

Book Review

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1) *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work. Theory, Research and Practice*

(745 pages; ISBN 978-1-4129-1661-1)

Rose Ragins & Kathy E. Kram (Eds.) 2007 *Los Angeles: Sage Publications.*

2) *Coaching and Mentoring. Theory and Practice.*

(257 pages; ISBN 978-1-4129-1216-7)

Garvey, B., Stokes, P, & Megginson, D. 2009, London: Sage.

Mentoring, like coaching, is practiced largely in the Anglo-Saxon world and to an increasing extent over the last quarter of a century. The research perspectives that have applied to these kinds of developmental activities are presented in two recent books – the one a north American research anthology on mentoring, the other a work co-authored by a British research team on mentoring and coaching. The two volumes are described, commented upon and compared in this paper. Interesting differences emerge, with regard to both recommended research approaches and socio-cultural values.

The two editors of *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work* are ‘heavy hitters’ in North American research into mentoring. Kathy Kram, known, inter alia, for her pioneering “Mentoring at Work” from 1985, is perhaps the most widely cited. Both editors are university professors, Kram in organizational behavior at the Boston University School of Management, Ragins in management at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Responsible for the book’s chapters, as well as the two editors, are 43 authors, among whom there is a preponderance of women. All except two (one from Canada, one from the UK), have positions at universities in the US – as professors, associate professors or lecturers – mainly at departments of psychology, education, communications, or gender studies. The biographical information on the authors reflects an image of the US as a country where the subject of mentoring is taken seriously as an academic research discipline.

The primary purpose of the book is to summarize research over the last 25 years and the current state of knowledge by presenting contributions from the most prominent researchers in the arena; thereafter, in the second part of the book, the works of authors with new theoretical approaches and perspectives on how mentoring can be illuminated and problematized are introduced. In a final part, practitioners from some consulting companies and voluntary organizations provide examples of their ways of working.

It emerges from the introduction that mentoring finds its original meaning in a reference to a relationship between two people, one older with greater experience (the mentor), the other, usually younger, with less experience (the mentee, or as most American authors prefer: the protégé). The core of the relationship is that it is development-oriented, and also embedded in the setting of a “career”. It should be pointed out that in many countries (like Sweden, for example), the word “career” or its equivalent is intrinsically associated with occupational, or even sporting,

advancement. Here, however, we are concerned more generally with an individual's work and other roles during the life course (as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "an individual's course or progress through life or a distinct portion of life"). Later in the book, there is talk of "traditional mentoring" relationships – by contrast with a string of alternative, extended forms of personal-development relations (in developmental networks or peer mentoring), encompassed by concepts launched by various authors, including Kram herself.

The book is rich in content, and aims both to display the assembled knowledge bottoming in the north-American experience, and to make proposals for how to find innovative ways of examining the phenomenon of mentoring. References to research outside the US are few. Indeed, comparisons with other countries are virtually entirely lacking. The book is something of a national manifesto.

The editors use the metaphor of a garden to characterize north-American research into mentoring. By this, they wish to maintain that the research has grown and flourished as varying forms of mentoring have gained ground in the US. That, after careful reading, it is possible finally to obtain an overall impression of the book is due to the editors exerting quite substantial control over the authors of the various chapters so that a uniform presentation is obtained. The first part of the book (comprising thirteen chapters) gives a review and assessment of the research so far, points to what are described as "research gaps", makes proposals for future research, and provides guidance in suitable methods, theories and approaches. The second part (comprising eight chapters) presents the "new" theoretical perspective, explains why and how it is applicable, presents a new theoretical model and frame of reference, and proposes empirical tests of specific suppositions. The third part (comprising five chapters) describes the authors' own practical efforts in the mentoring arena, and the programs and applications that have been employed, shares knowledge of the difficulties encountered and the measures taken to resolve them, names the type of research and theory that has been utilizable in practical settings, and makes research proposals for improving the activities of practitioners in different organizational and cultural contexts. The overall impression is one of clarity, albeit with a certain degree of repetitiveness.

The research strategies that predominate in the studies of mentoring are characterized by a certain degree of uniformity, which contributes to the overall impression of consistency. The first step is to illuminate one or several phenomena, with a point of departure in some reasonable definitions, which are operationalized and then investigated empirically; the results (usually descriptive) that emerge then give rise to repeated investigations for the purpose of validation. In some cases, generalizable conclusions can be drawn. Bit by bit, the author comes to make new research proposals and/or practical recommendations.

There is an overwhelming feeling that the research presented keeps its distance from mentoring as it is practiced; accordingly, the third part of the book, concerned with "bridging the gap between research and practice", becomes a logical necessity. The book does not test any action-oriented research approaches, with practice as their starting-point and where the researcher acquires knowledge by participating in one way or another.

