

Introduction

This book is about the psychology of coaching, mentoring and learning. There are many books about learning and mentoring; there are even more about coaching. However, we believe that there is no single book that brings together the intersection of these important, diverse and growing fields. The title of this book reflects our valuing of diversity in the emerging discipline of coaching, and how it can be enriched by continuously expanding, to include mentoring, while remaining grounded in the solid foundation of the psychology of learning.

AIMS

The aim of this chapter is to help readers gain a rapid understanding of the nature of the book and find the information it offers easily. It provides a rationale for the book, together with a résumé of its overall structure and a brief description of each chapter. It also suggests how readers working at different levels can use the book to meet their interests, experience and professional competence.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Our purpose is to show how individuals and organisations can apply the theories and principles of psychology in coaching, mentoring and learning. To this end, the book is written for the following groups:

- Coaches, mentors and trainers who would like to learn the general theories and principles of psychology that underpin coaching, mentoring and learning.
- Psychologists who want to apply their experience to coaching, mentoring and training individuals and organisations.
- Senior executives and managers responsible for training budgets who would like to realise the potential benefit and understand how to design for and evaluate effective training programmes in their organisations.
- Students of psychology considering a career in coaching, mentoring and training.

We are aware that the emerging field of coaching and mentoring, coupled with the popularity of psychology in the UK, will attract a very wide readership. Thus the intended readership is not limited to those described above. Readers may include teachers, instructors and anyone involved in coaching, mentoring, training or supervision.

With the rapid development of coaching/mentoring as an industry, much confusion exists between the psychology of coaching/mentoring and the psychology of counselling and psychotherapy. In comparison to the development of psychotherapy as a discipline, we have found a lot more sharing of practices, promoted by various coaching and mentoring organisations (see Chapter 2).

HOW THIS BOOK DIFFERS FROM OTHERS

There are many books on coaching and mentoring. However, this book differs from others in the following aspects:

- As far as we are aware, this is the first book on coaching psychology published in the UK that attempts to bring together the psychological theory that underpins coaching, mentoring and learning. It embodies a number of developments in coaching and mentoring as well as coaching psychology. It traces the development of the Special Group in Coaching Psychology within the British Psychological Society which addresses coaching psychology as a discipline.
- It reflects the latest thinking, research and development in coaching psychology with high-level theories, principles and practical applications.
- It applies psychology to both coaching/mentoring and learning (not either/or), thereby blurring the boundaries as well as addressing the differences between coaching, mentoring and learning.
- This book has cross-cultural elements that make the theories universal and applicable across different cultures.
- We apply the general psychology of learning rather than psychotherapy to coaching and mentoring (Chapter 3).
- It demonstrates know-how and presents exercises with step-by-step instructions as well as case studies within diverse organisational and community contexts (Chapters 7–9).
- It includes a chapter on evaluation, which demonstrates the effectiveness of applying the psychology of learning in coaching, mentoring and learning (Chapter 10).

Working Terminology

Before we get going and for those with no knowledge of coaching, mentoring and learning, we are going to offer some broad, pragmatic working definitions which we

will refine as we go along. Firstly we are talking in this book about processes and activities that support learning. By learning, we mean ‘the cognitive process of acquiring skill and knowledge’.

Coaching is often described as a process of support offered to an individual, which is performance focused and goal centred and results in action. A mentor (in mentoring) is a critical friend overseeing the development of another. All these processes are learner centred and driven. A theme running through this book is the cross-cultural application of coaching and mentoring. As such we define culture broadly as ‘the predominating attitudes and behaviour that categorise the functioning of a group, community or organisation, which we typically apply to a range of contexts – to countries, ethnic categories, professions and work places. By ‘cross-cultural’, we refer to the interaction between peoples or entities from two or more cultures. We will test theories, concepts and techniques cross-culturally to see if they are transferable to other contexts beyond the original application setting.

Towards Integration of Terms

The material provided represents the fertile ground of interaction between coaching, mentoring and psychology (in particular, learning). This triangular relationship can be represented in a simple Venn diagram (Figure 1.1).

