth' and can serve to '*perpetuate the status quo*' (Mullen, 2016, p.132). In contrast, comentoring – whether it starts out as peer mentoring or as a more traditional mentoring relationship which evolves into comentoring – "*unites individuals in a mutually beneficial relationship*" (p.134). Either way, the bi-directional focus reflects and takes advantage of the fact that powerful positive outcomes can result from being or acting as both mentee and mentor (Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005; Simpson et al., 2007). Other research complements Mullen's by highlighting: on the one hand, various conditions for or ingredients of successful and effective mentoring relationships and programmes (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Searby & Brondyk, 2016); and on the other hand, what can go wrong when such conditions and ingredients are not in place, including serious drawbacks of the deployment of 'remedial' or 'deficit' models of mentoring (Hobson & Maxwell, 2020), exemplified by the pathology of mentoring practice termed 'judgementoring' (Hobson and Malderez, 2013).

Judgementoring

Judgementoring is an excessively directive, evaluative and judgemental form of mentoring. It is typified by mentors' over-reliance on the strategy of regularly observing mentees' teaching and 'providing feedback'

on their 'performance', with relatively little emphasis on developing mentees' own critical analysis of their practice or ownership of their PLD, and little concern for mentees' well-being. Judgementoring inhibits the development of a safe, trusting relationship between mentee and mentor, which can (and often does) render mentees reluctant to engage openly, honestly and meaningfully with their mentors. In consequence, judgementoring, which has been found to be something of an international phenomenon, impedes mentees' PLD and has detrimental impacts on their well-being and retention (Hobson, 2016).

The ONSIDE Mentoring Framework

It was in the light of the research findings outlined above that I set out to develop a research-informed mentoring framework which might avert judgementoring and help organizations and policy-makers to maximize the positive impacts of mentorship. I analysed or re-analysed data and previously published research findings from five empirical studies of mentoring and PLD, carried out between 2003 and 2016, alongside a review of the wider literature. The five studies had varying foci, including mentoring of early career and more established teachers in primary, secondary and further (post-16) education in England, and successful mentoring schemes across different professions in six countries. I

found (Hobson, 2016) that positive impacts of mentoring tend to be maximized where mentoring is 'ONSIDE' – that is:

- **O**ff-line (separated from line-management and supervision);
- **N**on- evaluative and non-judgemental;
- **S**upportive of mentees' psycho-social needs and well-being;
- **I**ndividualised and tailored to each mentee's current emotional and developmental needs;
- **D**evelopmental and growth-oriented, to provide appropriate degrees of challenge whilst promoting mentees' learnacy (Claxton, 2004); and
- **E**mpowering and progressively non-directive, to support mentees to become more autonomous.

I considered that the ONSIDE acronym helpfully emphasised the importance of a mentor being on their mentee's side in terms of acting as confidant, ally and advocate.

Supporting the Introduction of Sustainable ONSIDE Mentoring Schemes

As with all mentoring schemes, the relative success with which ONSIDE Mentoring might be deployed is influenced by the extent to which a supportive mentoring architecture (Cunningham, 2007) or mentoring substructure and superstructure (Hobson &

Maxwell, 2020) can be established. It is vital, for example, for ONSIDE mentoring participants to be appropriately trained to enact non-judgemental and progressively non-directive mentoring. With this in mind, my University of Brighton colleague Kathy Clements and I have established an adaptable research and development (R&D) model for supporting organisations to introduce sustainable ONSIDE Mentoring schemes. Whilst the specific means of deploying the ONSIDE framework are shaped following discussion with commissioning organisations, to seek to ensure that the development of the mentoring schemes address organisational needs, the R&D programme typically lasts 12-15 months, and includes:

1. Support for a designated Mentoring Programme Coordinator (MPC) to establish the scheme (e.g. recruit participants, establish and oversee mentoring pairs);
2. The provision of specialist training in and opportunities to practise enacting ONSIDE Mentoring as mentor and/or mentee;
3. Research into an initial phase of ONSIDE Mentoring; which informs
4. Subsequent 'mid-term' mentoring development workshops for participants; followed by
5. Additional research to establish the impact of the mentoring scheme and inform its further development.

Mullen (2016) reminds us that formal mentoring schemes are 'haunted' by *sustainability* issues. One issue relates to scarce resources: organizations might be able to provide initial investment to establish a scheme, but there is often limited resource to support the scheme after that point. Whilst our university requires us to charge organisations for staff time to support the introduction of ONSIDE Mentoring schemes, our R&D model seeks to facilitate sustainability by empowering organisations to continue the schemes without our ongoing support after the initial 12-15 month period. This is done by working closely with the organisational MPC, who is encouraged to co-lead the training and development in the first year, to enable them to lead this alone after that point, when they are free to use and adapt the original training and development materials at no additional cost. We also encourage the organizations we work with to ensure effective MPC succession-planning, to try to ensure the schemes do not 'lose steam' if and when MPCs change roles or leave the organization (Mullen, 2016, p.133).

Following two pilot R&D programmes, we have been commissioned by five different organizations, to date, to support the establishment of sustainable ONSIDE mentoring schemes, including for trainee teachers, teachers in general, and school principals. The research elements of these programmes have identified positive impacts on participants' PLD, well-being, and self-efficacy, in line with others' research on the adoption of the ONSIDE framework (Hart, 2020; Káplár-Kodácsy & Dorner, 2020), together with some evidence of positive impacts on staff retention (Hobson, 2021). In what follows, I focus on a particular variant of ONSIDE that I term *ONSIDE Co-Mentoring*.

Introducing ONSIDE Co-Mentoring (Coaching, Compassion, Collaboration)

The 'Co-' in ONSIDE Co-Mentoring has a triple meaning. Firstly, the ONSIDE approach in general shares a number of features of progressive approaches to coaching as well as mentoring. For example, it supports Cox's (2013) notion of coaching as 'facilitated reflective practice', while the individualised and progressively non-directive elements of ONSIDE are consistent with Differentiated Coaching (Kise, 2006), and its emphasis on supporting participants' well-being is consistent with 'third generation coaching' (Grant, 2017; Roche, 2019). Secondly, ONSIDE Mentoring is consistent with 'Compassion-based Coaching' in particular (Boyatzis, Smith, & Beveridge, 2013), in that it promotes a growth-orientated rather than deficit, compliance or 'control and command' model of PLD.

Whilst the ONSIDE mentoring framework (with its off-line, non-evaluative and

empowering imperatives) was designed to promote mutually beneficial relationships between mentoring partners, its deployment in *uni-directional* mentoring schemes and relationships, in which relatively experienced mentors support relatively inexperienced mentees, nonetheless retains an element of hierarchy that could serve to impede collaboration and opportunities for 'reciprocal learning and growth' (Mullen, 2016, p.132). Hence, and thirdly, the deployment of the ONSIDE framework to support *bi-directional* relationships could promote more authentic Collaboration and potentially optimize mutual benefits of participation. The remainder of this paper presents a vignette of ONSIDE teacher co-mentoring which has been found to do just that.

J.S. Mill School ONSIDE Teacher Co-Mentoring

In 2018, a coeducational independent school for 13-19 year olds, in the south of England, approached the author for support to introduce a progressive staff mentoring scheme which would promote PLD and a collegial learning culture within the school. Following the School Leadership Team's identification of a suitable MPC, 26 colleagues – all members of J.S. Mill School (*pseudonym*) teaching staff – were recruited as the scheme's first cohort (2018-19). Participants included early and mid-career teachers, and

middle and senior leaders. Mentoring relationships were initially established as uni-directional, with the MPC acting as mentor to two colleagues, one colleague participating as both mentor and mentee, 11 colleagues as mentors only (each to one mentee), and 13 as mentees only. Fourteen mentoring relationships were thus established at the outset, though this was reduced to 13 after one mentee and one mentor left the school during the academic year, with the mentee whose mentor left the school being re-paired with the mentor whose mentee left the school.

Methods and Data

The research element of the R&D programme included:

1)   A baseline mentee survey (completed by 14 participants, in September 2018), which explored mentees' perceptions of different elements of their working lives (e.g. their work effectiveness) and their expectations of participating in the ONSIDE Mentoring scheme;

2)   Separate, mid-term focus groups with five mentors and five mentees, and a one-to-one semi-structured interview with the MPC – all conducted in December 2018;

3)   A final survey (completed by all 24 participants who completed the programme,

in May 2019), which explored participants' current perceptions of different elements of their working lives, and their experiences of participating in the ONSIDE Mentoring scheme.