One way of obtaining greater insight into the content of the book would be to make comments chapter by chapter. I, however, have preferred another approach – that of basing my

commentary on what to me are various distinguishable themes. These are organized under the subheadings below.

The dyadic relationship in focus

The core of mentoring, which is of decisive importance for a successful outcome, is the relationship between mentor and protégé. The extent to which this relationship is empirically accessible to the researcher is not really discussed in the book, although a number of the chapters have such a focus. Lillian Eby points out that it is mostly positive experiences that are documented, whereas interactions that undermine, to a greater or lesser extent, a developmental relationship are less frequently examined. Here, one can envisage everything from low commitment and frustrated hopes to reactions that are plainly hostile or indifferent.

Eby makes an interesting comparison between, on the one hand, academic and clinical supervision, both of which bear the imprint of strong dependence on the supervisor, and, on the other, mentorship in organizations, which is characterized by relatively greater voluntariness. Eby is making the point that it is precisely mutual dependence that has to be explored in greater detail, preferably from the perspective of balancing the positive exchange and the strains that both parties experience from the beginning through to the end of the mentoring period.

Joyce Fletcher and Belle Rose Ragins point out that the predominant interest has been in benefits to protégés, and that consideration of the role of the mentor has been largely absent. That this role is only sparsely explored, which leads to deprivation of the opportunity to come to terms with what high-quality mentorship actually is, is confirmed in Tammy Allen's exhaustive review. It is pointed out by Fletcher and Ragins that a so-far neglected but important dimension of the dyadic relation is power and how it is handled.

Another aspect is emotional intelligence, defined by Cary Cherniss in terms of how people perceive, express, understand and manage their own feelings and those of others. The importance of this, in both the mentor and the protégé, is incontestable in the view of this author. The reasoning in her text is presented in a fairly unobjectionable manner; she concludes by deploring the flora of divergent measuring instruments for emotional intelligence, a problem that calls for continued investment in method development before further empirical research in relation to mentoring can be conducted.

The communications researcher, Pamela Kalbfleisch, believes less in phases and stages of mentoring and more in the evolution of relations through communication. It is rather that the parties move alternatively forwards and backwards, and act alternatively apart and together. This represents the launch of a far less linear perspective on the interaction. The parties are regarded as active players, operating strategically at times, and routinely at others. An interesting study is one that addresses conflict events and how these are commented upon. On this view, conflicts can be subsumed under four types, labeled disagreements, embarrassment, negativity, and request. The reactions of protégés are divided into the provocative and the conciliatory, which in turn is divided into accommodating appeasement and pragmatic appeasement. The relations between the reactions and types of conflict events have been analyzed. This is an unusual and interestingly designed piece of research, especially in light of how hard it is to access the natural relational situation of mentor and protégé.

Eileen McGowan and colleagues want to view the mentor-protégé relationship from an adult-developmental perspective. Here, it is a matter of taking a point of departure in the developmental stages identified in the life-phase literature and research into “healthy adult development”, which is a direction that stands in opposition to research into maladaptation. The authors maintain that the adult human psyche undergoes several qualitatively different stages with regard to a person’s meaning-making in relation to his or her surrounding environment. Where the mentor and protégé find themselves on the path makes a major contribution to how their interaction develops and, not least, to how the mentor should take this into account. In the chapter, the stage model of the third author (Robert Kegan) is chosen to illuminate in greater detail how this perspective can be fruitful in analyzing – and improving – mentor-protégé relationships.

Mentoring and career success

One of the most penetrating contributions to the book is authored by Thomas Dougherty and George Dreher. They seek an answer to the question: On the basis of research performed so far, can it be maintained that mentorship leads to success for the protégé? In other words, is there an association between having undergone a period of mentoring and a positive outcome for the protégé? The authors lean on several extensive research reviews, and themselves utilize over forty cross-sectional and six longitudinal studies.

Objective measures of success, such as promotion and pay enhancement used to predominate, but the authors note that these have been supplemented or even succeeded by subjective measures, such as job satisfaction, commitment, perceived career success, and the like. They perform a research-critical analysis with its starting-point in a series of obstacles to answering the questions above. The studies demonstrate a great deal of occupational variation, but – on the other hand – the study population is consistently the same, namely the white, American middle-class. The definitions of mentoring are diffuse. The subjective outcome variables are measured in different ways, which hinders comparisons between different results. A misleading faith in causality prevails; career success, the positive outcome, is not necessarily the effect. It may well be that the persons chosen as protégés constitute a positively selected sample; that is, they would have been successful with or without a mentor. A major defect is that nothing is said about the very purpose of the mentor’s efforts, which can vary considerably; it may be to increase the protégé’s work capacity for the benefit of the employer, to make the protégé better equipped for mobility on the labor market, to train the protégé’s relational ability and network-creating capacity, or to support the protégé psychosocially so as to increase his or her self-confidence and sense of self-efficacy. The authors make the apposite point that the goal of a mentor-protégé relationship determines what should be regarded as a positive outcome. Thereby, many of the standard selected outcome criteria become valueless. The research criticism calls for the sharpening of definitions and methods prior to continued investigation of the relationship between mentorship and outcome.