However, as our research and coaching/mentoring journey unfolded, we discovered that there are increasing overlaps between the three disciplines. Thus one can see the three circles of influence in Figure 1.1 gravitating towards each other



Figure 1.1 The overlapping fertile ground between coaching, mentoring and psychology of learning

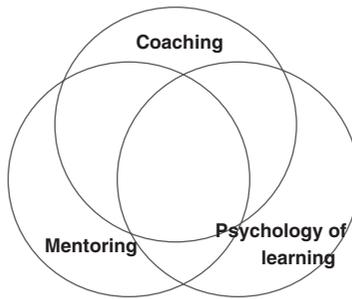


Figure 1.2 Increasing overlapped area between coaching, mentoring and psychology of learning

(see Figure 1.2). The next question then becomes clear: ‘How much overlap is there between the three disciplines in practice?’

At the end of our discussion, we conclude that the three are in fact interwoven. In Chapter 2, we show that coaching and mentoring are coming of age. We consider market forces, the development of the coaching/mentoring industry and the global market place and their roles in shaping practice. In order to bring our model of coaching/mentoring and psychology of learning to life, the orientation of this book can be rearranged as a three-dimensional working model (see Figure 1.3).

In this model, we view coaching and mentoring as an interchangeable continuum. Sometimes they may even be regarded as the same thing, depending on the context. That is why you will find the expressions coaching/mentoring, coaches/mentors and coachees/mentees. Whatever the context, we believe that at its centre due regard should be given to the diversity of all participants in this process. That understanding extends to an appreciation of sensitivity towards and respect for the values, beliefs, faith, gender (including transgender and different sexual orientation), social barriers/disability, and racial and cultural backgrounds of each other. To understand the universality and diversity of coachees/mentees within a diverse setting, it is important that coaches/mentors learn more about the principles and techniques grounded in the psychology of learning and applicable across cultures.

CONTENT IN A NUTSHELL

Coaching and mentoring are diverse disciplines. In the UK alone, organisations/groups have been set up specialising in coaching and/or mentoring. These include the Association for Coaching, the British Psychological Society’s Special Group in Coaching Psychology, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, the Eastern Mentoring Forum and the International Coaching Federation (see Chapter 2).

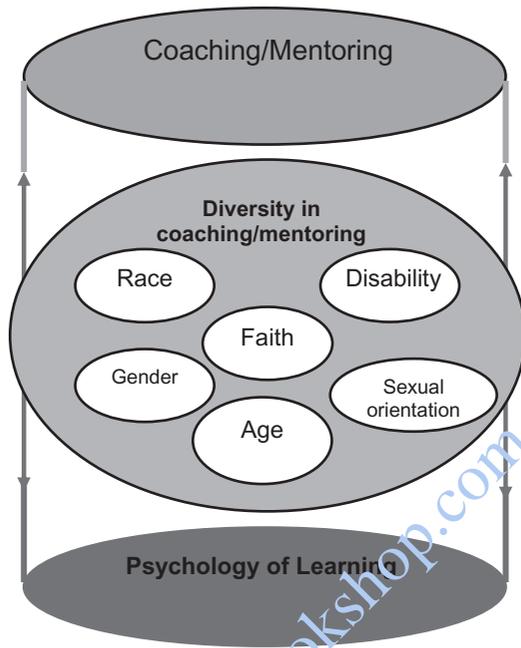


Figure 1.3 Working in a three-dimensional model of coaching, mentoring and psychology of learning

Coaches and mentors come from diverse backgrounds. While we do not need a degree in psychology in order to be a coach and mentor, we believe that for coaching and mentoring to be effective, we need to understand the psychological principles on which the practice is based. Without this understanding, coaches and mentors risk not achieving their intended outcome.

Throughout this book, we focus on linking theory to practical application, drawing on the comprehensive literature in psychology of learning. The psychological theories of learning are described in Chapter 3. This chapter provides a literature review as well as highlighting the learning theories that are useful in our coaching and mentoring practice within the tradition of epistemology. (By epistemology, we mean we question the nature of what we know, fundamentally asking what knowledge is and how we distinguish it from our internal thoughts/beliefs.) Chapter 4 addresses key definitions of coaching, mentoring and learning, which are grounded in the psychology of learning from the previous chapter. From revising the psychology of learning and establishing our own key definitions within the intersecting domain of coaching, mentoring and learning, we set out on a journey of enquiry and proceed logically to guide the reader through the chapters that follow. Chapter 5 describes how coaching and mentoring can be used as a vehicle to help organisations become