The focus groups and interview were recorded and subsequently transcribed to facilitate data analysis. The findings presented below are primarily based on a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of data generated from the mentee and mentor focus groups, the MPC interview, and open-ended questions from the final survey.

The research received ethical approval from the University of Brighton Research Ethics and Integrity Committee, and was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018).

Initial Findings and the Incorporation of Reverse Mentoring

The mentor and mentee focus groups revealed that mentees were accessing mentors' support for a diverse range of issues in accordance with their specific PLD and well-being needs. These included socialisation and induction into the school (for newly qualified or newly appointed teachers), general pedagogical knowledge and strategies (e.g. lesson planning and behaviour management), pastoral issues, problematical relationships

with colleagues, departmental management, time and workload management, and career progression. Together with the MPC interview, the focus groups also highlighted emergent positive impacts of ONSIDE Mentoring interactions, most notably for mentees' PLD and wellbeing. The following quotations are illustrative:

It was just about how you organise time … So I found that very useful because I was getting in a panic state… And so I've started implementing those changes and I do feel the benefit. (Mentee, Focus group)

[I]t's been nice to have that support and … from a staff well-being point of view I think it's kind of good to have someone there that you can just kind of vent to for a little bit… that's been quite helpful for me personally. (Mentee, Focus group)

[O]ne of [the] mentees … through discussing concerns that [they] had … turned round after session five saying that this is the happiest [they've] been at [the school], this is the happiest [they've] been with teaching and [they are] actually looking forward to staying at [the school] rather than looking to move… Now [they don't] know why [they're] feeling happier [but have] quite a strong feeling that by having these regular [ONSIDE Mentoring] meetings it is having an effect on [their] thinking. (MPC Interview)

Given early indications that the mentoring relationships were productive, and with the support of the MPC, both mentors and mentees were asked, in the mid-term focus groups, for their thoughts about the possibility of incorporating reverse mentoring, which had been found to have beneficial impacts in other contexts (e.g. Murphy, 2012), into their relationships. This would involve participants switching mentoring roles, for some meetings or parts of meetings, so that the designated mentee would support the designated mentor to explore one or more of *their* issues or PLD needs. The majority of participants were open to the idea – some quite enthusiastically so on the basis that "*it could break down any last sort of vestiges of hierarchy*" and *"have the effect of establishing a deeper level of trust*" (Mentor, Focus group). As a result, in the programme's mid-term mentoring development workshop, mentees and mentors were trained in the enactment of reverse mentoring and encouraged to incorporate this into their mentoring relationships where both partners were in favour of doing so. Subsequent evidence from the final survey indicated that around half of the mentoring pairs meaningfully engaged in reverse mentoring – and thus bi-directional or co-mentoring – between January and May 2019.

Overall Impacts of Participation

Responses to the final survey provided (additional) evidence of positive impacts of ONSIDE Mentoring on the PLD and wellbeing of those originally designated as mentors as well as those originally designated as mentees:

There are definitely things that I feel have improved in my teaching abilities (Mentee, Final survey)

[The mentoring] *has allowed me to understand my new working environment a lot quicker. It has also made me feel valued, cared for and safe. (Mentee, Final survey)*

It [the experience of ONSIDE Mentoring] *has made me more patient, circumspect and trusting. (Mentor, Final survey)*

Being able to mentor a colleague and see [her/him] *grow in her/his ability to manage has been a very fulfilling role and has added to my sense of purpose in my role. (Mentor, Final survey)*

Whilst it is problematical to attribute any changes solely to participants' experiences of mentoring, it is noteworthy that, amongst the 13 mentees who completed both the baseline and final surveys, the mean rating of their work effectiveness, on a scale of 0-10, increased from 6.69 to 7.69. (See Figures 1-2.)

Figure 1. On a scale of 0-10, how would you rate your overall effectiveness in your work? (0 =
ineffective; 5 = quite effective; 10 = very highly effective) (Mentee baseline survey)

```
0  | 0
1  | 0
2  ███████ 1 (7.7%)
3  | 0
4  | 0
5  ██████████████ 2 (15.4%)
6  ██████████████ 2 (15.4%)
7  ████████████████████████████████████ 5 (38.5%)
8  | 0
9  ██████████████ 2 (15.4%)
10 ███████ 1 (7.7%)
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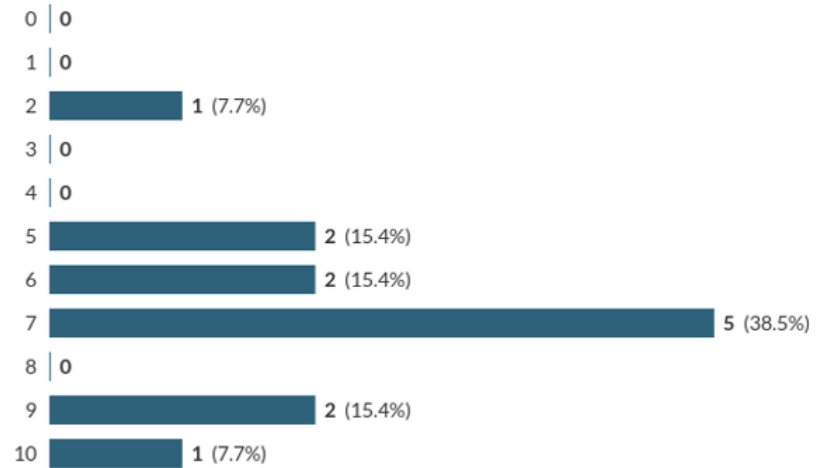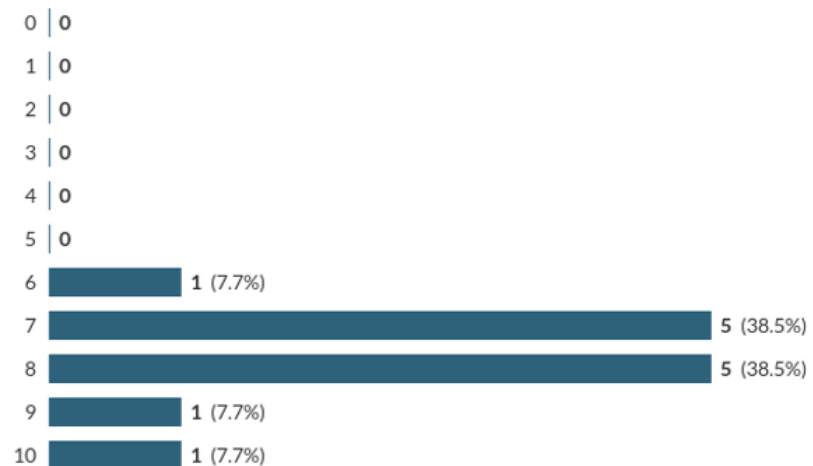**Figure 2. On a scale of 0-10, how would you rate your overall effectiveness in your work?** (0 =
ineffective; 5 = quite effective; 10 = very highly effective) (Final survey, mentee responses)

```
0  | 0
1  | 0
2  | 0
3  | 0
4  | 0
5  | 0
6  ███████ 1 (7.7%)
7  ████████████████████████████████████ 5 (38.5%)
8  ████████████████████████████████████ 5 (38.5%)
9  ███████ 1 (7.7%)
10 ███████ 1 (7.7%)
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When asked about their experiences of reverse mentoring, participants who incorporated this into their mentoring relationships stated that it strengthened those relationships and enhanced their knowledge and expertise in relation to mentoring and/or other aspects of their work:

This has been beneficial and… strengthened the relationship between mentor and mentee. (Mentor, Final survey)

Changing from mentor to mentee allowed the trust to grow. (Mentor, Final survey)

[It helped me b]*uild my own listening skills. Being able to listen, find the problem, and sum up what other people are saying is a very rewarding process. (Mentee, Final survey)*

[It m]*ade me look at one aspect of my work from a new angle, made me try a new approach I wouldn't have previously considered; made me understand the challenges of being a mentee. (Mentor, Final survey)*

The data suggest that the incorporation of reverse mentoring produced stronger, more trusting mentoring relationships precisely because, as a mentor quoted previously put it, it helped to '*break down any last vestiges of hierarchy'*. The following comments from the final survey substantiate this:

