

COACHING AND MENTORING in Higher Education

How to tell the difference

Paul Levy

Head of Staff and Educational Development
University of East Anglia

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Coaching and mentoring

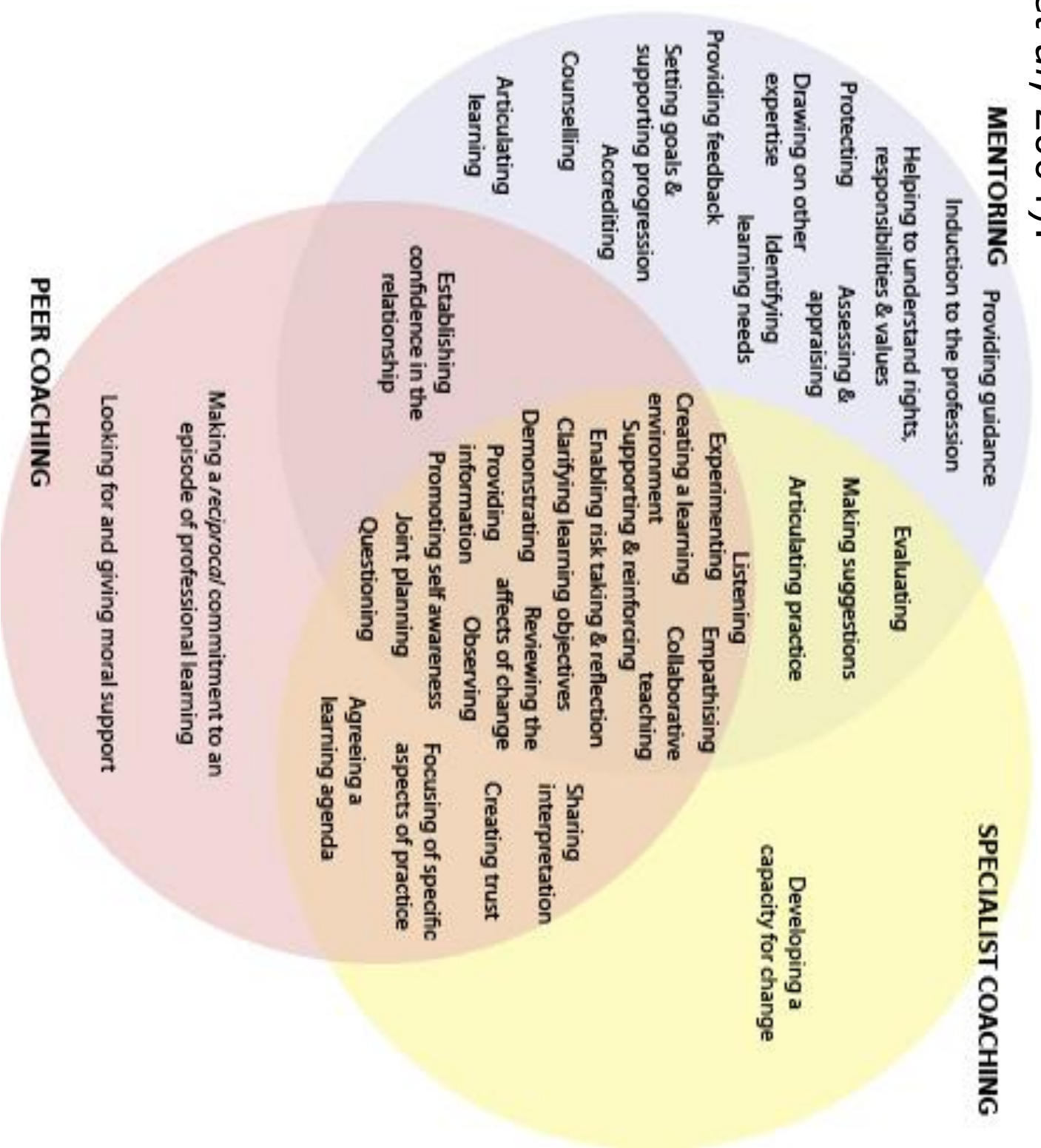
Coach and coachee?

Mentor and mentee?

Co-coaches?



Activities involved in mentoring and coaching and their overlap (Cordingley *et al*, 2004):



Differences between mentoring and coaching

These conceptions indicate some overlap and key differences:

Mentoring is often seen as a longer term process, for example offering support during a career change such as induction or becoming a leader or manager.

Coaching will usually be shorter term and more focused

Confusion between mentoring and coaching

In 'Transformational Mentoring' Hay (1995) describes mentoring as a 'developmental alliance'; a relationship between equals in which someone is helped to develop themselves.

