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Editorial

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Every year students of coaching and mentoring are provided with the opportunity to present their research findings at the Annual Coaching and Mentoring Research Conference that takes place at Oxford Brookes University. In Special Issue 8 we publish just some of the papers that were presented at the 10th Annual Conference on 17th January 2014.

The papers in this issue are indicative of the growing richness and diversity of interest by practitioners undertaking coaching and mentoring research. The papers also represent a range of methodological approaches, which are contributing to the breadth of evidence-based coaching and mentoring research. The first paper is a study of both coaching and mentoring, whilst the remaining five focus solely on coaching.

In the first paper, Tina Salter's comparative case study explores shared and distinctive approaches of mentoring and coaching. The research features six types of mentoring and coaching and participants shared how they thought their approaches might be transferable to other types of coaching and mentoring. Salter's findings will be of particular interest to those who are responsible for developing coaches and mentors and suggest that practitioners should be supported to specialise in a specific type of mentoring or coaching discipline; to adopt a mentor-coach interdisciplinary approach; or to develop the use of multidisciplinary approaches.

In Paper 2, the use of the 'Autodidact' Subject-Object Interview (ASOI) in coaching is investigated by Flo van Diemen who conducted an heuristic inquiry and worked with eight co-researchers to uncover the how the ASOI can be used as an assessment method on coaching. Van Diemen highlights the limitations of using the approach and draws attention to ethical considerations, as well as proposing how the ASOI could be usefully used in coaching.

The role of coaching in supporting transformational change is discussed by Elke Hanssmann in Paper 3, whose qualitative research study utilised interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to analyse data from the six coaches who participated in the research. The findings indicate how coaching can create a transformational space for clients, helping them to overcome their fears, and emphasises the role of coach spirituality, client readiness and the ability to take a long term view as contributions to achieving transformational change.

The research presented in Paper 4 also looked at transformation and aimed to explore if and how transformative learning theory is applied in coaching. Kristina Sammut's findings include the discovery of robust links between the fields of adult learning theory and coaching, suggesting that when these approaches are combined individuals can learn more effectively through the coaching process.

The final two papers are action research studies. In Paper 5, Alison Zarecky shows how a positive psychology strengths approach can be useful in helping military personnel in their transition to a civilian life. The findings indicate how the strengths intervention led to an awareness and understanding of participants' perceived individual, versus collective military, identity. A greater

awareness of their strengths helped participants gain clarity on what they wanted from their next career, and provided a common language that could help them to communicate their strengths to potential employers.

Paper 6 is somewhat of a departure from the other papers in this edition as Fiona Williams shares a very personal narrative, describing the journey of developing and presenting her research and some of the decisions that she made along the way. Those who have been on this journey will find the many challenges and the 'messiness' of the process familiar; whilst those who are just setting out on their research journey will benefit from reading about some of the struggles that Williams faced in designing her research and in discovering how she overcame them.