It is important to recognize that being a mentor should not aim to create a hierarchy [or] *a sense of the mentor being 'an expert'…* [T]*his*

could… potentially disempower the mentee. (Mentor, Final survey)

Reverse mentoring… is empowering and liberating at the same time for both mentors and mentees. (Mentee, Final survey)

As well as the incorporation of reverse mentoring into mentoring relationships, other factors identified by participants as facilitating positive impacts of the mentoring were the off-line, non-judgemental and progressively non-directive features of the ONSIDE framework, together with its concern for mentees' well-being, and the importance of confidentiality in mentoring relationships, to which they committed from the outset in a mentoring agreement. These considerations combined to enable the establishment of relational trust and a safe space within which participants were able to share issues, insecurities and perceived PLD needs with their (co-)mentors which might otherwise never have been aired or addressed:

It is absolutely about well-being and … people having the safe space psychologically and emotionally to say what they think and know they're not going to be judged for it. (Mentor, Focus group)

I have been able to ask questions to my mentor that otherwise I wouldn't have been able to ask. (Mentee, Final survey)

There are topics I felt I would never raise with the department or line manager or senior management, but actually that [ONSIDE

Mentoring relationship] *was just a perfect venue. (Mentee, Focus group)*

Finally, in addition to positive impacts on their PLD and well-being, some participants stated that ONSIDE (Co-)Mentoring was helping to foster a more collegial learning culture across the school:

I really like … that we are building a trusting and more open culture in the school through this ONSIDE mentoring programme. (Mentor, Final survey)

The process of sharing builds a sense of belonging for a new staff member and strengthens a sense of the collegiate community for longer standing colleague relationships. (Mentor, Final survey)

Conclusion

The research reported in this paper corroborates and extends earlier studies which have highlighted positive impacts of reverse mentoring (e.g. Chen, 2013; Clarke, Burgess, van Diggele, & Mellis, 2019; Murphy, 2012), and studies which have identified positive impacts of collaborative mentoring or comentoring (Mullen, 2016, p.132). Furthermore, the paper presents original research findings on positive impacts of incorporating reverse mentoring into ONSIDE Mentoring relationships, and of what I term ONSIDE Co-mentoring. For example, the ONSIDE Co-Mentoring vignette presented provides evidence of '*reciprocal learning and*

growth' (Mullen, 2016), while the incorporation of reverse mentoring into ONSIDE mentoring relationships initially established as uni-directional served to break down remaining elements of hierarchy to establish stronger, more trusting relationships. This provided a safe(r) space within which teachers could openly discuss and tackle issues and PLD needs that they may have been unwilling or unable to discuss with line managers and (judge)mentors associated with traditional, deficit or remedial models of mentoring.

Given that they arose from a single mentoring programme, the extent to which the findings reported in this paper are transferable to other contexts is unclear, and it is hoped that they might potentially be verified, qualified and/or extended through further research. For example, future studies might explore relative strengths and limitations, for different kinds of participants, of uni-directional versus bi-directional ONSIDE Mentoring schemes, or of ONSIDE Co-mentoring schemes which incorporate reverse mentoring into relationships initially established as uni-directional (like the J.S Mill scheme profiled above) versus those which establish peer-to-peer mentoring relationships from the outset. I therefore welcome others' adoption of and research into ONSIDE Co-Mentoring, and hope to learn more about means of facilitating its positive impacts on teachers, schools and other organizations.

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The language and practice of student support for one another: Diverse options for diverse purposes

A practice insight working paper by Tina Forbes, Alison Fox, Catherine Comfort, Louise Taylor and Natalie Mott

Towards a Student (peer) Mentoring Framework

One of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) expectations for quality is that 'from admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education' (QAA, 2018a, p3). They advise to evaluate provision by asking 'What peer support mechanisms do you have in place to encourage your students to develop their independent study habits?' (QAA, 2018b, p9). This paper reflects on one aspect of The Open University's response to this (The OU), through its review and forward planning around student (peer) mentoring. This coincides with a time when online support between peers has been under the spotlight as educational settings internationally have needed to move study online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Student mentoring and related peer support mechanisms are well known to increase a sense of belonging and to make new/inexperienced/under-confident students feel welcome and part of a community. Further, this sense of community and belonging can contribute to student success (Thomas, 2013; Thomas et al, 2017). To explore how peer support was working and could work in its distance learning context, student mentoring was included in The OU's Access and Participation Plan 2019/2020.

A Student Mentoring Framework for articulating and guiding such provision was envisaged and a student-staff task and finish group set up. Students acting as 'student experts' have been integral to developing several of The OU student mentoring initiatives, mirroring other University's approaches nationally eg. University of Huddersfield (Reeves et al, 2019), Sheffield Hallam (https://www.shu.ac.uk/goglobal/going-global-on-campus/culture-connect) and internationally (Sieu et al, 2017). In the mapping activity of current provision, 20 separate initiatives were identified, each born from local drivers, such as:

- offering moral support and study tips,

- a welcome into a broader student community,
- support for personal development planning,
- reduction of student isolation and
- increasing likelihood of student retention

alongside opportunities for mentors to develop and capture employability skills (Ragavan, 2012), stay connected with peers and become more involved in the life of the University.

Student roles and structures to support other students had already been developed by various teams across the University. As found in education more broadly (Whiteside, 2020), these reflected different ways of envisioning the course of support (whether as buddying, coaching or mentoring or as 1:1, 1:few or 1:many approaches).

'Coaching', 'Buddying', 'Mentoring', 'Peer Support': What an initiative chose to call itself appeared linked to its purpose and how students were expected to engage. It was clear there was no 'standard way'. Whilst sometimes the terms might appear interchangeable and subject to interpretation, they may also be applied with specific meanings in mind. With the benefits of co-creation in mind (Edwards et al, 2021), the naming could be reviewed to check it resonated well with students involved. Part of the training and co-creation day for new mentors in two Faculties involved discussing the appropriate name for the initiative. Considerations were being able to communicate their involvement to those involved and to external audiences, such as employers. Table 1 summarises how names mapped against OU initiatives.

Peer support: does it matter what it is called?

Table 1: Possible naming conventions according to initiative features

	Coach	Mentor	Buddy	Peer supporter
Vertical relationship (where an experienced student supports a less experiences student)	✓	✓		
Horizontal relationship (where students of similar experience support each other)			✓	✓
1:1 (where one mentor supports a mentee)	✓	✓	✓	
1:Many (where one mentor supports many mentees)	✓	✓	✓	
Many:Many (where a group of mentors support a group of mentees)				✓
Formal scheme (involving a mentoring role with specific tasks and expected outcomes, e.g. increased retention)	✓	✓		
Informal scheme (in a mentoring role supporting general introductory or community building activities)			✓	

Peer support: does it matter how it is offered?

At The OU, most mentoring initiatives are offered by faculties in relation to academic study, rather than being generic, emotional support sought by students independent of specific courses or qualifications. Being study and course/qualification-focused means peer mentors can share their own experiences and tips. Whilst support is needed for safeguarding purposes and advice on where to go for help should they receive interactions beyond the scope of their role, peer mentors do not require advanced training in areas such as mental health support or vetting, nor the mentor emotional support that this would entail. Having decided upon the **purpose** of the mentoring, the next decision is to identify at which point in a student's academic career mentoring is best offered and how long it will continue, balancing the needs of the mentees with those of the mentors. The options for consideration are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Stages of study for possible initiatives and anticipated purpose

Stage of study	Anticipated purpose/benefits
Before a student enrols	To focus on study readiness and encouragement for those who are unsure of their capabilities
On registration	To encourage a sense of belonging and orientation
Once a module starts	To reinforce confidence and share study tips
Throughout first year	Instilling sense of belonging and study skills by pointing to wider University support mechanisms
Throughout study in a Faculty	Helping establish sense of belonging and good study practices
At any point needed throughout study at the University	Needs to be coordinated across University to join up initiatives, helping establish sense of belonging to the University and maximising use of support available

Twenty different initiatives were identified as operating at The OU, as summarised in Figure 1 below, with different schemes often operating within the same faculty, serving different purposes such as support for students with particular characteristics (e.g., care givers) or a particular support focus (e.g. personal development planning). All have different entry and exit points.

