

Applied Leadership and Management in the Workplace

Module Assignment Submission

Student Name:	Alexandra Hassan
Student Number:	2329422
Module No:	BMSK6008
Module Title:	Coaching & Mentoring

Statement of Confirmation of Authenticity

By the act of making this submission, the student declares that this is the work of the student named above. The work has not, in whole or in part, been knowingly presented elsewhere for assessment, or where assessment has been built on a previous assessment, this has been identified. Where materials have been used from other sources it has been properly acknowledged. If this statement is untrue, the student acknowledges that an assessment offence has been committed.

Attention is drawn to the plagiarism and unfair practice policies of both the University and of ILM.

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Similarities and Differences Between Coaching and Mentoring in an Organisational Context	3
2.1 What is a Coach?	3
2.2 What is a Mentor?	4
2.3 Coaching.....	4
2.4 Mentoring	5
2.5 Bloom's Taxonomy and Learning in Coaching and Mentoring	5
2.6 Similarities Between Coaching and Mentoring.....	6
Critical Comparison of Coaching and Mentoring	7
3.Critically Exploring the Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes and Behaviours Needed by an Effective Workplace Coach.....	8
3.2 Knowledge Required for Effective Coaching	8
3.3 Skills Required for Effective Coaching.....	9
3.4 Attitudes Required for Effective Coaching	10
3.5 Behaviours Required for Effective Coaching	10
3.6 Critical Evaluation of Coaching Competencies.....	10
4. Critically Assessing a Model or Process for Workplace Coaching	11
4.1 The GROW Model.....	11
4.2 Comparison with Other Models.....	12
4.3 Role of Contracting	13
4.4 Role of Supervision	13
4.6 Evaluating Coaching Effectiveness	13
Case Study: Applying GROW in Practice	14
Reference List (Harvard Style)	14

1. Introduction

This assignment argues that while structured coaching models provide useful methods, the effectiveness of coaching and mentoring ultimately depends on the coach's ability to integrate theoretical knowledge, relational skills, and reflective practice in order to respond to the complex needs of individuals within organisational environments.

One notable finding throughout this assignment is that many mentors I have met in the workplace often continue relationships that began as coaching interactions, transitioning from a short-term, goal-focused approach to a longer-term mentoring relationship. While this continuity can provide valuable ongoing guidance and deepen trust, a critical argument arises if there is a risk that the lines between coaching and mentoring can become blurred. If mentors rely too heavily on prior coaching relationships, there is potential for over-dependence by the coachee, reduced autonomy, or assumptions about goals that may no longer reflect the individual's current needs. This highlights the importance of maintaining clear role definitions and reflective practice to ensure that ongoing mentoring relationships remain supportive without limiting coachee self-direction.

Across the assignment, critical perspectives are integrated, demonstrating that while coaching models provide structure and direction, their effectiveness is highly dependent on the skills, attitudes, and behaviours of the coach, as well as their ability to adapt approaches to the needs of the individual. The findings highlight that the integration of theory, reflective practice, and practical application is crucial to achieving meaningful outcomes, particularly in contexts involving mental health support and personal resilience. Overall, this assignment demonstrates that effective coaching and mentoring within organisations require not only theoretical knowledge and structured models but also ethical practice, relational sensitivity, and ongoing evaluation to ensure both individual and organisational benefits are realised.

2. Similarities and Differences Between Coaching and Mentoring in an Organisational Context

2.1 What is a Coach?

A coach is a professional who helps an individual improve performance, develop specific skills, or achieve goals through a structured, goal-oriented process. Coaching focuses on asking powerful questions, facilitating self-reflection, clarifying goals, challenging limiting beliefs, and encouraging action and accountability. Coaches do not usually give direct advice; instead, they help the coachee find their own solutions. Coaching is typically short- to medium-term, performance-focused, and future-oriented, making it

particularly useful for immediate development, skill-building, or overcoming challenges in the workplace.

2.2 What is a Mentor?

A mentor is a more experienced individual who provides guidance, advice, and support to someone less experienced, often over the long term. Mentoring focuses on broader personal and professional development rather than a specific short-term goal. Mentors share personal experiences, give recommendations, provide industry insights, and act as role models, helping mentees navigate their career paths and develop long-term growth strategies. Mentoring is relationship-based, experience-driven, and developmental, supporting overall growth rather than immediate performance outcomes.

