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***Reflective Statement on the Role-
play***

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Introduction

Within the pages of this essay, I embark on a reflective journey through the initial phase of an assignment that cast me into the role of a coach, igniting a process that captures the essence of authentic coaching.

This captivating assignment provided a stage for role-play, a dynamic exercise that traversed the realm of coaching dynamics and the profound impact of effective collaboration. Guided

by the tenets of Gibb's Reflective Cycle (Adeani et al., 2020), this essay unpacks the complexities, challenges, and inherent successes in this unique educational endeavour. The core of this assignment encompassed a role-play activity that required me to navigate the dual roles of coach and coachee. This duality provided an opportunity to delve into the complexities of coaching, propelling me into areas of guidance, empathy, and strategic communication.

The task commenced with the role of a coach, and in this role, my journey to cultivate a coaching partnership with Maria – a friend and classmate – began. I recognised that fostering an atmosphere of trust, collaboration, and comfort was paramount for the success of this journey. This realisation underscored the significance of preparation, effective communication, and shared commitment that paved the way for our collaboration.

The selection of roles, an act not taken lightly, provided insight into the importance of relatability and personal resonance. Choosing the character of Lakshmi, whose experiences mirrored my own encounters during the challenging times of the pandemic, amplified the authenticity of the coaching process. This character selection aligned closely with my understanding of balancing parenthood, remote work, and the pursuit of equilibrium in an ever-evolving landscape.

The underpinning of effective coaching emerged as the GROW model (Wilson, C. (2020), providing a structured scaffold to construct impactful questions and solutions. This model, coupled with probing questions born from meticulous research, fostered an environment where collaboration flourished. As the role-play drew near, the strategic transition from scripted responses to the authentic cultivation of empathetic listening and co-creation became paramount.

The culmination of these preparations unfolded within the role-play scenario itself. With Maria as my coachee, the dynamic interplay of questions, responses, and empathy unravelled, showcasing the intricate tapestry of coaching dynamics. Empathy, understanding, and the offer of tailored solutions paved the way for a journey that resonated deeply with the coachee's aspirations and challenges.

As the role-play reached its peak, the transition to reciprocate Maria's coaching role marked a crucial moment. Navigating the contours of adaptability and flexibility underscored the flexibility that a coach must embody to cater to the unique needs of each coachee.

The culmination of the exercise was met with applause and affirmations, echoing the effectiveness of the process in both empowering and preparing participants.

This reflective journey within the essay mirrors the essence of authentic coaching – a process that transcends scripted interactions to embody empathy, guidance, and growth. From the inception of collaboration to the triumphant execution of the role-play, this narrative encapsulates the transformative power of dedicated effort, strategic planning, and the genuine desire to foster leadership and growth in oneself and others.

Role-play

The primary aspect of our assignment involved engaging in a role-play, wherein we were provided with a situation where our initial task was to portray the role of a coach, followed by transitioning into the role of a coachee in the subsequent part.

Our teacher, Rixon, provided a comprehensive breakdown of the tasks and the required behaviours. This marked the point of origin where I began to conceive a plan and formulate a mental scenario.

As my role-play partner, I selected my friend and classmate, Maria. My confidence was robust in the prospect of our collaborative efforts yielding a favourable outcome. I held the conviction that Maria's strong sense of responsibility and our effective communication would facilitate seamless joint preparation.

The establishment of a comfort level with my partner was of paramount importance. I recognised that prior practice and effective communication with Maria were pivotal in ensuring that the initial portion of our assignment was a thoroughly enjoyable experience. Despite the fact that presentations often evoke a blend of emotions, including anxiety and a slight degree of nervousness in my case, I remained mindful of the potential for these feelings to stimulate better performance.

Furthermore, I was cognisant of the shared commitment Maria and I nurtured towards our academic pursuits. This mutual dedication solidified my certainty that with some effort, our success was virtually assured.

The manner in which I should embody Philippa's role as the coach seemed clear to me, but for the subsequent part, I needed to choose the role I desired to assume. I perused the descriptions of all the characters and determined that Lakshmi would be the most fitting persona for me. Lakshmi's position as an employee within the organization we were discussing resonated with my own experience, given the similarities between her circumstances and those I encountered during and post the COVID-19 period.

I recognised that discussing this role would be particularly comfortable for me due to my personal familiarity with the challenges of parenting during the pandemic, balancing remote

learning for my child, meeting work obligations, and striving for a harmonious work-life equilibrium.

Once I settled on my chosen character, I consulted Maria to ascertain her role selection. This decision would guide my choice of coaching model to employ. Although I had a clear inclination toward my character from the outset, I refrained from asking Maria to decide about her role. We had several days to finalise our choices. On the next day, Maria informed me that she would assume the role of Maria as per the provided scenario.