Figure 1: OU student mentoring schemes by study stage and faculty

Stages	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 and 19	18	20
Pre-registration												STEM							
Registration – pre module start	WELS			WELS					FASS	FASS	FASS		STEM			FBL			
Study – Student Support		WELS	WELS			WELS	WELS					STEM		FBL			OU WALES	OU WALES	CES
Study – Learning and teaching					WELS										FBL				
Study – general interest						WELS	WELS	FASS		FASS		STEM					OU WALES	OU WALES	CES
Alumni																			

NB. The abbreviations in Figure 1 refer to Faculties: WELS - Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies; FASS- Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; FBL – Faculty of Business and Law; OU WALES – the OU in Wales; CES – Careers and Employability Services.

Because the OU is a distance learning institution and mentoring is always offered remotely, each option raises questions about which technical solutions to use. The dimensions to be considered are:

- Whether the mentoring is linked to a course/qualification or stand alone?
- Whether mentoring is limited to students with certain attributes or open?
- The numbers of students involved – there can be 1000s of students on courses
- Which platform to use? Internal or external?
- How can security and confidentiality be ensured?
- How will students be notified about the service?
- How will they access the service?
- Students' preferred ways of communicating eg. via mobile devices, social media platform preferences

The technological solution is often shaped by compromises. For example, in course-specific mentoring, course forums and online rooms are unavailable to students until they have been allocated a tutor. Mentoring therefore cannot begin until close to course start when students might already be feeling overwhelmed. Workarounds are possible and initiatives have been using welcome forums on course and Qualification sites which are available before and/or across course study and available as soon as students register. However, this still leaves pre-registration support difficult to offer. Similarly, whilst wishing to be student-led, using students' preferred modes of communication might not be advisable once University data protection and Safeguarding responsibilities are factored in.

An inclusive rather than prescriptive Framework

Whilst The OU Framework has ended up being called Student Mentoring, it quickly demonstrates a respect to the way teams think carefully about their initiative's name, and outlines different conceptualisations (eg. buddying, Motzo, 2016; coaching, Whiteside, 2020; mentoring, Munro et al, 2020, KIC, 2021) and ways of constructing names. To illustrate these different ways of framing initiatives, the Framework needed to become part of a larger resource illustrating the rationale for and practical implementation of these as alternatives. However, this diversity also presents challenges. Similar sounding schemes in the same Faculty might appear to offer too many choices, confusion about what is on offer and what students might be able to engage with. Clarity of communications is proving important.

The process of developing our Student Mentoring Framework has been one of coming together to learn from students and

staff - not only involved in the initiatives but also those who have offered relevant insights into broader issues and next steps, such as the Safeguarding team and the Student Association. We are aware of evidence to suggest that students who feel that they 'belong' are more likely to be retained. Evaluations of peer support initiatives in various Universities have reported students' feeling welcomed and developing a sense of belonging (eg. Andreanoff, 2010; Andrews and Clark, 2011), particularly for international students (Nguyen and Clothier, 2019) and those from other potentially more marginalised or minority groups (Ryder et al, 2017; Foley, forthcoming). The Framework has embraced evidence that students can support one another and that this support might be offered in different ways, to support different transitions within a student journey, from pre-registration through to becoming an alumnus/alumna. With the diversity of backgrounds of students, for example as represented by the OU student body, these transitions are known to be demanding and represent a change process. The associated individual shifts in identity and agency would benefit from support (Ecclestone et al, 2009). Peer mentoring support offers a resource whereby students can draw on one another for this support, however we name our schemes and organise them.

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Putting context into coaching; creating an understanding of the value of contextual coaching in education

A research summary working paper by Rachel Lofthouse and Trista Hollweck

Introduction

Our recently published research paper (Hollweck and Lofthouse, 2021) is opening up a further exploration of what we termed contextual coaching in education. The research was a multi-case study (Stake, 2013) which drew on two bespoke examples of contextual coaching in education and uses the ten tenets of collaborative professionalism (Hargreaves and O'Connor, 2018) as a conceptual framework for abductive analysis. Data from both cases were collected through interviews, focus groups and documentation. The findings demonstrate that effective contextual coaching leads to conditions underpinning school improvement. We found patterns of alignment with the ten tenets of collaborative professionalism. These findings are summarised in this working paper. The paper also outlines the relevance of understanding the relationships between contextual factors defined by Hargreaves and O'Connor as the 4Bs 'before, betwixt, beside and beyond'.

When we think about contextual coaching the following key ideas are relevant: Gregory *et al.*, 2009; Johns, 2006.

- In the field of executive and organizational coaching, 'contextual coaching' is described as a process that emphasizes the importance of an organization's environment or context on its leadership development work

Valentine, 2019

- 'a knowledge of the system-level factors that inhibit or support coaching work, and the ability of an individual or group to sustain behavior change over time, would be useful in creating the conditions that are most conducive to accelerated organizational learning and development' (p.94).

Munro, 2017

- 'when we come to implementing coaching in schools, context is everything' (p.38).

Proffitt, 2020

- Coaching can also shape its educational context, for example fostering enculturation and building a strong dialogic platform focused on teaching and learning

These introduce the idea that coaching sits within, and is influenced by context, but also has the potential to shape the context both in the present and the future.

Two cases of coaching

The two cases of coaching analysed in this research can be summarised as follows:

Case 1 Swaledale, England
Teacher coaching for metacognitive pedagogies (maths focus)

Where?	10 primary schools in a Teaching School Alliance (TSA) in rural north England, with significant numbers of children from military families. Coaching was part of a Strategic School Improvement project (SSIF) funded by the government Department for Education (DfE)
Why?	Teachers to gain greater expertise for teaching maths through metacognitive pedagogies, to raise pupil attainment. Teachers to be able to subsequently lead development in school.
When?	SSIF project ran for five terms from September 2017 to April 2019. Lead practitioners began working directly with Lead Teachers (LTs) in each school using contextual coaching from January 2018.
Who?	Coaches were 3 experienced teachers newly appointed as lead practitioners by the TSA for the SSIF project. One SSIF designated LT per school was coached. The LTs were selected by senior leaders. Each coach maintained a coaching relationship with 3 or 4 schools over project.
How?	Specialised contextual coaching occurred regularly during scheduled visits by coaches to each school. Coaches worked with LTs using modelling of teaching, joint planning, co-teaching and debriefing. DfE funded Strategic School Improvement project budget paid salaries of lead practitioners (coaches) and release time for LTs to work with coaches and attend network meetings.

Case 2 Western Quebec
Teacher coaching for professional learning (induction with mentor- coaching)

Where?	1 large mixed-socioeconomic secondary school with two campuses: a junior high school (7-8) and a high school (9-11) in an urban setting in Western Quebec, Canada. Mentor-coaching was a mandatory part of the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) established in the school board in 2010 for first year teaching fellows (TFs). The school developed its own required coaching process for second year TIP TFs. The school also had developed a bespoke peer coaching approach.
Why?	Teachers in all stages of their career to be supported and have access to a self-sustaining professional learning process that focuses on meeting the needs of children in their care.
When?	TIP coaching for first year TFs began in 2011 with the school-developed TIP coaching for year 2 TFs introduced in 2017. The first cohort of peer coaching started in 2015. The study visit was on October 31, 2018. All coaching models continued beyond the study.
Who?	2 lead coaches (LCs) were full-time teachers, selected by the school principal as in-school support for coaches. The 15 TIP coaches were full-time experienced teachers in the school who worked with 7 first year TIP TFs and 6 second year TIP TFs. The 16 peer coaches were full-time experienced teachers.
How?	The TIP used a contextual coaching model that included goal setting, reciprocal classroom observations and debriefing, preparation of a Reflective Record, co-planning, and modelling of instructional strategies.

Understanding the coaching contexts

To further understand the coaching contexts the 'before and betwixt' elements of collaboration were evidenced using the research data.