Key Differences:

- Focus: Coaching targets specific goals; mentoring targets overall growth.
- Approach: Coaches ask questions; mentors give advice.
- Structure: Coaching is structured and measurable; mentoring is more informal and flexible.
- Duration: Coaching is short- to medium-term; mentoring is typically long-term.
- Orientation: Coaching is future-focused; mentoring draws on experience to guide development.

In essence, coaching helps a person perform better in the present and achieve immediate objectives, while mentoring provides wisdom, guidance, and support for long-term personal and professional growth.

2.3 Coaching

Coaching is a structured process that focuses on improving individual performance and developing specific skills. John Whitmore defines coaching as “unlocking a person’s potential to maximise their own performance by helping them learn rather than teaching them” (Whitmore, 2017). In organisational settings, coaching often focuses on helping individuals overcome challenges and achieve specific goals through reflective dialogue and questioning.

One commonly used coaching framework is the GROW model, developed by Whitmore (2017). The model provides a structured approach to coaching conversations and consists of four stages:

- Goal – identifying what the individual wants to achieve
- Reality – exploring the current situation
- Options – identifying possible strategies or solutions

- Will – deciding on actions and commitment to change

In my role as a mental health coach within my organisation, I often apply similar coaching principles when supporting colleagues experiencing stress or workplace pressures. For example, when a colleague feels overwhelmed with workload, we may begin by identifying their goal of reducing stress levels. We then explore the current situation, discuss possible coping strategies, and agree on practical steps such as workload prioritisation or wellbeing strategies. This process reflects the structured and goal-focused nature of coaching described by Whitmore (2017); however, the effectiveness of such structured approaches depends heavily on the coach's ability to adapt questioning techniques to the individual needs of the coachee.

2.4 Mentoring

Mentoring differs from coaching in that it focuses more broadly on career development and professional growth. David Clutterbuck describes mentoring as a supportive relationship in which a more experienced individual helps another person develop their career and personal capabilities (Clutterbuck, 2014).

Mentoring relationships often involve the mentor sharing their experiences, offering advice, and supporting the mentee in understanding organisational culture and career opportunities.

Within my organisation, my manager acts as a mentor by guiding my professional development and helping me consider future career opportunities. These conversations are less structured than coaching sessions and tend to focus on long-term development, such as leadership skills, career pathways, and professional growth. This reflects the developmental nature of mentoring described by Clutterbuck (2014).

While mentoring provides valuable career guidance, some researchers argue that traditional mentoring relationships may reinforce organisational hierarchies and power dynamics, potentially limiting independent thinking by the mentee.

2.5 Bloom's Taxonomy and Learning in Coaching and Mentoring

Bloom's Taxonomy is widely used to explain levels of learning and cognitive development. The framework was developed by Benjamin Bloom and includes six levels of learning: remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating (Bloom, 1956).

Coaching and mentoring contribute to learning at different levels within this framework.

Coaching often focuses on application and analysis, where individuals reflect on their behaviours and apply new strategies to improve their performance. For example, when

coaching colleagues about stress management, I help them analyse the factors causing their stress and apply practical coping strategies in their daily work.

Mentoring often operates at the higher levels of evaluation and creation, where individuals reflect on long-term career goals and develop strategies for professional development. Through mentoring conversations with my manager, I evaluate my career goals and explore opportunities for growth within the organisation.

This demonstrates how both coaching and mentoring contribute to different stages of learning and development within organisational settings.

However, Bloom's taxonomy has also been criticised for oversimplifying the complexity of adult learning processes, as workplace learning often involves emotional, social, and contextual factors that extend beyond purely cognitive development.

2.6 Similarities Between Coaching and Mentoring

Although coaching and mentoring are distinct approaches, they share several similarities.

Firstly, both aims to support individual learning and development within organisations. They help employees develop new skills, improve confidence, and enhance performance (Parsloe and Wray, 2000).

