

## Editorial:

The papers in this edition were presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Coaching and Mentoring Research Conference, held at Oxford Brookes University in the UK on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007.

The first paper, a 'reflection from the field', is based on Sarah Fletcher's opening keynote to the conference. It begins with a narrative account of her initial encounter with mentoring and coaching and a realisation of the distinction between the two. Then, after exploring the advantages of mentoring for teacher research and the collaborative learning opportunities available, Sarah considers the gaps in our knowledge about research in mentoring and coaching. She calls for all researchers in this area to help in creating what she calls a 'creative commons of mentoring and coaching': a space where research and understanding can be shared as a "basis for critical engagement". This, Sarah, perceives could be achieved best by a greater use of computer technologies, which would complement the dynamic, living relationship of the coach/client or mentor/mentee.

The first of our research based papers is by Paul Allan, who reports on an action research study such looking at the benefits and impacts of a coaching and mentoring programme for teachers working in a secondary school. The paper concludes with a number of benefits for staff, including enhanced personal effectiveness, greater reflectivity and enhanced energy and job satisfaction.

Hazel Mackenzie's paper is entitled Stepping off the Treadmill and is a phenomenological study of participants experiences of coaching on the Royal College of Nursing's Clinical Leadership Development Programme. The title of the paper emerged from the data collected, which suggested that coaching was seen as an opportunity for 'stepping off the treadmill'. As recognised in almost all the papers in this issue, there is a significant value in having the time and space that coaching provides to reflect on professional practice. Mackenzie goes on to outline a number of other significant findings including the importance of the coaching component in "lynch pinning" the programme and enabling the transfer of learning.

Learning is also the focus of the third research paper in this issue. Julia Drum focuses on how theatre directors in rehearsal create a learning environment, believing that coaches too have an obligation to create a learning environment and that they might have something to learn from the climate created by directors during theatre rehearsals. From this grounded theory study, some fascinating insights emerge, not least that directors prepare very thoroughly in order to achieve the right environment for the rehearsal. No such complex preparation was evident in the coaching literature. Other findings relate to the value of individuality and intuition.

The final paper in this issue is a study of the complex relationship between personality and culture that makes up our 'cultural baggage'. Barbara St. Claire-Ostwald reports on recent research into cultural dimensions and her own survey, which was designed to identify themes and orientations to cross-cultural issues. The results have highlighted a high level of recognition of cultural dilemmas among coaches, but indicate a need for a much greater understanding cultural identity, with an acknowledgement of its multi-faceted nature that depends on context and setting.

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