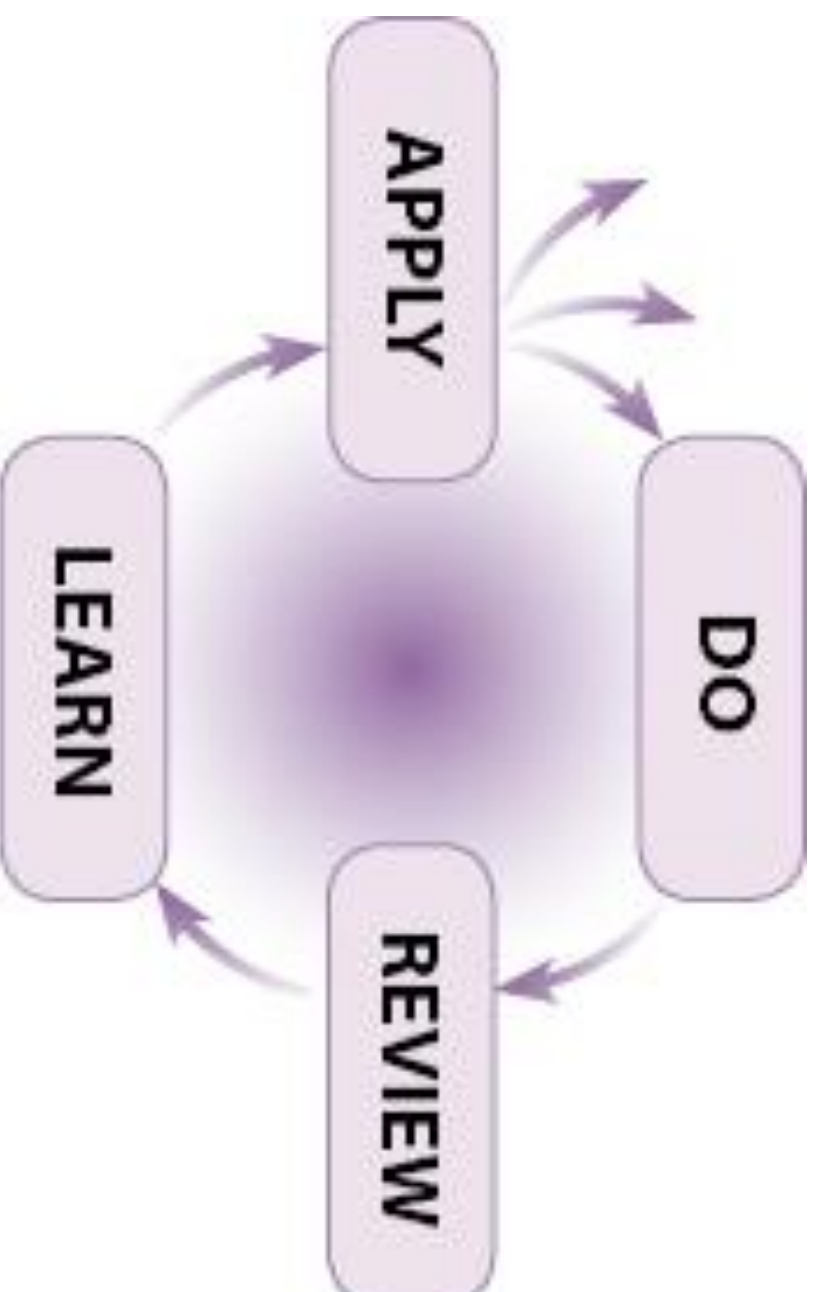
Two explanations of both mentoring and coaching make my working distinction explicit:

- **Mentoring** is usually concerned with supporting new practitioners whilst they make a significant career transition or take on a new role (Cordingley *et al*, 2004).
- is intended to be supportive of the individual and occurs 'at need'. Here the emphasis is on ready and confidential access to an experienced colleague who can be used as a sounding board and who offers a form of advice or guidance.

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- **Coaching** is normally used to support the process of reviewing established or emerging practice. It is focused on innovation, change or specific skills (Cordingley et al, 2004).
 - is conceived as a more structured learning process aimed at explicit professional development in an agreed area(s) of performance (Pennington, 2004).
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The learning approach

In my conception of mentoring and coaching, transformation or change comes about through a learning conversation. The conversation enables a process of mentoring or coaching in which there is an explicit focus on learning. Dennison and Kirk's cycle of learning (1990) is useful for this purpose.



What mentoring and coaching is not

Mentoring and coaching are not counselling, although some counselling skills may be used by the mentor or coach.

Learning conversations do not focus on personal problems.

Neither is the learning conversation therapy although the outcome of the conversation may leave the person feeling up-lifted and may feel their emotions have changed.

But learning is always the focus.

Benefits to the mentee / coachee

Mentoring and coaching have been associated with a wide range of benefits: from career advancement and heightened self-confidence, to an increased sense of belonging.

(Hansford et al, 2002 cited in Hobson, 2003).