Upon receiving her decision, I commenced contemplation on the most appropriate coaching model for Maria. I conducted research on the various coaching models we had studied, delving into the finer intricacies of each, in order to determine the most fitting line of questioning for Maria's character.

I decided that the GROW model (Wilson, C., 2020) would be the most fitting approach for the selected character. Subsequently, I initiated research into suitable questions for Maria and devised a coaching strategy. My task encompassed the formulation of five questions in my role as the coach, aiming to collaboratively arrive at optimal solutions with Maria. This task posed no difficulty, given the lucidity of the provided scenario, and I was confident that the process would unfold smoothly.

On the day preceding our scheduled role-play, Maria and I engaged in a video chat for practice. This session proved highly successful, bolstering our preparedness for the upcoming exercise. Further practice was undertaken before our class with Rexon to enhance our confidence in our presentation, intending to avoid overreliance on a scripted performance. Although we had notes outlining the questions and responses, we aimed to avoid reading directly from them. Seeking to initiate the role-play proceedings, we requested Rexon's permission to be the first participants, which he granted.

We inquired whether we could have our laptops accessible during the role-play, primarily to refer to our notes in case we encountered challenges or forgot key points. Rexon commenced printing marking criteria for the participating students while we reviewed them. At that juncture, I realized an error in how I had formulated my coaching advice for Maria. Contrary to my initial approach of offering advice based on my perspective, I should have focused on attentive listening and co-creating solutions.

I promptly apprised Maria of the need for an adjusted approach, emphasising the importance of improvisation guided by the marking criteria. Just as our lecturer re-entered the class, we found ourselves at the point of no return. Thus, we commenced our role-play, embracing the need to adapt and improvise.

For the coaching session I knew that as a coach, being prepared and equipped to support the coachee is essential. This involves not only having a well-structured coaching model but

also being adaptable and flexible in the approach. Every coachee is unique, and their journey may require tailored strategies and solutions (Smith, S. 2017).

As the first to assume the role of Philippa, the coach, I posed my opening question to Maria: a query concerning her current situation and the challenges she confronted. Attentively listening to her narrative, I simultaneously formulated my coaching response based on her input.

From my academic pursuits, I was aware that a fundamental step for a coach entails actively listening to the individual being coached. This process involves gaining a comprehensive understanding of the situation and deriving conclusions based on the insights gathered through attentive listening.

I exhibited empathy towards her narrative, offering reassurance that my intent was to collaborate towards the optimal resolution. Throughout, I maintained consistent eye contact, striving to immerse myself in the situation as if genuinely functioning as a coach.

I have tried to make Maria feel comfortable, building a comfortable and open atmosphere is crucial in coaching. When a coachee feels at ease and trusts their coach, they are more likely to share their thoughts, concerns, and aspirations openly. This environment fosters honest and productive discussions, which are essential for effective coaching outcomes (Whitmore, Sir J., 2019).

Continuing, I posed the subsequent question: what changes she aspired to witness in her current workplace and if there were any aspects, she wished were different. Her response was unequivocal. Considering her input, I conveyed my empathy for her sentiment of underappreciation and acknowledged her aspirations for advancement within the organization. Concurrently, I communicated my understanding that the realization of her objectives would necessitate specific incremental actions on her part.

Based on my comprehension, this aligns precisely with the role of a coach – demonstrating empathy towards the individual being coached and generating potential solutions to foster a sense of appreciation (E. Cox, T. Bachkirova, & D. Clutterbuck (eds.), 2014) .

The subsequent question I posed to Maria centred around the actions she had undertaken towards securing the desired position. Drawing from her responses, my responsibility was to formulate various potential options. I recollected class discussions and explored potential options suitable for Maria.

I inquired about her openness to pursuing training or perhaps participating in a boot camp as potential paths. I aimed to present her with choices derived not solely from my personal coaching experiences but tailored to her specific circumstances.

Based on the information I gathered from the reading materials, I grasped the significance of a proficient and adept coach in influencing an individual's achievement, whether it pertains to personal or professional endeavours. The adept guidance, expertise, and skilful questioning of a coach can facilitate individuals in attaining lucidity, establishing objectives, and overcoming obstacles with enhanced efficiency. I aimed to communicate this notion to Maria during our interaction, emphasising the role of a coach as a requisite for her goal accomplishment (Searby, L.J. & Armstrong, D., 2016).