Secondly, both rely on effective communication and trust. Successful coaching and mentoring relationships require active listening, empathy, and openness between participants.

Thirdly, both involve guidance from another individual who facilitates reflection and development. Whether acting as a coach or mentor, the individual providing support encourages the other person to think critically about their behaviour and identify ways to improve.

Within my organisation, both coaching and mentoring contribute to a supportive working environment. My role as a mental health coach helps colleagues manage wellbeing challenges, while the mentoring support provided by my manager helps me develop professionally. Together, these approaches support both employee wellbeing and career development.

3. Critical Comparison of Coaching and Mentoring

Despite these similarities, several important differences exist between coaching and mentoring.

One significant difference is the focus of the relationship. Coaching is typically performance-oriented and aims to improve specific skills or behaviours within a defined time frame. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development states that coaching is commonly used to improve performance and address workplace challenges (CIPD, 2023).

In contrast, mentoring focuses more broadly on long-term career development. Mentors provide advice, share experiences, and help mentees navigate organisational environments (Clutterbuck, 2014).

Another difference relates to structure and duration. Coaching relationships are often structured with clear objectives and scheduled sessions. In contrast, mentoring relationships tend to be more informal and may develop over a longer period.

A further difference concerns the role of experience. Coaches do not necessarily need to have greater experience in the specific role of the person being coached; instead, they facilitate reflection through questioning. Mentors, however, are typically more experienced and use their knowledge and professional experience to guide the mentee (Parsloe and Wray, 2000).

However, some scholars argue that the distinction between coaching and mentoring is becoming less clear in modern organisations. Managers may adopt both roles, using coaching techniques to support performance while also mentoring employees for long-term development. My own experience reflects this overlap. While I use coaching techniques to support colleagues' wellbeing, my manager mentors me by offering guidance based on their experience and helping me develop professionally.

Coaching and mentoring are both valuable development tools within organisations that support employee learning and professional growth. While they share similarities in their focus on communication, reflection, and development, they differ in their purpose, structure, and duration. Coaching is typically short-term and goal-focused, often using frameworks such as the GROW model to improve specific skills or behaviours. Mentoring, however, is a longer-term relationship that focuses on broader career development and guidance.

Using frameworks such as Bloom's Taxonomy helps to explain how coaching and mentoring support different levels of learning and development. My experience as a mental health coach and as a mentee demonstrates how both approaches can work together to support employee wellbeing, professional growth, and organisational success.

3.1 Critically Exploring the Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes and Behaviours Needed by an Effective Workplace Coach

Workplace coaching has become an increasingly important approach for supporting employee development, improving performance, and promoting wellbeing within organisations. Coaching enables individuals to reflect on their work experiences, identify solutions to challenges, and develop new skills through guided conversation. According to Jenny Rogers, coaching is a process that facilitates learning and development through structured dialogue that encourages individuals to explore their own thinking and solutions (Rogers, 2012).

However, effective coaching requires more than simply asking questions or providing encouragement. Coaches must possess a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours to support individuals effectively. Researchers have debated which of these competencies is most important, with some emphasising the importance of technical coaching knowledge while others argue that interpersonal qualities and relationships are more influential. This essay critically explores these competencies, drawing on coaching literature and examples from my own workplace experience as a Mental Health Champion who provides coaching-style support to colleagues.

3.2 Knowledge Required for Effective Coaching

Knowledge is widely considered the foundation of effective coaching. Coaches must understand coaching principles, behavioural theories, and organisational systems to guide individuals through reflective learning processes.

For example, knowledge of goal-setting theory and behavioural change models can help coaches support individuals in identifying realistic objectives and developing strategies to achieve them. Anthony M Grant argues that evidence-based coaching practices grounded in psychological theory are more effective in promoting sustained behavioural change (Grant, 2014). From this perspective, coaches who possess a strong theoretical understanding of learning and motivation are better equipped to support development.

In addition, workplace coaches must maintain knowledge that is accurate, current, and contextually relevant. Within my role as a Mental Health Champion, this means keeping up to date with organisational wellbeing policies, internal support resources, and current mental health guidance. Using outdated or incorrect information could reduce the effectiveness of coaching or even risk harm. Continuous professional development and engagement with organisational training are therefore essential.

