

International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
Vol. 11 No. 2, August 2013 - Special Issue on Culture in Coaching

Editorial

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In many ways, coaching is about helping individuals decipher cultures. For instance, it may involve helping them in negotiating practices in existing sub-cultures or making new cultures accessible where individual ways of seeing things stand in the way of doing so. When we talk about culture as a shared practice between a group of individuals, we can refer to the culture at the micro level, for instance the place of work with its particular boardroom practices or coffee machine etiquette. We can also refer to ever widening domains, where cultures inform, reflect, and gather practices in for instance religion, profession, or sexuality. This Special Issue, however, primarily considers culture at the national level where shared collective experiences and memories, and the histories these create, are reflected in language, art, music, politics, social and economical systems, and so on. These in turn inform coaching issues for the client as well as the approach of the cross-cultural coach.

Cultures themselves are in a continual state of development and change and individuals raised in them have some agency to go beyond guiding cultural mores and modify their practices and stance. Nonetheless, some elements appear to be hard-wired into the national psyche and to individuals seeking access these particular cultural elements may seem like insurmountable obstacles and cultural codes impossible to crack. A coaching programme designed for the cross-cultural domain may try to identify and raise awareness of these particular cultural elements, as well as of those pertaining to the culture of the client, and seek to develop a particular mindset and reflection to negotiate them. A confrontation with a culture different to one's own therefore has the potential for profound change and new ways of looking at the world. Research on the ways in which this is done is an underdeveloped but growing field of interest; this issue of IJECM can be seen as a contribution to this field.

Our call for papers generated an interesting mix of responses and different interpretations of the theme, often a combination of different interpretations. Although each article is of interest on its own merits, the question arises as to what the different types of responses tell us about the coaching discipline as a whole. To some, 'culture in coaching' was about differences of coaching practices that were somehow geographically bound, i.e. about how the geographical setting informed the coaching research. Within this interpretation, we have articles on life coaching in Israel, on the particular challenges of a coaching project on Fiji, and on a British Columbian (Canada) action research project. To two authors, the call for papers prompted articles on models and a global mindset that inform a culturally aware approach to coaching practice. Finally, the brief was interpreted to explore how the discipline of coaching's own cultural lenses affect coaching research and practice, generating a reflexive inquiry into the western bias of coaching concepts, the applicability of these coaching concepts in non-western cultural settings, and the need to include indigenous knowledge in the development of coaching research, coach training

and leadership coaching. It can therefore be argued that incorporating a cultural perspective in coaching research introduces a layer of complexity that has hitherto largely been overlooked.

To introduce the theme of culture in coaching, this Special Issue begins with an interview with Dr Alastair Macfarlane, consultant and coach in the international domain, based in Oxford, UK. Taking a holistic approach to the preparation for an international assignment, Macfarlane emphasises the importance of self-awareness, the ability to reflect and being open to learn, as well as a consideration of the needs of any of the client's family that may come along. He relates his own experiences and confrontations with cultures that were not his own, notably in South Africa, and gives practical advice for coaches working with a global workforce and organisations looking to send their employees abroad.

Although staying in the same regional territory, authors of the next article, merely use this region to illustrate their central point of the importance of bringing indigenous knowledge to culturally aware coaching practice. Hilary Geber and Moyra Keane, from the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa discuss how indigenous knowledge in coaching is key to South Africa's leadership development and the re-connection to more human and community-centred ways of being. Indigenous knowledge can be an important aspect of transformation and redress, as well as a unique and valuable resource across disciplines. When the role coaching plays is considered in personal and organizational transformation, and the immediate cultural edges it comes up against, coaching and coach training could contribute significantly to people development and in the case of South Africa, to systems healing in a country that is ravaged by poverty, education inadequacies, and past and present social traumas.

From a different perspective, Julia Milner from the Sydney Business School, Ether Ostmeier and Ronald Franke, both from Leuphana University in Lüneburg, Germany, approach the western bias in coaching research and practice by asking if western coaching concepts can be transported to other cultural settings. Using the data from 15 semi-structured interviews with fifteen German coaching experts, and applying the critical incidents technique to determine those critical incidents they experienced in cross-cultural coaching settings, the authors highlight four main areas that affect cross-cultural coaching setting: communication, coach-client relationship, coaching setting and role understanding.

The next two articles look at models and mindsets required for coaching practice across cultures. Jenny Plaister-Ten, a practising coach from Abingdon, UK, proposes that raising culturally-bound awareness and building culturally-appropriate responsibility constitute the essence of good inter-cultural coaching practice. The author describes the building blocks that have informed the construction of her Kaleidoscope model to support this practice by facilitating awareness and responsibility building. It is proposed that the differing values informing constructs such as 'responsibility' can change over the lifespan due to multiple and prolonged intercultural experiences and this may require that the coach work with 'unlearning' as a key intercultural competency.

Wendy Wilson, a practising coach from Oxford, UK reports on a study that assessed cross-cultural coaches' awareness and interpretation of 'global mindedness'. With focus group discussions as its main data collection method, the grounded-theory study identifies how the criticality of an experience can lead to a transformation of the self and the development of a global mindset, and presents a key developmental theme in cross-cultural coaches' interpretations of the construct. The article discusses the coaching implications of the findings and the need for

the development of a more integrated, systemic, global approach to coaching to accommodate the challenges posed by a new global paradigm.

This Special Issue concludes with three geographically located studies set in Fiji, Canadian British Columbia, and Israel, respectively. In the first of these articles, the authors Donasiano Ruru, from the University of the South Pacific, Fiji, Kabini Sanga from the Victoria University of Wellington, Keith Walters and Edwin Ralph, both from University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada, describe three mentorship workshops they facilitated in Fiji. Workshop attendees represented a variety of professions and occupations from several educational, health care, government, and religious organizations. The researchers achieved their purpose by facilitating the three cohorts of Fijian leaders to begin to develop an adaptive mentorship approach that resonated with the attendees. The authors extracted findings that can inform future research on investigating how leaders representing different cultures and professions could adapt a generic mentorship model to create unique frameworks with potential to enhance mentoring practice in their respective situations.

Catherine Carr and Lily Seto, practising coaches at BP Public Service, British Columbia, Canada undertook an action research project to understand how coaches' own cultural lens affect their coaching practice. Fourteen internal coaches from a government human resources organization in British Columbia were introduced to Rosinski's Cultural Orientations Framework (COF) through education and self-assessment. Six themes were identified: culture is complex; awareness of the culture of the coaching profession; cultural awareness affects coaching outcomes; similar coach-client orientations makes for more comfortable coaching; the challenge of adapting to the client's orientation; and leveraging possibilities through different orientations.

The final article explores the thriving nature of the life-coaching industry in Israel. Ofer Atad, Yair Galily and Anthony Grant undertook an Internet search, website analysis, document analysis and in-depth interviews with key people in the industry, and suggest that there is a distorted notion of life-coaching, both from a professional and an ethical perspective. It appears that the Israeli life-coaching industry is at an early stage of its development and too fragmented to have yet developed a standard. The main findings, as well as the industry's future directions and avenues for future research, are presented and discussed.

This issue ends with a book review by Karine Mangion from Regent's University, London of Philippe Rosinski's - *Global Coaching: An Integrated Approach for Long-Lasting Results* (2012).

We hope that you will find this Special Issue interesting and useful and that the research reported here is a spur to further development of cultural awareness and perspective in both coaching research and practice.

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August 2013