The concept of career requires its own theoretical elaboration. Within career research, a theory of careers consisting of lengthy phases, so-called learning cycles has been developed. Each phase, or learning cycle, contains a number of steps leading to mastery of that phase, whereupon there is a transition to the next phase. Douglas Hall and Dawn Chandler want to reconcile this theory with mentorship on ground that mentors need to do different things for protégés according to where they find themselves on the various steps in their career phases. Providers of support

should be clear over where their protégés are located in order to make the correct interventions. The protégés themselves should also have self-insight into this. What triggers a transition may be societal or organizational, or a change in the occupational role or attributes of the protégé (in this chapter called the “learner”). Or, might it be that the role of the mentor is to accelerate, or even decelerate, the process?

Mentoring and learning

Naturally, a basic idea involved in mentorship is learning. Despite this, Melenie Lankau and Terri Scandura maintain that learning has been far less examined than the effects of mentoring. To remedy this situation, it is a matter of urgency, as a first step, to differentiate between different types of learning. Distinguishing between personal learning and task-related learning is useful, as too is the distinction between context-specific and context-independent learning. The latter requires a long-term perspective. Regarding the duties of the mentor, he or she should be aware of what type of learning is to be achieved. By adopting their proposed typology of learning, the authors exhort researchers to conceive of a more differentiated catalogue of mentor functions, which might constitute a basis for empirical studies of learning.

A more specific learning problematic is treated by Georgia Chao: How can mentoring act as a facilitator for newcomers/new employees to learn their new organization? Such facilitation is called “organizational socialization”. In this setting, the protégés, i.e. the newcomers, are not necessarily young; nor are they inexperienced in a broad sense. Here, it is a matter of socialization into a new set of activities. Chao poses the question of who might best contribute in the role of mentor: a superordinate, a subordinate, a colleague, or a person from the same cultural, geographical or occupational areas. Chao is doubtful about the traditional mentor role. Maybe, more than one mentor per person would be better than a longer term dyadic relationship; maybe, a network of mentors would be better, since a single person seldom possesses all the experiences to which the protégé requires access. On the basis of research that has evidenced tendencies for the exclusion of minorities, Chao concludes with a call for more studies of the problems involved in mentoring.

Indeed, an entire chapter is devoted to this problematic. Stacy Blake-Beard and colleagues criticize the current research paradigm, and give the message that discrimination of mentorship according to ethnic affiliation must be taken seriously. Ethnic minorities (in the US) have difficulty in advancing, and obtaining access to the mentoring that might provide a tool for learning and development. They state that, within American management research, ethnic belonging is an entirely neglected factor. Non-whites are regarded as “others”. Comparative studies are performed now and again with, as the authors express it, the ideal of whiteness as frame of reference. Also, research into mentoring has largely been performed on whites; accordingly, it follows that theoretical and conceptual development derives from a subpopulation that does not cover the population of the US. The few studies that have been conducted consistently demonstrate difficulties in the interaction between mentor and protégé when two skin colors are represented in the constellation. In particular, psychosocial support is poorer. Researchers who have investigated mentor networks have interpreted their findings without taking account of cultural differences. The authors maintain that these findings lack authenticity for specific ethnic groups. A radical reassessment of the research as a whole has to be performed. A basic ideological undertone to the authors’ criticism is detectable, but they also present a pragmatic argument; that is, since the birth

rate is considerably higher among non-white than white groups, working life will become ever more dependent on the inputs of the former.

Mentoring and gender

Three of the book's chapters discuss mentoring from a gender perspective, largely linked to women's work-life situation. Shared points of departure are scarcely detectable from comparing these three chapters. At least, the chapter authored by Carol McKeen and Merridee Bujaki, both business economists with a specialization in financial accounting and business-information systems, is strikingly different. Their survey of the current research situation is certainly both systematic and detailed, but ends up in great caution when it comes to recommending research interventions that would enable the opportunities and rights of women to be promoted by mentoring. By contrast with Giscombe's chapter in particular, the authors adopt an exceptionally gender-neutral stance.

Katherine Giscombe is head of research at Catalyst, a well-known non-profit organization for the promotion of the conditions of women in the workplace. (Indeed, many of the book's authors have been involved there.) Among other activities, Catalyst gathers together knowledge about mentoring projects throughout the country. Giscombe describes eleven formal mentoring programs designed to promote women's managerial development. All the programs have received favorable evaluations. For those interested in this form of mentoring, it is the author's comparative analysis of the programs' varying designs (their organizational positioning, the model employed, the selection of protégés and mentors, the matching principles, program support, gender orientation, and evaluation) that is particularly pertinent. She proposes continued research into the mentor-selection process, gender combinations and dynamics in mentor-protégé relationships, resource allocation, and time demarcation in the programs.