In case 1 the teacher coaching for metacognitive pedagogies was developed within a Teaching School Alliance and funded by the DfE. Teaching schools were first established in 2011 and were part of a drive toward a policy ambition of a "school-led self-improving system" (see Greany and Higham, 2018). Each TSA was expected to lead "school improvement initiatives based on school partnerships" (Gu et al., 2015, p. 17). SSIF grants supported TSAs to focus on particular improvement needs identified through national performance data and use approaches considered to be evidence informed. In this case, the SSIF project involved 10 primary schools, some of which had been partners in previous collaborative projects. The funds were awarded for three key reasons. First, the 10 schools served military communities, where children typically underperformed. Second, the project prioritized mathematics, which is considered a learning priority and is used as a key indicator of school performance. Third, it focused on pupil metacognition and self-regulation, which is considered "high impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence" (Quigley et al., 2018, p. 4). A model described as

contextual specialist coaching" (Lofthouse and Rose, 2019, p. 24) was developed alongside a wider SSIF project infrastructure which evolved over the duration of the project. Three lead practitioners were employed and acted as the coaches for an LT in each of the 10 schools. The SSIF project also funded pedagogical resources, staff training and a virtual platform that could be used to share project materials, teacher reflections and examples of pupils' work. These provided a common foundation and experience for teachers engaged in the project. There was also a steering group which consisted of head teachers and deputy head teachers from the schools and external advisers.

In case 2 coaching for induction and teacher development was developed and implemented by the Western Quebec School Board (WQSB), an English language school district in a mainly French-speaking province. The WQSB's Teacher Induction Program (TIP) was first established in 2010 as a response to the challenge in the school district in attracting and retaining effective new teachers, especially in rural and northern schools. All teachers new to the district – called teaching fellows (TFs) – were paired in their first year with experienced teachers who supported them as mentor-coaches (MCs). Case 2 focused on a secondary school, where there was initial resistance to the TIP. Over time, school leaders and staff saw how the TIP

could be useful to support both new and experienced teachers in their school and thus developed more bespoke coaching provision for TFs in their second year. This peer coaching model complemented another coaching programme implemented through an external partnership with the OLEVI Alliance in England. LCs in both programmes worked together to establish monthly informal "coaches" breakfasts' which gave all coaches an opportunity to meet before school to share experiences, ideas and best practice.

Abductive analysis of coaching using the 10 tenets of Collaborative Professionalism

There are ten key tenets of collaborative professionalism identified by Hargreaves and O'Connor and data from the two cases of coaching were analysed in relation to these using an abductive approach:

1. Collective autonomy: Teachers' professional judgment is valued, and they have relative independence from top-down bureaucratic authority but less independence from each other.

2. Collective efficacy: Teachers believe that together they can make a difference to the students they teach, no matter what.

3. Collaborative inquiry: Teachers routinely explore problems, issues or differences of practice together and make evidence-

informed decisions to improve or transform what they are doing.

4. Collective responsibility: Teachers develop a mutual and moral obligation to help each other to become better in order to serve all students in the school community

5. Collective initiative: There are fewer initiatives in schools but more initiative by communities of strong individuals committed to learning with and from each other.

6. Mutual dialogue: Teachers' collaborative work is characterized by meaningful, respectful and constructive dialogue and feedback.

7. Joint work: Teachers engage in thoughtful and productive work to examine and improve professional practice facilitated by structures, tools and protocols.

8. Common meaning and purpose: Teachers articulate and advance a common purpose that is greater than test scores or even academic achievement and aims to make a difference in the lives of young people, so they can thrive and flourish as whole human beings.

9. Collaboration with students: Not only are students the focus of the collaborative work but they are also actively engaged with their teachers in constructing educational change together.

10. Big picture thinking for all: Teachers and school staff as well as school and system

leaders see, live and create the big picture together.

Over six months, we took time to revisit and work with research evidence from the two cases in order to familiarize and defamiliarize ourselves (Tavory and Timmermans, 2014). This involved sharing notes, initial codes and categories (Saldana, 2015) as well as emerging ideas and then going back to rethink, reword and reorganize. Findings were recorded and grouped into categories representing similar phenomena and ideas.

Outline findings

In both cases coaching were responses to the policy challenges and opportunities in their specific settings. The approaches were adapted over time, with changes largely being the result of co-construction between coaches and/or coachees in the contexts of the schools. Analysis of the cases of coaching in relation to the collaborative professionalism tenets revealed the significance of the contextualization of the coaching. The research findings can be outlined as follows:

- effective contextual coaching leads to conditions underpinning school improvement
- there are patterns of alignment with the ten tenets of collaborative professionalism

- contextual coaching is founded on mutual dialogue, joint work, collective responsibility and collaborative inquiry
- in more mature coaching programmes, collective autonomy, initiative and efficacy emerge
- there is also evidence that opportunities exist for contextual coaching to be further aligned with the remaining tenets
- the study also offers insight into how school improvement can be realised by the development of staff capacity for teacher leadership through contextual coaching

Making meaning and implications

The key conclusions were drawn from this study are summarised as follows. The impact of coaching in education is enhanced by recognizing the importance of context and the value of iterative design and co-construction.

Contextual coaching relies on deliberate yet flexible designs and structures of support:

- The self-determining and iterative element of contextual coaching increased its sustainability and enabled collaborative professionalism to flourish across and beyond the active coaching cohorts. The professionals involved began to take responsibility for shaping the coaching structure and design as a collective.

It is necessary to enable responsiveness to school culture and context:

- Coaching programmes can not simply be inserted into schools and expected to work in isolation; they must be part of a broader programme design so that the intelligence gathered through coaching can feed back to the wider system and vice versa.

Participants in coaching are helped by a shared purpose and understanding:

- In both cases the teachers understood the pedagogic 'why' and 'how' underpinning the focus of contextual coaching which led to greater buy-in, engagement and commitment.

Teachers need autonomy and leaders need to ensure capacity for coaching:

- Although externally initiated, participants in both cases were given sufficient time, space, resources and agency to co-construct ongoing coaching delivery and design. Individual teachers also set their own coaching goals based on the areas of improvement and innovation that they had identified as important for their students.

Long-term commitment and resources

- To build and sustain coaching impact there needs to be long term commitment and investment in the necessary resources.

The research suggests that the principles of contextual coaching are generalizable but models must be developed to be bespoke and aligned with each setting. It also indicates that collaborative professionalism might offer a useful framework to better design and implement contextual coaching programmes.

Additional sources

The peer-reviewed paper which this summarises (you can request a copy from the authors)
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Taking an ecological view of student (peer) mentoring

A think piece working paper by Alison Fox, Catherine Comfort, Tina Forbes, Louise Taylor, and Natalie Mott

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen those teaching online needing to find effective ways to support learners. One particular challenge has been to help students feel part of a community of peers, known to benefit them in multiple ways. Like many Universities, the Open University, has been developing its student (peer) mentoring. It seemed this was an opportunity to reflect on how our University, as a distance learning higher education provider, have been facilitating peer support through our wholly online qualifications.

As in face-to-face teaching settings, students studying at a distance benefit from spaces in which they can study alongside one another. For those students taking up these opportunities, there is the chance to share experiences (Foley and Marr, 2019) and these can be facilitated by creating student roles which offer encouragement, reduce any sense of isolation and support other students in developing self-reflective skills to aid decision-making. These might include roles named as 'buddies', 'coach', and/or of 'mentor' (e.g. Thalluri et al, 2014; Forbes et al, 2022). On distance learning courses it is harder to create the kinds of social space where students can

interact without a tutor present (Foley and Marr, 2019). Even when such spaces are offered through virtual learning environments, such as through forums, online rooms or live seminars, all students might not engage. Therefore, to meet their aims to be inclusive, Universities might evaluate what it takes to develop supportive peer-peer environments.

As might sound familiar to other Universities, in our evaluation of practices at The Open University (The OU), we realised how many initiatives had been developing in pockets of activity, identifying 20 to date. We embarked on developing a Student Mentoring Framework to embrace the various initiatives course teams had been putting in place to facilitate student mentoring of their peers (eg. Fayram et al, 2018; Taylor et al, 2020). In a mapping exercise asking colleagues about these initiatives we found peer 'buddy', 'coach' and 'mentoring' projects. Whilst similar in aims, the ways they were designed, set up and operated were different – involving different people and resources. It has been helpful to imagine the support from possible stakeholders ecologically to describe what

might be termed the habitat needed for effective peer support.

Student mentoring needs support across the institution

A familiar framework to many teacher educators, Bronfenbrenner's (1988) views on ecological systems are helpful in revealing different layers of support within which learning takes place. Originally envisioned to understand child development, this has been applied to understanding adult learning environment support (Zhang, 2018). This approach has been used to create Figure 1 to represent the three key within-institutional layers of those who can support student mentoring.