Moving forward, the fourth question pertained to the goal she was striving to achieve – its positivity, feasibility, and challenge level. While her response was anticipated, the guidance I would provide as a coach remained uncertain. Simultaneously, as Maria shared her thoughts, I formulated my response in my mind, striving to conceal any apprehension about the unfolding situation and offering a well-considered answer.

To provide valuable support, a coach needs to deeply understand the coachee's needs, goals, challenges, and aspirations. Active listening, asking probing questions, and empathizing with the coachee's perspective are key elements in building this understanding (Illeris, K., 2011) .

Reassuring Maria, I emphasised our collaborative efforts in identifying the optimal solution for her and the organisation. I highlighted the positive aspects of her answer and reminded her of the available options to aid her in achieving her goal while enhancing her comfort within the organization. Additionally, I touched upon the communication strategies we would employ and their frequency.

Drawing from my exploration of the class reading materials, I recognised the significance of establishing mutual agreement regarding ongoing communication and the specific methods through which it would be facilitated within the context of a coaching session.

In conclusion, the final question revolved around Maria's strategy for overcoming the challenges and hurdles anticipated on her path to attaining her goals. Maria provided a thoughtful response, allowing me to subsequently offer nuanced suggestions in a considerate and constructive manner. Reflecting on this phase, it struck me that the most challenging segment of the role-play was successfully executed. Throughout, my objective

extended beyond mere role-playing; I endeavoured to fully embody the role of a coach, effectively guiding Maria through the process.

In my understanding, this encapsulates the essence of authentic coaching – the act of motivating, providing guidance, presenting alternatives, and nurturing individual growth and advancement within the organization, ultimately fostering their evolution into effective and capable leadership figures (Hawkins, P., 2018) .

The time had come to reciprocate support for Maria in her role as a coach. Recognising the need to adapt my responses based on her improvisations, I remained flexible in my approach. Maria reciprocated by inquiring about my concerns as an employee and presented several options.

Carefully considering the choices, I selected the option that seemed most advantageous to me. With this positive interaction, our role-play segment concluded. Applause resonated from our classmates, including our instructor, which we took as an encouraging sign. We hoped that their applause reflected genuine enjoyment of our performance, rather than mere support.

Following the role play, we attentively absorbed feedback from our instructor. At that moment, a sense of pride washed over us for our collective efforts and dedication.

Colleagues expressed their enjoyment of our presentation, highlighting how it had facilitated their own preparation for upcoming role plays.

The greatest sense of relief washed over me when I received feedback from the teacher.

Upon reviewing the marking criteria, it was evident that we had successfully fulfilled all the assigned tasks. This realization confirmed the worthiness of both Maria's and my efforts. It was a testament that diligent work consistently yields favourable results, even if it demands occasional sacrifices.

Conclusion

In traversing the multifaceted landscape of role-play, coaching dynamics, and collaborative exploration, this essay has delved into the inception and execution of an assignment that epitomizes the art of coaching. Guided by Rixon's comprehensive breakdown of tasks, a journey commenced, transitioning seamlessly between the roles of coach and coachee. The partnership forged with Maria, replete with confidence and mutual dedication, laid the foundation for an endeavour marked by effective communication, shared commitment, and meticulous preparation.

As the contours of the coaching landscape unfolded, the selection of Lakshmi's role, resonating deeply with personal experiences, further enriched the engagement. This character choice, rooted in the parallels between Lakshmi's challenges and those posed by the pandemic era, underscored the authenticity and empathy underpinning the coaching process.

The adoption of the GROW model as the guiding framework and the formulation of probing questions bespoke an intricate and thoughtful coaching strategy. Rigorous practice sessions and strategic adaptations demonstrated a commitment to authenticity over scripted performance, while an important realization steered the coaching approach towards empathetic listening and co-creation.

The role-play itself was a tapestry of dynamic interactions, from probing questions that unearthed aspirations and challenges, to offering tailored options and strategies. The culmination of Maria's thoughtful response underscored the successful execution of the most challenging segment of the role-play.

As the role-play concluded and feedback was received, a sense of pride emanated from the collective efforts invested. Colleagues' expressions of enjoyment and newfound preparedness underscored the impact of the presentation. The ultimate confirmation, however, lay in the alignment of our performance with the marking criteria, affirming the culmination of diligent work and strategic preparation.

In essence, this essay's exploration mirrors the essence of authentic coaching – a process rooted in motivation, guidance, and fostering growth within individuals. The journey from Philippa's empathetic coaching to reciprocating support for Maria's role has showcased the dynamic evolution of both coachee and coach. This experience not only underscores the art of fostering leadership but also underscores the value of dedication, adaptability, and the rewards that diligent effort yields.

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