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Editorial

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This issue of IJEBM reflects the considerable increase in coaching and mentoring research in the first part of this decade. We have nine academic papers and two book reviews in this issue.

Our first paper is concerned with the role of narrative in coaching. Martin Vogel, researching in the UK, uses narrative inquiry in order to explore how coaches use narrative in their work. Vogel argues that the biggest contribution narrative can make to coaching is the improvements that can be gained for the quality and depth of the client's self-awareness, creating what he calls a dynamic of self-development.

The second paper examines the effectiveness of executive coaching on coachees' performance in the Israeli context. Using a quasi-experimental approach with 197 participants from four Israeli-based organisations, Gil Bozer and James Sarros conclude that executive coaching may help in improving and maintaining a high level of career satisfaction. This has implications for organizations in the design and implementation of effective executive coaching programmes.

Our third paper focuses on dialogue as the central motif of coaching and how that dialogue can create spaces for understanding and for misunderstanding. Hilary Armstrong, from Australia, explores dialogue through different forms of conversational practice and presents contrasting practices of a coach-expert, where the focus is on the situation/world outside, and a coach-custodian, where the focus is on coachees as meaning-makers of their own situation/experience. Armstrong argues that by using 'within-ness' talk, a coach maintains the focus on coachees and their situations as well as demonstrating a strength-based philosophy that can enable them to develop the capacity to find their own solutions.

The next paper by researchers in Canada, examines why Certified Professional Co-Active Coaches Enjoy Coaching. Courtney Newnham-Kanas, Don Morrow and Jennifer Irwin from the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Western Ontario conducted a survey of 390 Co-active Coaching and found that the things they most enjoyed were witnessing clients change their lives; the sense of satisfaction and fulfilment that they got from coaching; the collaborative relationship with clients; the autonomy and flexibility that the profession gives them and the gratification received from using their skill set.

In the first of our mentoring papers in this issue, Jenni Jones paper explores the learning outcomes from a number of formal mentoring relationships. A qualitative case study was undertaken to explore mentors' and mentees' learning at regular intervals throughout a pilot formal mentoring programme within a Healthcare Trust in the UK. The results suggest that both mentors and mentees gain a deeper understanding of themselves and that this learning is applied outside of the mentoring relationships. Unexpected learning also occurred, notably social networks (for mentees) and wider perspectives about the organisation (for mentors).

In our sixth paper, Raechel Johns, Justine McNamara and Zoe Moses, report on research into existing negative perceptions of an established staff group mentoring intervention in an Australian university. Quantitative and qualitative research were collected and triangulated to improve understanding. Findings led to recommendations for re-branding of the intervention. Numerous incorrect perceptions existed, and one of the biggest hindrances for participation in the program was a perceived lack of time and confusion about the nature of the programme.

Our seventh paper focuses on formal teacher-pupil mentoring in Irish second-level education. David King reports on a study of the formal teacher-pupil mentoring scheme at Blackwater Community School in the Republic of Ireland. A mixed methods approach was used to collect data from teachers, pupils and two mentoring coordinators. Benefits and drawbacks of the scheme are discussed and it was found that the most beneficial outcome of the scheme was the development of positive relationships between teachers and pupils involved.

In our next paper, Sandra Williams, Judith Sunderman and Justin Kim describe the outcomes of an e-mentoring scheme used in an online graduate course in human resource development in the USA. Again a mixed methods design was used to collect data from e-mentors via interviews and questionnaires. Participants reported personal satisfaction from sharing knowledge and experience. They also valued opportunities to network, socialize and to self-reflect, which in turn led to an interest in self-improvement as a practicing mentor. E-mentor challenges are also discussed.

The final paper in this issue is a case study exploring the retention of High Potential Talent. Anne Lueneburger, working in the USA, considers that assessment and coaching can be a means of avoiding what she calls the “Mahna-Mahna” effect. Her case study explores how coaching effectiveness is enhanced by focusing on and managing the frequency of job tasks. Research suggests that in order to motivate and retain an organisation's best people, the key is to understand their strengths and maximize their opportunities to apply their strengths. Furthermore, the study emphasizes why constraining a talented person's ability to customize his/her role and career path (defined as the “Mahna-Mahna” effect) must be addressed by the coaching intervention if it is to support talent retention effectively.

In this issue we also have two book reviews: Bachkirova's book *Developmental Coaching: Working with the Self* is reviewed by Birgit den Outer and Askew and Carnell's book, *Transformative Coaching: A Learning Theory for Practice*, is reviewed by Ian Wycherley.

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