Figure 1: Within-institutional layers of support for student mentoring
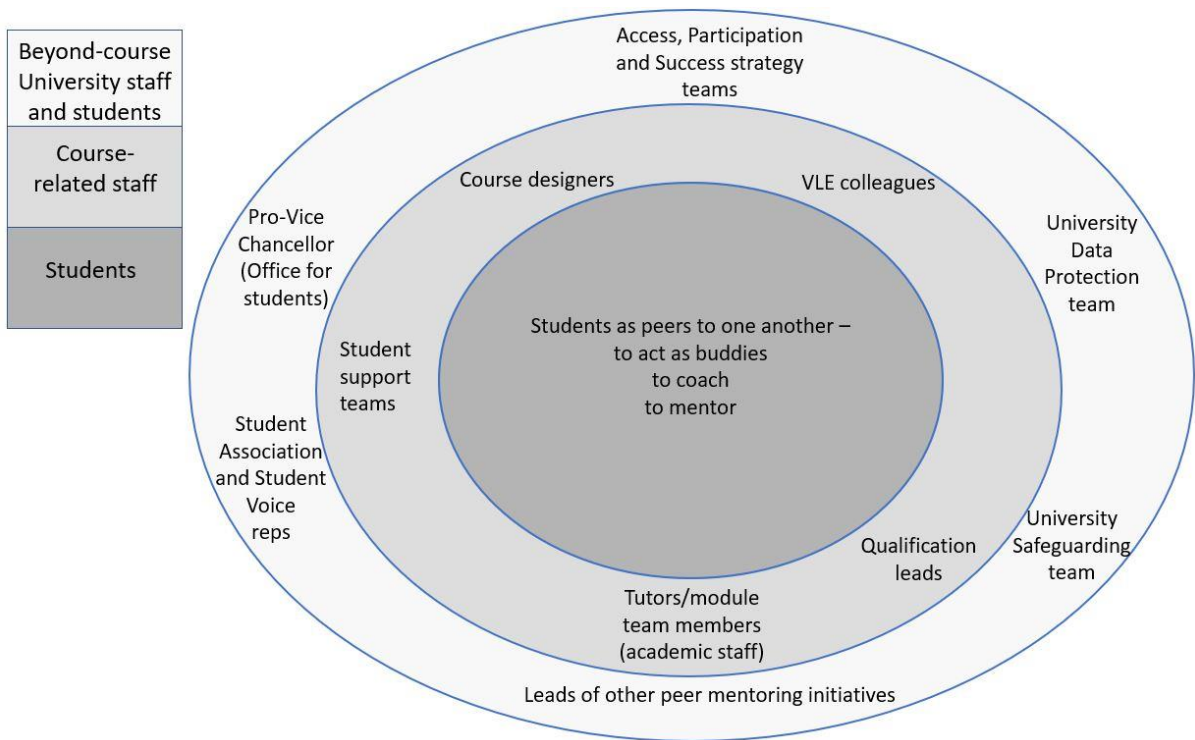
The positionality of students

Sharing authentic experiences gives mentors value as insiders but they can't be expected to do this without support. Training is important to help peer mentors manage their positionality or 'where one stands in relation to other' (Greene, 2014 p.2), emphasising their role in sharing their learning about successful navigation of University study – learning about learning. By taking on this kind of role, such students also become outsiders, setting aside their personal opinions around university practices to suggest objective solutions. This involves knowing where the limits to their role exists. Training can provide guidance on where to point peers to when they are unqualified to give advice, referring academic matters to tutors and study progression and financial advice to student support teams.

It is possible for students to support other students online, with mentors willing to 'give back', voluntarily offering their time and expertise, harnessing emotional and practical resources to benefit mentees. On forums or, less frequently in online rooms, mentors can respond to individual queries and raise awareness of resources whose value they have learned (e.g., the library or the study calendar). There are often many more readers of mentor posts, with mentees accessing forums benefitting from this learning vicariously, even if they do not participate

(Robson and Forbes, 2016). Training can also make mentors aware of benefits to their personal and professional lives from mentoring (Bunting et al, 2012), enhancing their social capital (Raposa et al, 2019) and employability through skill development.

As other University's report (eg Yomtov et al, 2017), student mentoring provides opportunities for course teams to benefit by learning in real-time which issues students face at which points in a course, highlighting where clarifications could be made, and which sources of information are valuable when. Hence, feedback from mentees and mentors helps improve current and future iterations of courses. We have come to appreciate the way processes which allow regular evaluation and communication of findings e.g., through scholarship, course and student support briefings, can ensure that valuable information is not lost and can be shared across the University.

Course staff - opportunity makers – if supported

Course teams take roles in training mentors so mentees can be informed and onboarded and, subsequently, to keep mentors engaged; especially when mentees are not always responding to mentor communications. Teams found that fostering support between mentors (Bunting et al, 2012), such as through a 'mentoring forum' or specific 'group chat', offered a space to share experiences (and

frustrations) and where the staff team could provide support and encouragement.

Student mentoring projects were conceived and realised because course teams identified a particular need to provide additional support to their students, often after engaging with student feedback. However, what was not always readily available and yet needed to realise the potential for student mentoring as a solution to the identified need was course team familiarity with current thinking on student mentoring, opportunities to learn from previous initiatives and sufficient capacity and resources to shape an appropriate initiative. This is where a need for University-level support was identified, which involved the Pro Vice Chancellors' Office in directing the Access, Participation and Success Strategy teams to fund a task and finish group to develop a Student Mentoring Framework.

Towards sustainability and inclusivity

Student mentoring initiatives take time, both in set up and implementation. Therefore, engagement from staff is paramount in terms of organisational input, onboarding, appropriate messaging during the mentoring period, keeping the momentum going for students and then effective evaluation and closedown. The Student Mentoring Framework encourages involvement of a variety of staff as outlined in the outer two rings of Figure 1 to help provide the training and logistical support to allow for effective

communications, safeguarding, data protection and mechanisms for mentoring. Ideally these stakeholders would be identified in advance and embedded into the initiative.

One of the biggest challenges for these initiatives is to onboard the least confident students – potentially the students who would most benefit. Students may sign up to the initiative and then disengage and gentle encouragement is needed for both mentor and mentee. They can feel encouraged just by knowing mentors are there if needed (Robson and Forbes, 2016). Quantifying this in terms of mentee benefit is not easy, and a difficult message to convey to mentors who can understandably become frustrated. Whilst also difficult to capture for evaluating the impact of such initiatives, this vicarious support is important to convey to those funding initiatives in the University.

The ripple effect: Learning from one another

Ecological thinking is helpful in recognising the mutuality of the systems in place within a University, which can help it be responsive rather than prescriptive, as a learning organisation (Collie and Taylor, 2004). If students are central, the support they can offer to one another is interconnected with the organisation as a whole. Students' sharing their experiences of study are crucial to organising future courses of study and to ensure that the services of the University are tailored to their needs. By engaging with a)

student coaches and mentors, b) one another within qualifications and Faculties, and c) teams across the University with various, but relevant, responsibilities, the OU Student Mentoring Framework team became clearer how our activities connected with one another, how we could support one another and the vital role of student voice in these understandings. A key remaining challenge is to engage with, and therefore hear from, students who are potentially the hardest to reach, in order to learn from all students' experiences and not only those who come forward to act as buddies, coaches and mentors. Student mentors are well placed to help reach out and improve University understandings of the nature of student needs.

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What does a Thesis Mentor do? And how can we support them to do it well?

A practice insight paper by Kay Guccione

The doctorate is full of unknowns and uncertainties. Successful transition to, and through, the doctorate represents a sizeable shift in thinking and being. As familiar learning strategies such as modularised, assessment-centred partitioning of writing into 'just in time' efforts fall away, confidence, self-belief and enthusiasm for the task can be eroded. Managing a large project such as the doctoral thesis is not something that just 'comes naturally'. Passively accepting that a thesis is one of life's great unknowns is not a sensible course of action; like any other writing task, it can, and must be defined (Murray, 2017).