The third chapter is authored by specialists in the balance between paid employment and the family. Jeffrey Greenhaus and Romila Singh concentrate on the mentor's role in formal mentoring programs. They make proposals to support mentors who wish to develop their ability to direct dialogue towards the family's impact on the protégé's plans. The mentor should take up matters concerning:

1. how the protégé combines work and the family;
2. what conflicts may arise; and,
3. How work might enrich family life and vice versa.

The mentor should seek to see the situation through these filters, and the protégé should be made sensitive to his or her attempts to do this.

Formal mentoring

In many chapters, the results of varying forms of mentoring are presented without specifying the precise form of mentorship involved. Some authors, however, pay special attention to the mentoring that is practiced within the frame of a program (arranged by a third party), what is called formal mentoring. At many levels, there is a contrast between this kind of mentoring and informal mentoring, i.e. a voluntarily agreed relationship between mentor and protégé. Gayle Baugh and Ellen Fagenson-Eland provide a systematic set of comparative characteristics, and then go into the benefits and shortcomings of formal mentoring. Here, there is much to recognize from Swedish handbooks in mentoring practice (see, e.g., Westlander in Arbetsmarknad Arbetsliv, 2008, no. 4), and certainly also from those in other countries.

According to the authors, it is important from a research perspective not, in one and the same survey or cross-sectional study, to mix subjects involved in formal and informal mentoring activities. Aims, forms and contents of the encounters may all be quite different, which can make use of the same investigatory variables wholly irrelevant. Whereas informal mentoring starts by a mentor and protégé themselves determining to enter into a development-oriented relationship, the start of mentoring within a formal program consists in a matching process in order to obtain suitable combinations of people. In the view of the authors, this should be given considerably greater research attention.

One of the book's most rewarding contributions concerns precisely this problematic. Stacy Blake-Beard and colleagues take the view that what characterizes the initiation of an informal relationship, namely mutual attraction and confirmation, scarcely applies in formal mentoring. There are other forces involved at the outset. In the formal case, the mentor and the protégé make attempts to orient themselves to each other. They seek their way forwards, see if the expectations of the one are reconcilable with those of the other, and have only limited time available, which makes the initial situation less natural than when entering into an informal relationship.

These authors have found a variety of matching models, and grouped them into three main categories: one administratively controlled, often according to the needs of the organization; another choice-based, with either the participating protégés, the mentors or both making the choices; the third profile-based, where the profiles are derived from the personality testing of potential participants. The authors take the view that it is extremely important to generate greater knowledge of matching techniques in formal mentoring programs. Research needs to be focused, inter alia, on matching criteria and their effects on goal fulfillment, the link between these criteria and the purpose of the program, and matching methods in relation to ethnicity, gender and diversity.

The task of making concluding remarks on all of the book's contributions goes to the British author, researcher and consultant, David Clutterbuck. Here, as suggested by the chapter's heading, "An international perspective on mentoring", the view is extended. Clutterbuck is one of the founders of a European professional organization, now called the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, which is linked to a research department at Sheffield Hallam University in England that publishes its findings in, inter alia, the International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching.

Clutterbuck sketches out British research against the background of the north American as it is presented in the anthology. The main difference, in his view, lies in the relation between research and practice. British research takes its point of departure in specific mentoring programs, with a large number of practitioners involved, who are temporarily linked to a research team. The research, according to the author, is not academic in a traditional sense. Rather, the approach is action-oriented, with ongoing interplay between practice and research, and with knowledge and method development as its primary goal.

Another difference lies in the greater problematization of the mentor-protégé relationship, not least in terms of how it is dependent on sociocultural values. The role of these has become particularly clear due to the experiences, from different countries inside and outside Europe, obtained by the author and his colleagues when hired as advisors. Mentoring programs have become a means of solving problems, promoting efficiency and developing cross-cultural collaboration in a globalized world.

How then is British research into mentoring conducted? Clutterbuck's chapter gave me reason to pose the question. In my search for an answer, I was recommended a brand new publication: the title of the book, *Coaching and Mentoring. Theory and Practice*, indicates that it treats both mentoring and coaching. Perhaps, this in itself would give a more distinct contour to mentoring, and thereby lead our knowledge one step further. The book's three authors are members of a research team at Sheffield Hallam University, where Professor Bob Garvey is head of the Coaching and Mentoring Research Unit, Paul Stokes a university lecturer in the same subject, and David Megginson a visiting professor. All are leading members of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). Dawn Chandler, a lecturer at California Polytechnic University is the author of a special chapter on the research perspective in the US. She also contributed to the anthology about research in the United States discussed above.