However, some critics suggest that excessive reliance on theoretical frameworks may limit flexibility. Rogers (2012) argues that while structured models are useful, authentic coaching requires responsiveness to the coachee's unique situation. This tension highlights that knowledge must be applied adaptively, particularly in sensitive contexts such as mental health coaching.

3.3 Skills Required for Effective Coaching

Practical skills are central to effective coaching. Among the most widely discussed skills are active listening, questioning, feedback, and the ability to signpost resources.

Active listening enables coaches to understand both the verbal and emotional content of conversations, allowing individuals to feel heard and supported (Starr, 2016). Questioning techniques, particularly open-ended and reflective questions, encourage self-exploration and solution-finding (Grant, 2014). Skills in providing feedback and facilitating reflection further support the coachee's learning and decision-making.

In my role as a Mental Health Champion, I recently applied these skills in practice. A colleague approached me who was dealing with the recent suicide of a family member while also supporting her mother through ongoing illness. She was feeling overwhelmed and struggling to cope. I actively listened to her concerns and asked reflective questions such as, "Would it help to take some time off for a break?" She explained that she had arranged a holiday, which offered her some initial relief. We discussed how she could seek additional support if needed, including using our organisation's counselling services. I offered to help point her in the right direction and make the appointment on her behalf.

This case demonstrates several coaching competencies in action:

- **Knowledge:** Understanding organisational support structures and wellbeing policies allowed me to provide relevant and accurate guidance.
- **Skills:** Active listening and reflective questioning enabled the colleague to explore her own coping strategies.
- **Attitudes:** Empathy and non-judgement created a safe space for sharing sensitive experiences.
- **Behaviours:** Professionalism, confidentiality, and proactive support reinforced trust and safety.

Critically, this example highlights an ongoing debate in coaching literature: while coaching typically emphasises self-directed problem-solving, in some circumstances, especially relating to mental health, direct guidance and practical assistance are

ethically necessary (Rogers, 2012; Grant, 2014). Effective coaching, therefore, involves balancing autonomy with supportive intervention.

3.4 Attitudes Required for Effective Coaching

Attitudes such as empathy, openness, and respect for autonomy are widely recognised as central to coaching effectiveness. Empathy allows coaches to connect with the coachee's experience, while non-judgement fosters trust and psychological safety. Rogers (2012) argues that the coaching relationship itself can be a primary driver of positive outcomes, sometimes even more so than the techniques used.

However, maintaining empathy must be balanced with professional boundaries. Over-involvement can reduce objectivity and potentially blur ethical lines (Grant, 2014). My case study illustrates this balance: I provided emotional support and guidance while respecting the colleague's autonomy and personal choices, ensuring she retained control over her decisions.

3.5 Behaviours Required for Effective Coaching

Professional behaviours underpin coaching practice. Key behaviours include:

- Confidentiality: Maintaining trust by protecting sensitive information.
- Professional responsibility: Recognising the limits of the coaching role and referring to appropriate professional support when necessary.
- Reflective practice and continuous development: Ensuring knowledge and skills remain current and relevant (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000).

In the case study, confidentiality was critical; the colleague needed reassurance that her personal experiences would be handled sensitively. I also demonstrated professional responsibility by offering guidance on organisational counselling services and discussing next steps if her wellbeing deteriorated. Finally, maintaining knowledge of current organisational procedures ensured that the support provided was appropriate and relevant.

3.6 Critical Evaluation of Coaching Competencies

The literature debates the relative importance of coaching competencies. Some authors argue that structured knowledge and skills are essential for effective outcomes. Others contend that attitudes and relational behaviours, such as empathy and trust-building, are the key determinants of success (Rogers, 2012).

In practice, effective coaching requires a balanced integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours. The case study demonstrates this: knowledge of organisational resources enabled informed guidance, skills allowed active facilitation of reflection, attitudes promoted a supportive environment, and professional behaviours reinforced safety and trust.

This reflects the dual nature of workplace coaching, where theoretical frameworks must be applied adaptively to the needs of individuals, particularly in sensitive situations involving mental health or wellbeing (Grant, 2014; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000).