Over the last eight years I have been working with Thesis Mentors in structured programmes designed to support doctoral writers to define and manage the writing process. Thesis Mentors support their mentees to recognise, interrupt, and rebuild patterns of writing, that fit with the demands of the doctoral process, and the preferences and motivations of the individual writer. Thesis Mentoring as a programme pairs doctoral writers with a mentor who is trained in the ethical practices of coaching & mentoring. Over a 16-week period the pairs meet to discuss personal barriers to thesis writing progress, and to co-create bespoke solutions to the blocks that lead to inactivity and guilt. A mentor can support their mentee by supporting them to break the cycle of inactivity and guilt, and to creatively make their way out of old patterns and devise new habits and practices for writing (Guccione and Hutchinson, 2020: p134).

Not all institutions benefit from the existence of such a structured programme, yet supportive near-peer relationships are common, organically springing up in the research clusters and communities naturally occurring in university scholarly communities. I have put the following resources together to help to frame such partnerships by offering some guidelines and ideas for the role of the mentor in supporting thesis writing. The ideas that underpin Thesis Mentoring are covered more expansively in Guccione & Wellington (2017).

Important Context for Thesis Mentors

To give you some brief context for the resources that follow, please read these statements before engaging with the materials:

- When I say 'thesis mentor', I mean anyone who has completed their doctorate, and would like to volunteer some time to support others who are writing their thesis. This may be in the same group or dept, or across institutions.

- Whilst doctoral supervisors may find this material helpful, a mentor takes a different stance and approach, and is not part of the official, candidate advisory team. Nor do they play any formal role in the mentee's candidacy, on behalf of their university.

- The mentor is an independent supporter and champion who complements (does not substitute or contradict) those formal roles. They offer neutrality, and a sense of 'professional distance' to the mentee.

- Mentors offering help inter-institutionally, should be mindful that policies and guidelines for Doctoral Candidacy differ between institutions.

- I am not offering a mentoring service, as a mentor or as a programme leader. Nor am I able to give mentors individual support or supervision to mentors. These resources are offered for you as ideas that may inform your professional development, and so please apply your own good judgement as to how and when to use them.

If you are happy to proceed on that basis, feel free to engage with the resources below.

Resources for Thesis Mentors

The [slides I use in the Thesis Mentor Induction](#) give an overview of the purpose, focus, role and value of a Thesis Mentor.

For more detailed writing on the conversational style, please see my blog posts here on the [pros and cons of giving advice](#), and my post here on [the power of listening](#).

[A template 'Mentoring Agreement' form](#). This will support you to set expectations with your mentee. Feel free to adapt this as you prefer.

Here are three short supporting videos for thesis mentors:

- [Where Do Thesis Writers Commonly Get Stuck?](#)
- [The Solution Focused Approach to Thesis Mentoring](#)
- [Setting Boundaries in Thesis Mentoring](#)

Enjoy working with your mentees and feel free to pass this link on. These resources can be shared with anyone who would benefit. Post adapted from the original here: https://supervisingphds.wordpress.com/2020/03/24/resources-for-thesis-mentors/

All resources and text created by Dr Kay Guccione are licensed using Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike which means readers can share and republish them, as long as they credit Dr Kay Guccione as the author and link back to the original article.

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Book review of The Coaching Habit, by Michael Bungay Stanier

by Samuel Crome

If you're anything like me, each step forward in your development as a coach can also feel like a step back. Coaching is layered, intricate, complex. Training courses or books often reflect this complexity, sometimes treading the dangerous path of sterilising the inspiring act of coaching itself. It's a difficult balance for a writer or presenter: impressing the importance and depth of coaching, whilst maintaining its vitality.

Michael Bungay Stanier writes The Coaching Habit to engage and rejuvenate our feelings towards coaching, acknowledging himself that a 2006 study showed that only 23% of people who had been coached felt that coaching had a positive impact on their work (reference). The book is steeped in energy and charisma, and is deliberately concise – Bungay Stanier wants to convey the benefits and joys of coaching with his boundless positivity and succinct, practical strategies.

Coaching is enjoying a renaissance in the education sector, with schools eagerly training coaches, either following more traditional coaching models to develop their staff or help with career goals, or through instructional coaching, which often links to a

teacher's lessons themselves. Bungay Stanier's view is that all leaders should adopt a coaching approach in the way they lead and manage; only by asking questions can we truly help our colleagues grow. The book opens with the author's statement of intent: 'This book is about making you a leader, a manager, a human being who's more coach-like. Which means building this simple but difficult new habit: stay curious a little longer, rush to action and advice-giving a little more slowly'.

This mantra perhaps explains why The Coaching Habit isn't a comprehensive guide to cover all elements of coaching; it doesn't seek to fill the reader's boots with the nuances to become a trained coach, but it does empower everyone to improve the quality of their questions and conversation management. The advice is direct and practical, allowing the reader to implement the ideas immediately.

The premise of the book is twofold: primarily, to help you build a coaching habit in both your coaching conversations, and generally in day-to-day interactions – as Christian van Nieuwerburgh would say, to achieve 'a coaching way of being' (reference). Bungay

Stanier spends time throughout the book acknowledging how difficult it is to break out of some of our management habits (especially giving advice), and as the title of the book suggests, he aims to help us embed his ideas as a new habit. Secondly, The Coaching Habit provides seven essential questions to use in coaching conversations; each question has its own chapter which explores how and why you should utilise it.

The Seven Essential Questions are the pillars of the book; Bungay Stanier explores their merits on an individual basis, but also groups them as a framework for a coaching conversation. Theoretically, you could apply the seven questions throughout a conversation, even without following another model such as GROWTH (reference) or BASIC (reference), and you'd have something that could potentially work. The questions are:

1. What's on your mind?
2. And what else?
3. What's the real challenge here for you?
4. What do you want.
5. How can I help?
6. If you're saying yes to this, what are you saying no to?
7. What was most useful for you?

Firstly, Bungay Stanier analyses why the question, with its precise wording, is particularly useful or powerful in a coaching conversation. Once its use has been established, he then examines how we might apply it, providing us with hypothetical scenarios and pieces of dialogue.

A great example is The AWE question itself: 'And what else?'. Those three words have made my brain work harder than ever before when being coached. We tend to stop when we think we've hit on a good idea, or drawn a conclusion. Having a coach who challenges you with 'and what else?', pushes you to think more deeply; just when you thought you were spent, the AWE question ignites new ideas and options. Bungay Stanier outlines the ways this question unlocks responses from coachees, but also gives practical advice about how you can adapt the question at different points in a conversation. I could ask a coachee 'And what else?' when they first tell me what's on their mind, or much later in the conversation when they think they've come up with all the options possible to overcome a certain challenge.

Another excellent chapter focusing on one of the questions is the third: 'What is the real challenge here for you?'. Bungay Stanier cites a fictional conversation in which a coachee wants to vent about a colleague. The coach indulges them and bases the conversation around this colleague, who receives quite the critique. However, while this colleague, or

alternatively a project or other issue, is a challenge that needs to be addressed, the onus needs to return to how the coachee can take ownership of the situation. The question 'what's the real challenge here for you' stops conversations getting derailed and grounds them back in what the coachee can control – now it's over to them to think through what they can do next. Bungay Stanier's coaching prowess shines, here.

One of the key issues for a novice coach is how to manage the conversation so that the coachee isn't being indulged in a perception that they can't master a situation. This question, and the explanations that the author provides about how to use it, realty empower the reader about how to help the coachee focus on how they can overcome a situation or difficulty, and not become consumed by the situation itself. As he acknowledges, indulging in discussions about difficult people or situations can feel good – coach and coachee can unite in this shared problem – but the coachee walks away with little more than a sense of validation that someone listened and understood. They deserve more – they deserve a self-made plan that helps them overcome issues and puts the control back in their hands – this is an example of Bungay Stanier trying to boost the 23% cited at the beginning of the review so that all coachees are challenged and directed to unlock their potential.

As I mentioned, *The Coaching Habit* aims to make changes to the way you lead and coach, often citing the ways we can change our habits. Bungay Stanier briefly discusses how we learn and form habits, citing the excellent work of Chares Duhigg in The Power of Habit (reference), and specifically the way that we can change habits by identifying routine cues that prompt behaviour, and then replacing our next action with something else.

Therefore, after each chapter, we are met with the subheading: 'Here's your new habit'. This is then followed by a Duhigg-esque framework to help us replace an old, unwanted habit, with a new one. Here is an example below, with the italicised text denoting the generic framework, and the following text denoting a specific example from book.

When this happens… I've got an answer to suggest the coachee

Instead of… asking fake questions such as 'have you thought of…?' which is just advice with a question mark

I will…. Ask one of the seven essential questions.