The intention underlying the book is to provide a topical picture of the expanding use of coaching and mentoring as developmental activities in a variety of areas. The picture is primarily British/European and is based on the authors' multifaceted personal experiences of interventions as mentors or coaches, mentees or coachees, program leaders, evaluators, and researchers. The practical experiences of the authors weigh heavily in the theoretical perspectives treated in the book. As a natural consequence, their own research is action-oriented, qualitative and largely case-study based.

The tone is critically analytical and problematizing, but – at the same time – positive and affirmative. It is clearly imbued by a philosophical, humanistic approach to the subject. Thus, the book's title makes it clear that – by contrast with the anthology discussed above – it is concerned with two types of supportive activities, namely coaching and mentoring. This may give rise to a certain degree of amazement in light of the line of demarcation that many other authors have recommended. In this book, the authors follow two directions: the one is to give prominence to common features of coaching and mentoring, the other is to treat them separately in order to highlight differences. By making such an apportionment of educational space, the reader is given an opportunity to see what is a shared problematic and what differs between the two.

The first part of the book introduces the subject area: the varying meanings, the historical roots, how research in general is conducted, how organizational prerequisites are created, what models for implementation and evaluation have been launched, and what are the characteristics of the central dialogue between mentor/coach and mentee/coachee.

The second part concentrates on the two-party relationship that constitutes the core of mentoring and coaching. The power relation is an aspect that cannot be avoided, as too are the learning process, forms and paths of communication, and how intentions and goals in the establishment of coaching and mentoring affect the relationship.

The third part takes up topical issues in the insiders' debate on mentoring and coaching, namely the qualifications of mentors and coaches, how professionalization might proceed or should be achieved, whether an arrangement for supervision of practicing coaches and mentors should be made, and supervision possibly made mandatory, and whether standards and norms for accreditation need to be developed.

The concluding chapter contains a summary of the book's contents and a discussion by the authors of alternative ways for how the mentoring and coaching of the future can be influenced.

Virtually all authors in the arena make attempts to specify the meanings of mentoring or coaching, either by resolutely stipulating a definition of their own or by first invoking some authorities back in time. In this book, the efforts made are more profound and exhaustive than usual. Based on a literary analysis of texts translated into English, there is an historical exposé of the conceptions of thinkers from ancient Greece through to the present day. Historically, there are differences between mentoring and coaching. On the other hand, the authors wish to point to some similarities in the dyadic relationship, i.e. that between mentee/coachee and mentor/coach. The point of departure lies in Simmel's sociological work concerning the distinctive characteristics of a dyadic relation. They state that research into mentoring and coaching has demonstrated certain common features: confidence and trust, confidentiality, durability of the relationship and awareness that it will come to an end. By contrast, intimacy and friendship are only examined with regard to the mentor-mentee relationship. The authors offer the following summary:

“The term coaching, when compared with the term mentoring seems to have a more recent history in the English language. The nineteenth century writings on coaching focus on performance and attainment, originally in an educational setting but also in sport and life. There is some historical evidence that coaching was also about reflection and the development of ‘life skills’. Similar to the mentor, the coach is the skilled, more experienced or more knowledgeable person.

Crucial to the success of mentoring, as outlined in the historical texts, is the development of the *relationship* between mentor and mentee. Historical writers describe this as forms of friendship. In modern writings (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999) ‘friendships’ is still strongly linked to mentoring but the link between ‘friendships’ and coaching is not so strong.” (Garvey, et al., 2009, p. 22)

The authors liken coaching and mentoring to “a swampy lowland”, with various confusing problems. In such a research field, the only path to increased insight and understand is to take a point of departure in the role played by the social context in concrete development-oriented investments and to provide qualitatively complete descriptions of these (so-called “thick descriptions” in the vocabulary of Geertz’s anthropology).

The book’s introductory question, “Are mentoring and coaching distinctive and separate activities or are they essentially similar in nature?” is answered in the affirmative with regard to the latter part of the question, *provided that* account is taken of how the two types of activities are portrayed and spoken about by the general public and in everyday language. Here, we have the background to the authors’ preference for non-positivist, action-oriented, qualitative, and largely case-study based research. They do not want to lay down any pre-set, precise definition of mentoring or coaching, but instead explore the ways in which they are shaped and understood by the people involved.

Research into mentoring and coaching – differences

Nevertheless, one evident difference emerges on scrutiny of the research. An entire chapter is devoted to investigating what is characteristic of research into mentoring and coaching, respectively. The authors have selected research articles, published in 2003 or later in international peer-reviewed journals, taking just three from any one journal to obtain a spread of publishing sources. A total of 18 articles for mentoring and coaching each were utilized to represent current research. The method involved seeing whether anything typical became apparent after surveying the contents of the articles. How the analyses were performed is exhaustively described.