Mentoring-benefits to the mentee

- helps reflection
- reduces feelings of solitariness
- helps share with other colleagues
- helps to seek help from others
- boosts confidence
- gains awareness of the University's unwritten rules
- helps assess issues of concern

Coaching - benefits to the coachee

- helps think about goals and how to achieve them
- helps articulate issues in a conscious and thoughtful way
- reduces feelings of isolation
- helps gain a perspective on issues and concerns
- helps see ways through difficulties
- helps review and makes sense of feelings.

Benefits to the Mentor/Coach

- own professional development is enhanced; new skills and areas of expertise developed
 - knowledge and ideas updated
 - insights and understandings through supervision are gained
 - increased peer recognition
 - increased personal reputation
 - increased job satisfaction (Kay and Hinds, 2005).
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- benefits to own professional development
 - improved performance/problem analysis
 - insights into current practice
 - awareness of different approaches
 - increased reflectiveness
 - improved self-esteem (Hobson, 2003).

Benefits to the organisation

Positive effects for the organisation can accrue. Douglas' (1997) review found a range of benefits from the organisation's perspective:

- increased productivity and motivation
- improved recruitment
- increased organisational communication
- improved succession planning
- management development
- reduced staff turnover
- increased organisational commitment
- strengthening and continuance of corporate culture.

What helps effective Mentoring and Coaching?

A review carried out by Pennington (2004) found that:

- Mentoring is more effective when it is formalised and when the expectations and commitments of participants are made explicit
- the quality of the mentoring process is enhanced when participants are provided with guidelines and/or training on effective practice and the management of the relationship
- Mentors drawn from outside the organisation are generally at least as effective as those from within and in some circumstances may provide added benefit
- Mentoring works equally well in pairings of mixed gender or race as it does with same gender/race pairings

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- the mentoring process is strengthened when care is taken to match individuals in terms of needs, geographical location and personal preferences
 - given the centrality of confidentiality and trust in the mentoring process it is important to design ground rules for the management of significant ethical issues
 - Mentoring is particularly effective when individuals are new to a role, engage in major career transitions or work in environments where change is frequent.
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Effective relationships in a learning-centred approach

In a learning-centered approach the relationship is non-hierarchical. It can be helpful if mentoring or coaching takes place outside the line management relationship. The relationship needs to be based on mutual respect in a non-judgmental atmosphere.

There is no single right way; the approach needs to be appropriate for the specific circumstances but some basic principles apply to any situation:

- The mentor or coach needs to be independent ie act impartially
 - The purpose of the process needs to be agreed
 - The means of contact needs to be agreed and reviewed
 - Confidentiality needs to be maintained
- (Kay and Hinds, 2005).

Questions and discussion

- In twos or threes, compare experiences of either coaching, mentoring or both.
- Share some insights
- Questions and further thoughts?



Summary

Coaching and mentoring share many features, skills and attributes in common but are different in aim:

- Mentoring tends to be offered to staff either new on role or new to the organisation. The mentor is more experienced and has a advisory and sometimes supervisory role (in the developmental sense)
- Coaching is shorter term and focussed on more specific goals or objectives. The coach need not be expert in the coachee's work.
- Different models serve different needs; peer coaching, co-coaching, leadership coaching, life coaching etc.
- All tend to be supported by (and supportive of) the development of a coaching culture in the organisation.

References in the presentation

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What hinders effective mentoring or coaching?

The skills of mentoring and coaching are hard to acquire and evaluate but crucial to success

(Cordingley *et al*, 2004).



Specific issues that hinder effective Mentoring and Coaching have been identified:

- misunderstandings on either or both sides about the roles, obligations and expectations
 - the process is not a priority for either or both
 - the mentee and mentor (coachee and coach) do not respect each other
 - the mentee/coachee sees the process as an organisational requirement and does not enter the process with a wish to learn
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- the mentor/coach has been coerced into taking on the role and has little interest in the process
 - the mentor/coach does not see the process as an opportunity for learning but as a way of passing on his/her expertise or is patronising (developed from Rogers, 2004: 24).

Developing a coaching culture in the organisation

Clutterbuck and Megginson define a coaching culture as one where:

- Coaching is the predominant style of managing and working together, and where a commitment to grow the organisation is embedded in a parallel commitment to grow the people in the organisation.

They present a summarised version of a model of coaching culture as a kind of 'ideal type':

- Everyone in the organisation believes that learning is critical to individual and organisational success

- The leaders of the organisation use a non-directive leadership style that is, they employ a coaching style with peers and subordinates

- Decision making is devolved as far as possible to those who are closest to having to implement the decisions. They are given freedom to take risks and set their own goals.

- Managers use a coaching style in the way they manage staff on a day-to-day basis

- Managers view developing others and creating a learning environment as one of their major responsibilities

- Peers coach one another to share knowledge, to pass on expertise and help one another, and also raise their own standards and general standards of professionalism

- Having a mentor or a coach is viewed positively, and people are encouraged to seek mentoring or coaching support at various stages in their career and for various reasons.

Adapted from Clutterbuck, D and Megginson, D. (2005) Making Coaching Work: Creating a Coaching Culture, London CIPD.