Bungay Stanier understands the common pitfalls of coaching conversations, and addresses the regular mistakes that we make by replacing them with better questions and

habits. The book even provides space for you to reflect and record your own habits that could be improved.

As for the book's style, Bungay Stanier writes with charisma, confidence, and a relatable tone that acknowledges where we are at as managers and leaders. The energy that he attaches to each page reflects his own knowledge and creative flair, and it's no surprise that he heads up a creative agency called Box of Crayons. He uses anecdotes, fictionalised scenarios, and real-life examples to help exemplify his points, all of which are written in concise and engaging prose. Visually, the book is broken up with quotes that fill up a whole page in large font, subheadings, and engaging page layouts. Reading the book feels like an experience. It almost emulates the excitement of a coaching conversation.

Admittedly, The Coaching Habit is not a standalone coaching textbook, and nor does it claim to be. There are many elements of coaching, such as contracting, ethics, and listening, which are covered in other books and courses that will be vital to your growth as a coach. But, if you're looking to become a coach, or develop your practice, this book is essential. The Seven Essential Questions are excellent and will make many appearances in your coaching conversations; the wisdom of the writer and the examples he uses will provide you clarity and confidence in your understanding of being a coach. But, just as importantly, experiencing The Coaching Habit will light fires to get out there and coach – not just in arranged coaching sessions, but in corridors and spontaneous meetings – and that will be of huge, long-term benefit to you and your colleagues.

Thank you to our wonderful issue 14 contributors

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Contributing a CollectivED working paper

Introduction

CollectivED publish working papers written by researchers, practitioners and students on the themes of coaching, mentoring, professional learning and development in education. We publish these at   https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/collectived/working-paper-series/

Contributors to the working paper series are given Carnegie School of Education Professional Associate status making them eligible to use the Leeds Beckett University library facility (in person or online). They can also apply to become CollectivED Fellows.

Purpose and audience

The CollectivEd working papers are intended as an opportunity to connect educational practice, policy and research focusing on coaching, mentoring and related forms of professional development. They are written with a diverse audience in mind: teachers, governors and school leaders, academics and students, members of grassroots organisations, advocates, influencers and policy makers at all levels. We intend that the content and audience is national and international. The working papers will enable a diverse range of informed voices in education to co-exist in each publication, in order to encourage scholarship and debate.

Invitation to contribute and article types

We invite academic staff, research students, teachers, school leaders, and members of the wider education professional practitioner communities to contribute papers. This is chance to share practice, research and insights. All papers submitted should demonstrate criticality, going beyond descriptive accounts, problematizing professional development and learning practices and policy where appropriate and recognising tensions that exist in the realities of educational settings and decision making. The following types of contribution are welcome, and some flexibility will be built in around these:

- *Research working papers:* These might be in the form of summaries of empirical research, case studies, action research or research vignettes. These will normally be about 2000-2500 words in length, and will be fully referenced using Harvard Referencing. Please limit the amount of references to those which are absolute necessary to the understanding of the article, and use the most recent references possible. Research papers should include a consideration of the implications for practice and/or policy at an appropriate scale. Research papers should be accompanied by an abstract (max 250 words). Abstracts should outline the research undertaken, methodology and conclusions drawn.

- *Practice insight working papers:* These will be focused on aspects of relevant professional learning and development practice, and should communicate its particular features, its context and the decision making that shapes it. These will normally be 1200-1800 words in length and should reference policies or research that influence the practice.

- *Think-piece working papers:* These offer opportunities for writers to share opinions, reflections or critiques of relevant professional learning and development practice, research and/or policy. These will normally be 750-1250 words in length. They may include responses to previously published working papers.

- *Book or conference reviews:* Reviews are published of events or books which relate to the themes of coaching, mentoring or professional learning in education settings. These often include personal reflections from the author as well as elements of reportage. These will normally be 750-1250 words in length.

Writing style and guidance

In order for the working paper series to be inclusive and become a platform for a range of voices we would expect a range of writing styles. However, we do need to maintain the following writing conventions.

- Papers will be written in English, which should be accessible and clear to a range of readers. Text can be broken up with subheadings, bullet points, diagrams and other visuals.
- Papers cannot be submitted anonymously. The names of author(s) should be clearly stated, and where appropriate their educational context should be made clear (secondary teacher, PhD student, education consultant, ITE tutor etc).
- Names of schools, universities and other organisations can be included, and we require authors to confirm that they have consent to do so.
- Children and young people may not be identified by name and every effort should be made to ensure that their identities remain confidential.
- Adults (such as colleagues, and professional or research partners) may only be named with their consent, and where appropriate we encourage joint authorship.
- A limited number of images may be submitted with the papers, but please note that we will use discretion when including them according to formatting limitations. Please be clear if the inclusion of an image (such as a diagram or table) is critical to the working paper.
- No submitted photographs of children will be published, although the Carnegie School of Education may select appropriate images from stock photograph libraries.
- While will not publish papers written as a sales pitch we are happy for papers to be written which engage critically and professionally with resources, programmes, courses or consultancy, and weblinks can be included.
- Each paper should state a corresponding author and include an email address, and / or twitter handle.

Submission and review

Papers for consideration for CollectivED working papers should be submitted via email to
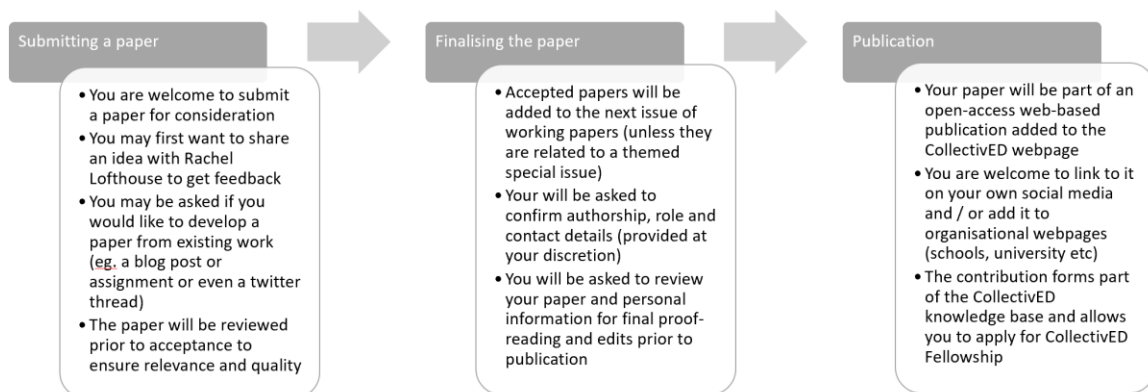R.M.Lofthouse@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

They should be submitted as word documents, Arial 11 font, 1.5 line spacing, with subheadings included as appropriate. Each word document should include the title, names of authors, context

and affiliations of the authors. Essential images should be embedded in the word document, and discretionary images should be sent as attachments.

Each submission will be reviewed by the working paper series editorial team. Decisions will be made in a timely fashion and any guidance for resubmission will be communicated to the authors. Once an issue of CollectivED is collated authors will be asked to undertake final proof-reading prior to publication.

CollectivED Working Papers; route to publication

The CollectivED Working Papers form an invaluable open access resource. Their focus is practice, policy and research on coaching, mentoring and professional development. The content and audience are national and international. Working papers give a voice to practitioners, researchers, and members of professional and grass-roots organisations. They enable scholarship and provoke debate.

Submitting a paper	Finalising the paper	Publication
• You are welcome to submit a paper for consideration • You may first want to share an idea with Rachel Lofthouse to get feedback • You may be asked if you would like to develop a paper from existing work (eg. a blog post or assignment or even a twitter thread) • The paper will be reviewed prior to acceptance to ensure relevance and quality	• Accepted papers will be added to the next issue of working papers (unless they are related to a themed special issue) • Your will be asked to confirm authorship, role and contact details (provided at your discretion) • You will be asked to review your paper and personal information for final proof-reading and edits prior to publication	• Your paper will be part of an open-access web-based publication added to the CollectivED webpage • You are welcome to link to it on your own social media and / or add it to organisational webpages (schools, university etc) • The contribution forms part of the CollectivED knowledge base and allows you to apply for CollectivED Fellowship

https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/collectived/working-paper-series/
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Professor Rachel Lofthouse