Research into mentoring. Most research articles about mentoring are characterized by positivism, a theory at base, usually very large study groups, use of the passive tense about the mentee, and a distance to participants in the study reported. A smaller number of articles are based on practicing mentors’ experiences as “insiders”, usually with the situations of mentees in focus; then, qualitative methods are employed. Given the large number of studies of mentorship available, it was not at all difficult to find 18 articles that met the pre-set selection criteria.

Research into coaching. The opposite was the case with regard to research into coaching. It was with great difficulty that the authors managed to obtain a sufficient number of articles. The nature of the studies reported was different. Either they were surveys of other studies, or they were investigations of just a few subjects, described by the author, who was personally involved in the coaching arrangement in one way or another. The studies of coaching are directed largely at outcomes and financial returns on investments. A consequence is that the relationship between the parties is less interesting and is neglected, as – even more so – is the way in which the interaction between the two develops. The whole thing becomes a technical, business matter. Commercial relevance, results, and the benefits and utility of the intervention are in focus.

One conclusion is that mentoring and coaching are rooted in different research traditions. The differences proved to be strikingly evident. The explanation given is that researchers’ epistemological interests, or perceptions of reality, have differed. On the basis of this finding, the authors make a series of proposals concerning how research might be improved. Both the approach to and the results of this scrutiny of research undeniably supply something new and original. An

eye-opener is, of course, that the relatively restricted scope of the documentation of coaching makes it easier to lean towards the far richer documentation of mentoring.

Organizational cultures

One thesis consistently pursued in the book is that the impact on the organization of developmental activities, such as mentoring and coaching, is substantial, as too is the impact of organizational conditions on interaction between mentee/coachee and mentor/coach. But the organizational context is easily overshadowed by the two-party relationship that constitutes the core of both mentoring and coaching. The concepts of “mentoring organization” and “coaching organization” serve to direct our thoughts to the significance of our surroundings, of the organizational culture. The authors maintain that neither mentoring nor coaching represents any kind of oracular medication; nor is there any single promoted organizational culture, or best practice, to recommend.

The literature in the arena of coaching organizations is richer, more robust and analytically more thoroughly developed than that offered in texts on mentoring organizations. Thus, according to the authors, it is easier to find examples of a coaching organization. An abundance of case studies provide the foundation for an overall but still variegated picture. There are strong links between mentoring/coaching and organizational development, and it is therefore important for a researcher to start with a diagnosis of an organization’s operations, of where it is located in a number of relevant respects, in order then to understand how mentoring or coaching is pursued. Proposals are given in the form of a number of models for the creation of mentoring or coaching cultures, which are suitable in different settings. Attention should, for example, be paid to whether the management of a business undertaking emphasizes change or internal stability, if it wishes to work for increased needs satisfaction for personnel or build further on the strengths that already exist, or whether it recognizes current problems or, preferably, the problems of the future.

Thus, to judge from the literature, there seems to be a broad interest in how coaching cultures can be created, but no such equivalent interest in the mentoring arena. The explanation given for the difference is that mentoring is a process that usually lies outside the line organization, whereas coaching is regarded as something that can improve operational performances, and may be performed by a line manager or incorporated within the tasks and skills of executive personnel.

Programmes and methods

From organizational culture, the authors turn to a somewhat more down-to-earth problematic, namely that of how to set up *formal coaching or mentoring programs* and how to evaluate them. Here, the tone is more prescriptive. Criticism is directed at common methods of goal and system evaluation; how various stakeholders and participants perceive a program in all its aspects is not captured, which makes their results superficial and, in part, even misleading. The most important knowledge gets lost. The authors speak warmly of the phenomenological approach, where the researcher takes an interest in how the aim of a program is perceived and evaluated by the various individuals involved, how the recruitment process takes place, how credible mentees/coachees and mentors/coaches come across to each other, and what motives underlie their participation. Further, the matching problematic needs to be addressed, as too do the forms in which a program is advertised or marketed, and how the messages mediated influence the participants. There is a

pleading for action research, on the ground that it is an absolutely essential pathway to obtaining in-depth knowledge.