learning organisations. From our consolidation of theory into coaching and mentoring practice in diverse settings, we develop a Universal Integrated Framework (UIF) in Chapter 6. We describe the major classes of techniques and tools in Chapter 7; and supplement them with relevant practical exercises that we hope readers will find useful in Chapter 8. In particular, we provide information on a supervision approach and ideas for measuring receptiveness to coaching/mentoring, as well as a base-line assessment tool. Chapter 9 provides a number of case studies that we discuss in terms of the UIF and demonstrate that these theories and exercises work in the real world, in various organisations as well as in diverse communities. One of the major criticisms in the emerging coaching industry is that most theories and practices lack rigorous, evidence-based evaluation. Chapter 10 meets this challenge by providing an impact evaluation of the Universal Integrated Framework (UIF) linked to a case study. Finally, in Chapter 11, we describe our perceived future direction and work in terms of following key areas of our prior focus:

- matching between coaching/mentoring pairs
- co-ordinator role
- emotional intelligence cross-cultural competency
- evidence-based research and impact assessment
- supervision
- training
- coaching/mentoring standards, codes of conduct and ethics

BOOK RESEARCH APPROACH

Writing this book has been like riding two horses. We would like to ensure that it is easy to read and accessible to a diverse readership without compromising its academic rigour. Thus the writing style is straightforward wherever possible. Academic references are only noted at direct points in the text. They do reflect the wide range of literature we have reviewed, both from online sources and information obtained from attending international workshops and conferences, in the UK, Europe, Australia and Hong Kong. While we cast our research net very widely, we also focus on the deliverables that this book represents, that is, useful guidance for learners and practitioners in the field of coaching, mentoring and training. The UIF we have developed through our research and practice is grounded in both established psychological theories of learning and evidence-based evaluation for its effectiveness and efficacies.

WHY COACHING, MENTORING AND LEARNING?

As globalisation leads to more intense competition, organisations need to continue to recruit, develop and deploy the best people in order to stay ahead and survive.

We have seen rapid and unprecedented change in our organisations and communities across the globe. This has taken place in the fast-growing communications industry as well as in public organisations. Repeated reconfigurations in search of service improvements have meant that leaders are required to work at the leading edge of their capability. Corporate leaders have begun to realise that traditional training methods may not be able to cope with the pace of change. Hence organisations have turned to coaching and mentoring to help develop their people, deepen their talent pool and enhance their organisational learning capability. Mentoring and coaching go beyond industry. Individuals from vulnerable communities need channelled effective routes to learning in trusted partnerships; isolated groups need a mechanism to break down barriers to mainstream communities and any one who wants to learn more about them selves, increase their knowledge in targeted areas and their wider environment can benefit.

How to Read this Book

Owing to the philosophy that underpins this book, the following terms are used interchangeably throughout this book:

- you and readers
- coaches and mentors
- coachees and mentees
- learners, trainers and supervisors

Each chapter is intended to be independent in terms of its topic and content. You may pick and choose which chapters are relevant to you. Nevertheless, throughout this book you will find that the chapters are interwoven, and some are clustered more closely around a topic than others at a certain juncture of the coaching/mentoring journey. We recommend that the chapters be read consecutively in pairs. For example, if you are a learner or student who would like to know more about coaching and mentoring and how they link to the psychology of learning, you should read Chapters 2 and 3. If you are a busy chief executive or training manager who wants to find out the relevance of coaching and mentoring to organisations, you may like to read Chapter 5. For experienced coaches/mentors wishing to refer directly to the techniques and exercises, Chapters 7 and 8 can be read together. Chapter 8 provides a things-to-do list for coaching; in addition the exercises are organised in a systematic way so that readers can refer back to the principles described in Chapter 7. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced coach/mentor, you will find these two chapters useful as they provide pointers to begin your continuous development or fine-tune what you already know. Readers who are interested in concrete examples, case studies and evidence-based evaluation of coaching and mentoring programme can go directly to Chapters 9 and 10. Throughout the book, we highlight concepts and ideas that are interwoven by cross-referencing. In this way, we hope that our

'conversation' with the reader will provide a sense of continuity as the story unfolds and encourages a dramatic re-engagement with many of your experiences that may fill some of the gaps in this book. To help readers apply the theories to reflective practice, each chapter is written to a standard format. It begins with an Introduction to outline its content, and ends with a Chapter Summary and Reflection, which summarises the key concepts and reflects on the implications in practice.

<http://www.pbookshop.com>