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Coaching in Education: a professional development process in formation

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Complex context for coaching in England



Why bother with coaching in education?

Coaches 'In Conversation' with each other at public event, conversations audio-recorded and analysed

- 1) For each conversation individually;
 - Factual details about the coaching and the coach.
 - First review using theory of practice architecture (Kemmis et al. 2012) as an organising frame: 'doings' (the physical space) 'sayings' (the semantic space), 'relatings' (the social space).
- 2) Broad themes identified
- 3) Coaches' individual narratives.
- 4) Key findings shared with the coach participants to review and validate the research.





Ruth Whiteside is a newly appointed member of the senior leadership team in a primary school which is deemed to be underperforming, and is deployed as a coach to support teacher development in that school.



Jo Flanagan is an independent Speech and Language Therapist who uses a video-based coaching approach to support primary and early years teachers to develop communication-rich pedagogies.



Rebecca Tickell is employed in a school leadership development centre and has been developing her own coaching skills through the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) programme for transformational and developmental coaching.



Simon Feasey is an ex-primary Headteacher who now works as a 'community capacity coach' using group coaching approaches to bring parents and senior leaders in school into more aligned working relationships.



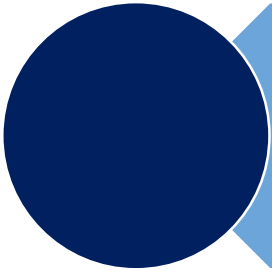
Lou Mycroft is a 'freelance thinker' who works with a wide range of organisations using the discipline of 'The Thinking Environment', including for one to one coaching, group teaching and facilitation.



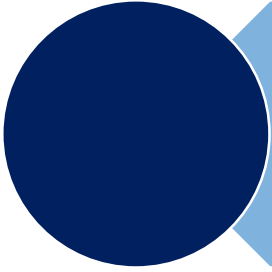
Rachel Lofthouse is a teacher educator and researcher who has previously used video-based coaching approaches in research projects and to support teacher development, and who has recently founded CollectivED.



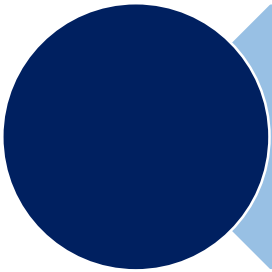
Commonalities and contrasts in coaching



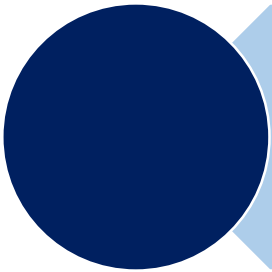
Some one-to-one coaching, some group coaching



Purposes vary; developing teaching quality, inter-professional learning, personal development and improving community-school relationships.



Expectation that coaching involves dialogues to create opportunities for learning and change; striking balance between organisation's agenda and individual's motives & interests.



Coaches use structures, disciplines and tools to underpin coaching (e.g. video, listening mode, Thinking Environment).

Discourses of coaching

Coaches describe fluid identities; being a 'coach' as part of integrated and evolving professional identity

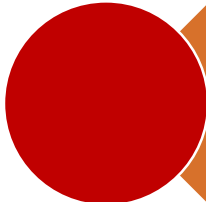
Contexts deemed in need of change. Coaching often introduced to, 'close the gap', 'sharpen practice', 'solve the problem'

Coaching is not about 'saving people', a 'quick fix', 'performative'.

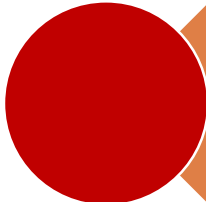
Coaching means being 'listened to', being 'attentive to', allowing coachees to 'open up' & 'do their best thinking'.

Coaching is 'reciprocal', 'exploratory', 'authentic', and allows coaches and coachees to 'share', 'learn' in relation to 'bespoke' approaches.

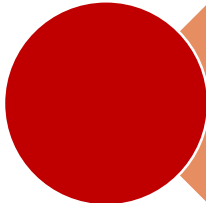
Coaches in formation



Coaches' narratives indicate ongoing journeys to become a coach and as a coach



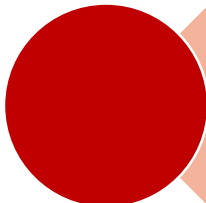
Development of coaching practices often coincide with new employment & professional scholarship



Use of coaching in educational settings often sought as new approach to existing issue



Coaches bring expertise and experience to role from former professional roles



Coaching experienced by coaches as formative process, developing skills and capacity. Coaching not static – evolves over time.

Coaching as relational practice

'Relatings' generated most discussion; fostering distinct social space for professional development

Due to 'gatekeeping' of coaching, and coaches experience/expertise, a power imbalance with the coachee is possible

Can take time to create coaching relationships which are comfortable, productive and inclusive

Coach/coachee work together on genuine concerns, building trust, being non-judgmental, and engaging in co-construction

Coach acts in congruence with personal and professional values; intrapersonal aspects transferred into interpersonal domains

Discussion; key themes

Coaching not easily defined (Bloom et al, 2005)

Coaching can be practiced as a counter-balance to performativity (Lofthouse & Leat, 2013)

Coaching is dialogic & relies on trust (Whitmore, 2002, Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran (2010)

Links to ecological agency (Priestley et al, 2015)

Potential to be transformative form of CPD (Kennedy, 2014)

Coaching can build teacher collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2017)

Links to collaborative professionalism (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2017)