The variation in perspectives and *models for pursuing coaching and mentoring* is considerable. This applies especially to coaching. The number of hits on Google is given as an indicator – 133 million for the word “coaching”, and more than 8 million for the concept of “coaching model”. In other words, it is a subject that is especially widely written-about and commented-upon. No such seductive figures are given by the authors for mentoring. For a reflective overview of this variation in models and perspectives, the book’s fifth chapter is particularly informative. Here, coaching and mentoring are treated apart, in two separate sections. Ten more distinct coaching methods are described, of which three in greater depth: sports coaching, life coaching, and managerial career coaching. References are made to research articles and books where the different models have been examined and discussed. Within mentoring there are not as many methods; in fact they can be subsumed under four group headings: career mentoring, diversity mentoring, mentoring in the world of education, and mentoring in the voluntary sector (for vulnerable groups). On the other hand, the areas of application are wide. The forms for pursuing mentoring have been condensed – after a lengthy period of internal discussion – into four serious options where traditional dyadic mentoring (with the mentor as the more experienced and usually older party) is the oldest and still predominant. But there are other forms, based on a mutual and equal relationship between mentor and mentee, or on more or less formalized networking. The fourth is so-called e-mentoring, which involves varying degrees of internet-based communication between mentor and mentee. The last-mentioned has not yet been the subject of empirical research, but is discussed in a couple of chapters in the book. A forecast, made above all for coaching, is that the area will expand with the arrival of yet more models and perspectives. Here, the researcher has the task of seeking ways of viewing associations and integrating variants so as, in the longer term, hopefully to contribute to a smaller number of broader approaches.

The dyadic relationship

The encounter between mentor/coach and mentee/coachee shall be development-oriented, drive – above all – the mentee/coachee forwards, and involve “conversational learning”. This is the general recommendation. To understand what is meant by conversation, it is well worth reading an extract of four pages from the sixth chapter. The example is transcribed from a mentor-mentee conversation reflecting “non-linear learning”, a cornerstone of the authors’ fundamental perspective on how development comes about. It is important to apply a freer style of conversation, which offers scope for discussion of the various interpretations of tales of everyday life taken up by the mentee. Equally important is to attempt to avoid a conversational technique based on rationality, a stepwise schema or a focus on results, which is the agenda of linear learning. The reader becomes convinced of this, thanks to the extensive argumentation that precedes the example of dialogue.

At a deeper level, the conversation, even the relationship, between the mentee/coachee and the mentor/coach is analyzed from a *power perspective*. Regardless of the extent to which exchange between the two parties is founded in ideas of equality and mutual benefit, there are elements of power in more or less subtle forms. Rather than just pass this by, or trivialize it, the authors take a firm grip on the issue. Supported by a concept of power that distinguishes between different power bases (reward, compulsion, expert, reputation and position) the “pair relationship”

is dissected in three mutually different studies, each a case study by nature. As well as the aspects of power, an attempt is made to identify transference and counter-transference tendencies in the parties; and, specifically in the third study, where a coach extensively describes the coaching efforts made, a discourse analysis is performed. The aim is to demonstrate how power expresses itself, and the impact it has, especially on the mentee/coachee. The authors also wish to show that one of the dimensions of power lies in a relationship; that is, power expresses itself in the interaction to which both parties contribute. Thus, it is maintained, power is not a behavior tied to an individual; rather, “power is relational”.

The activity of mentoring or coaching can be viewed from the aspect of power even in relation to its organizational frame. A string of challenging questions are posed in the chapter entitled “Power in Coaching and Mentoring”. Examples include: How honest and open can the coachee be in a relationship when he or she knows, or perceives it as such, that the coach has the power to influence his or her career? What happens when the mentee approaches the mentor’s level of capacity? How likely is it that the coachee becomes or is made dependent on attractive personality attributes of the coach?

Setting goals

Power is also a theme when the authors discuss the importance of goal-setting. In coaching, the norm is to work with distinct immediate goals. In mentoring, it is more a matter of setting long-term goals, usually without any one goal dominating the conversation too much. Whatever, goal-setting is regarded in this book as a power problem, strongly linked to the organizational context in which coaching or mentoring takes place. In the literature, there are advocates, opponents and people of ambivalence with regard to the necessity of formulating and following up goals. Typical questions arising in this setting are: Who sets the agenda? In whose interests are goals (one or several) determined? According to what criteria should the impact of coaching or mentoring be measured? The authors point out that there is a tension between management’s need for control (expressed, *inter alia*, in pre-set generally applicable goals) and the participants’ (especially the mentee’s/coachee’s) needs for personal liberation and development, and for being respected for their own goals. With regard to coaching, there is the fear that large companies, in the future, will, to an ever greater extent, get their own HR department, or a pool of specially selected external or internal coaches, to take care of coaching for employees. In the wake of this, the effect on the part of the individual will be less promotional in terms of development. Accordingly, the vision for the future is pessimistic.

Power can also stereotype, and thereby hinder, diversity – the downside of which is intolerance and prejudice, and the exclusion of individuals. Diversity is, according to the authors, perhaps the greatest challenge that humanity has to face. It is expressed not only in policy documents, action plans and particular experimental projects, but also in concrete and even more sweeping or radical actions. One chapter in the book is specifically devoted to the concept of diversity, and how resistance to it is to be combated. In the authors’ view, conversations between mentors and mentees provide fertile ground for such a process. A fairly lengthy portrayal is presented of a mentoring program that was successfully implemented in a police district in Yorkshire in England. The background lay in the street murder of a non-white teenager. The ground for starting the mentoring program was that the murder investigation indicated that “institutional racism” had been involved. One of the authors was responsible for the content of the

program and its implementation. The focus was on how to come to terms with unequal treatment, preconceived opinions and lack of knowledge within the police force and the general public, and also with sociocultural differences, and so on.