Effective workplace coaching requires a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours. Knowledge of coaching principles and organisational resources provides the foundation for practice, while interpersonal skills such as listening and questioning enable effective conversations. Empathy, openness, and non-judgemental attitudes support a safe coaching environment, and professional behaviours, including confidentiality and continuous learning, maintain trust and efficacy.

In my role as a Mental Health Champion, applying these competencies has been crucial in supporting colleagues through challenging personal circumstances. The case study demonstrates the practical application of coaching competencies, highlighting the importance of up-to-date knowledge, appropriate use of organisational tools, and the balance between supporting autonomy and providing direct assistance.

4. Critically Assessing a Model or Process for Workplace Coaching

Formal coaching in the workplace relies on structured models to guide the coaching relationship, ensure consistency, and achieve measurable outcomes. Models provide a framework for both the coach and coachee, ensuring conversations are purposeful and productive. One of the most widely adopted coaching models is the GROW model, developed by John Whitmore (2017). This essay critically assesses the GROW model, compares it to other models such as OSKAR and CLEAR, and explores the roles of contracting, supervision, and programme evaluation in coaching. While some researchers emphasise the importance of structured coaching frameworks and technical knowledge, others argue that the quality of the coaching relationship and the coach's interpersonal skills are the primary drivers of successful outcomes (Rogers, 2012; Grant, 2014).

4.1 The GROW Model

The GROW model represents four key stages of coaching: Goal, Reality, Options, and Will or Way Forward. The Goal stage involves establishing what the coachee wants to achieve,

while Reality explores the current situation and identifies challenges. Options encourage the coachee to consider possible strategies and alternatives, and Will or Way Forward focuses on agreeing on actions and commitments (Whitmore, 2017). The model is widely praised for its simplicity and clarity, making it accessible for both new and experienced coaches. Its structured yet flexible framework supports reflective thinking and goal achievement, providing clarity of purpose for coaching sessions and facilitating self-directed learning by prompting coachees to explore solutions themselves. Additionally, the clear action-oriented outcome enhances accountability and follow-up.

However, the GROW model has limitations. It can be too linear for complex personal or organisational issues where multiple factors interact. Critics have argued that it places strong emphasis on problem-solving and goal setting, potentially overlooking relational and emotional aspects of coaching (Grant, 2014). Furthermore, it places less emphasis on long-term review and reflection beyond individual sessions, which may limit its effectiveness for ongoing personal or professional development. Some critics also suggest that highly structured coaching models such as GROW may oversimplify complex workplace issues, particularly where emotional or relational factors play a significant role in the coachee's situation.

4.2 Comparison with Other Models

The OSKAR model, which stands for Outcome, Scaling, Know-How, Affirm + Action, and Review, is a solution-focused coaching framework that integrates scaling questions and affirmation to emphasise coachee strengths and progress (De Jong & Berg, 2013). Compared with GROW, OSKAR places greater emphasis on positive psychology and solution-building rather than analysing problems. Scaling questions also provide measurable feedback, helping to track progress. However, OSKAR can be less structured when guiding coachees through detailed analysis of their current reality and may be challenging for those who prefer a step-by-step, linear framework.

The CLEAR model (Contracting, Listening, Exploring, Action, Review) places significant emphasis on the coaching relationship and incorporates explicit attention to contracting and ongoing review (Parsloe & Wray, 2000). Compared with GROW, CLEAR provides a stronger relational focus, with attention to active listening and exploration, fostering trust and rapport. However, CLEAR is less goal-oriented, which may reduce its effectiveness in situations where specific performance outcomes are required. Furthermore, action steps in CLEAR may be less defined, which can limit accountability and follow-through.

4.3 Role of Contracting

Contracting is a foundational process in coaching that establishes mutual expectations, clarifies roles and boundaries, defines confidentiality, and sets session objectives. Effective contracting ensures that both coach and coachee understand their roles and responsibilities, that ethical and professional boundaries are maintained, and that agreements are in place regarding session frequency, scope, and evaluation. In my experience as a Mental Health Champion, contracting has been crucial when supporting colleagues through sensitive conversations. Before coaching a colleague facing significant personal distress, I clarified the scope of support I could provide, limits of confidentiality, and available organisational resources. This helped establish trust and ensured the coaching interaction was ethical and safe.

4.4 Role of Supervision

Supervision provides reflective support for the coach and ensures quality and ethical practice. It allows coaches to reflect on challenging cases, such as those involving mental health crises, and provides guidance on handling ethical dilemmas or boundary issues. Supervision also supports continuous professional development by offering feedback on coaching techniques and approaches. In practice, supervision is particularly important when sensitive personal issues are discussed, ensuring coaches remain effective while upholding organisational standards and ethical obligations.

4.5 Evaluating Coaching Effectiveness

Evaluation is essential to measure the impact of coaching and inform continuous improvement. Effective evaluation considers coachee progress, including the achievement of goals, acquisition of skills, or improved coping strategies. It also considers behavioural outcomes, such as observable changes in performance, as well as organisational impact, including reduced stress, improved retention, or enhanced team effectiveness. Feedback mechanisms, such as surveys, reflective reports, or interviews, provide insight into the coachee experience and programme quality. In my role as a Mental Health Champion, evaluation involves follow-up conversations to assess whether agreed actions, such as taking time off or accessing counselling, were effective in supporting the colleague's wellbeing. This reflective process ensures that coaching remains responsive and impactful.

Case Study: Applying GROW in Practice

A recent coaching conversation demonstrates the practical application of the GROW model alongside contracting, supervision, and evaluation processes. A colleague approached me who was struggling due to the recent suicide of a family member while also supporting her mother through ongoing illness and treatment. She was feeling overwhelmed and unable to manage work pressures alongside personal challenges. Using the GROW model, I explored her 0 stage, she described the current pressures and challenges she was facing. We explored options, considering strategies such as taking time off, arranging a holiday, and accessing counselling. Finally, in the Will/Way Forward stage, she confirmed her holiday plans and agreed that if her stress escalated, she would reach out to access counselling via the company support service. I also offered to assist with making appointments if required.

Contracting had been applied prior to the session, establishing clear expectations regarding my role as a supportive coach rather than a therapist, as well as boundaries and confidentiality. I also reflected on the conversation afterward with a senior colleague acting in a supervisory capacity to ensure the guidance provided aligned with organisational policies and professional ethics. Evaluation occurred through follow-up conversations to assess whether the actions taken had been effective and to determine if additional support was needed. Critically, this case demonstrates the balance between facilitating coachee autonomy and providing appropriate supportive intervention, illustrating the tension highlighted in coaching literature between self-directed problem-solving and guided support (Grant, 2014; Rogers, 2012).

Ultimately, successful coaching and mentoring within organisations depend not only on the application of theoretical frameworks but also on the ability of practitioners to adapt their approach to the needs of individuals. Integrating structured models with relational sensitivity, ethical practice, and ongoing evaluation enables coaching to contribute meaningfully to both employee wellbeing and organisational development.

Reference List (Harvard Style)

De Jong, P. & Berg, I. K. (2013) *Interviewing for Solutions*. 4th edition. Belmont: Brooks/Cole.

Grant, A. M. (2014) *The Efficacy of Executive Coaching in Times of Organisational Change*. Journal of Change Management.

John Whitmore (2017) *Coaching for Performance*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Parsloe, E. & Wray, M. (2000) *Coaching and Mentoring: Practical Methods to Improve Learning*. London: Kogan Page.

- Rogers, J. (2012) *Coaching Skills: A Handbook*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Starr, J. (2016) *The Coaching Manual*. Harlow: Pearson.
- Zeus, P. and Skiffington, S. (2000) *The Complete Guide to Coaching at Work*. Sydney: McGraw-Hill.
- Bloom, B. (1956) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*. New York: Longman.
- David Clutterbuck (2014) *Everyone Needs a Mentor*. London: CIPD.
- Parsloe, E. and Wray, M. (2000) *Coaching and Mentoring: Practical Methods to Improve Learning*. London: Kogan Page.
- John Whitmore (2017) *Coaching for Performance: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2023) *Coaching and Mentoring Factsheet*. London: CIPD.