Qualification demands and professionalization

Who is suited to be a coach or mentor? What qualifications are necessary? How can occupational competencies be safeguarded? On the basis of these questions, posed in the two concluding chapters, the authors enter the arena of professionalization. As founders and leaders of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council and the International Coaching Federation, they have had reason to ponder over different possible solutions. What is fundamental is the prevention of charlatanism and safeguarding the good reputation of the collective serving as mentors and coaches. One way is to introduce supervision of practicing mentors and coaches. Various proposals and models that have been launched for such supervision (from above) are discussed. The authors seek to adopt a stance on the burgeoning enthusiasm for professionalization, which means that a further layer is placed on top. There are several detectable risks. One is the rapid formation of a school for how supervision is to be structured and what theories it should be based upon. Another is that mentees or coachees will be seen as passive objects. A third is that a kind of moralizing around how a company hires people for coaching and mentoring might arise, and it will be regarded somehow as “finer” if these persons have a supervisor above them. The position adopted by the authors is that it is premature to establish principles for supervision, and even more so for the educational requirements of supervisors. Instead, regular developmental talks in groups with experienced, skilled colleagues are required. The discussion concerning the authorization or certification of mentors and coaches is very similar to the one conducted in Sweden some time ago with regard to the psychology profession.

The argument for formalization of competency requirements and standardized specializations is concerned with giving potential commissioners of services, coaching in particular, some clues in making informed decisions on enlistment – given the vast range of services on offer. Control is exerted over poor and unethical practitioners. A stop is put to dilettantes and quacks. But even here, the authors express a certain degree of hesitancy when confronted with the prospect of locking themselves into formally adopted competency requirements. It is, as we know, a matter of a growing profession. What is of greatest importance is to maintain an open development-oriented attitude, to adopt a nuanced approach to professionalization, and to give scope for freedom.

Professionalization is an issue that is treated across national borders. The hesitation expressed in this book with regard to its forms does not come across at all in the guest chapter on the research perspective in the US. There, Dawn Chandler, with authority, reports on how certification demands for coaches, under the auspices of the International Coaching Federation (ICF) have been around for a long time, but also how the issue has had less of a role to play in the context of mentoring. After presenting an introductory fact-laden history of coaching and mentoring in the US, Chandler gives a description of research in the country that largely accords with that in “The Handbook of Mentoring at Work. Theory, Research and Practice”, edited by Ragins and Kram, in which she is a co-author. Her critical reflections apply above all to the research having been founded in the corporate-management ideas and social norms prevailing in north-American working life, which means that its findings cannot be said to have global validity.

It is inevitable, in her view, that the practical applications of mentoring and coaching in the US are the ones that have become and remain the objects of research. However, it is important to illuminate the cultural differences between different parts of the world to understand whether and how mentoring and coaching can be applied – if this has not already been done, without these specific terms being employed.

Concluding remarks

The characterizations made of their own countries' research into mentoring and, to some extent, coaching, show that genuinely different research traditions predominate in the US and Britain. There is also broad agreement on this, to judge from how "the other country's" research is characterized in each case.

Chandler (US) affirms that the typical research article on mentoring restricts itself to established concepts, launches some hypotheses, uses statistical analyses and large study groups, investigates a handful of associations, reports results and their limitations, and demonstrates some practical implications. She attaches the label "positivist" to this kind of study, and she expects that research into coaching, when it has had time to grow, will bear the same positivist stamp. Between the lines, a favorable attitude towards a positivist approach can be detected.

Such an interpretation is impossible to make from reading the British authors. Garvey and his co-authors are very clear in their view on how mentoring and coaching best can be illuminated. You should start with a qualitative and quantitative investigation of how coaching and mentoring are concretely pursued: "participant research" is essential – call it action research; and, sociocultural values and the organizational context must be incorporated into any interpretation of what goes on. They are convinced that a constructionist research approach is superior in the seeking of knowledge about mentoring and coaching.

Here, we are dealing with two contrasting directions of research into current phenomena of great topicality. Both the US and Britain are eager to uphold their line. What kind of knowledge does the one and the other deliver, and who are the primary stakeholders involved? It is quite clear that, in their book, Garvey and co-authors are primarily targeting people who are active in mentoring and coaching, and who need intellectual topping-up, in-depth knowledge, and stimulation. The north-American research anthology seems primarily to be created for up-and-coming researchers, who have chosen mentoring as their subject area, and who wish to pursue an academic career in this area.