

Part i

Within organisations, particularly those with a trade focused or hierarchal structure, training and developing employee skills becomes essential when they not only progress up the ladder but also when new untrained staff come in. When it comes to teaching the newcomers, businesses and organisations can tend to avoid the typical pedagogical approach that can be found in most classrooms, and instead present more intimate and personal learning models: Coaching and/or Mentoring. The following is an investigation into the use of such methods within contemporary organisational practises that not only looks at the effectiveness or both but also newer in which either can be applied in today's current working environment.

Coaching, unlike the more master-apprentice relationship that can be taken with mentoring, is mostly focused on driving the coachee to achieve their maximum potential whether it be personally or professionally. Usually stereotyped with sports and other physical activities, coaches work intimately with a client to organise outcomes, set action plans, and generally motivate them with the aim to achieve a final goal. (de Haan & Duckworth, 2013) Using a study by Boyson et al, they propose that through their survey in which participants were asked to rate their experiences with executive coaching programs they saw a one-hundred percent positive response to the questions: *"One of the benefits of this survey design was the ability to read, and hear, how clients experience executive and leadership coaching. This narrative provided a 'story' of the impact coaching has had on their development and growth as leaders."* (Boysen, et al., 2018) While they don't go into too much detail in their report, this substantial result that this survey yields strongly suggests the benefits that coaching can have, particularly in higher-end business.

However, as described by Jones et al (while paraphrasing McAdams), coaches tend to stay away from setting precise job-focused goals as, in the case with some organisations, they may be hired externally so they lack the specific industry knowledge that an employee may need, instead creating more general targets:

“The coach may discuss suggested tools and techniques to help the coachee develop and improve, the content of which is dependent on the background and approach of the coach. However, coaches generally avoid providing instructional or prescriptive solutions to coachees, because as highlighted above, they are often not technical experts in the coachee’s occupational area of specialty (McAdams, 2005).” (J. Jones, et al., 2016)

Losing this connection and shared passion over an industry seems to illegitimate the professional approach that coaching can have as if a client’s goal is to progress within their field, there isn’t a clear direction for them to be pushed. Instead, as the goals can be designed to be more universal and not particularly field-focused, they could not only be perceived as more personal challenged but (depending on the individual), may not be taken at all.

In an effort to combat having to employ external coaches to come in and assist the work force, as well as for monetary purposes (Sherlock-Storey, et al., 2013), organisations have begun to look inwards. The trend of ‘Peer Coaching’ sees employees trained and then acting as each other’s coaches, sharing in their own experiences within their specific field, setting goals, and keeping logs to keep track of each other’s progress over time. Apart from being a much cheaper alternative, Ladyshevsky also offers another potential personal benefit that peer coaching can have on the workforce. He suggests that the process breaks down the existing hierarchal nature of business, in which employees may be reluctant to approach someone of higher authority if they have an issue and, in its place, offers the guidance of a peer who may be or already has experience said issue: “More often than not coachees will be able to work through problems themselves and discover their own solutions. The peer coach merely serves as a respected guide, who gains the trust and respect of the peer coachee over time because of the positive changes seen in learning and performance.”

(Ladyschewsky, 2017) Despite the benefits that peer coaching provides; its biggest drawbacks are the lack of research and willingness to partake as found in a study by Sherlock-Storey et al. She suggests that getting a large enough sample size may prove a challenge in a smaller company may prove difficult and without the research to back it up, larger organisations may not jump aboard willingly to try it.

On the other side of this investigation stands Mentoring. As defined by Illies and Reiter-Palmon while paraphrasing Kram, the process begins when a senior employee takes a junior or 'apprentice' under their guidance, with the aim to train them until a certain point, up until the latter can become self-reliant and transform into a 'master'. (Kram, 1988) As well as this, the relationship is designed to give an increasingly personal introduction into an organisation, with the aim to share experiences and tips to ensure later success: *"The career support function of mentoring includes helping protégés adjust to the organization by protecting protégés, giving protégés information to orient them to the organization, and giving protégés assignments to improve skills and be visible to others."* (Illies & Reiter-Palmon, 2018) The term originating in ancient Greece and the character of 'Mentor' (Beverly J. Irby, et al., 2020), this system has been used by trades and organisations for centuries and research suggests the benefits of the model and why it is still used within contemporary organisational structures.

Firstly, Evans investigates the actual relationships formed throughout the mentoring process and how that affects the mentees perception on not only the organisation, but also the field of study. After sit down interviews, she found that having a figure in which a trainee can openly go to discuss knowledge or personal matter with someone who has been through the same experience is highly beneficial, especially when said mentor doesn't attempt to push their own agenda on their student: *"Mentees thus have a dependable source of knowledge and experience that is relevant to them, and that they trust the mentor to share, while not imposing their own views on the mentee."* (Evans,

2018) To support the beneficial nature, Bear look at the opposite end and investigates how the relationship can be beneficial to the mentors themselves. In a study in which he measures the level of support that both parties feel they have from their organisations, he finds that it is the actual nature of the bond than can play a factor, particularly if the mentee is shown to be willing and capable for the tasks given: *“Despite the fact that mentor perceived organizational support encourages mentor effort, other factors, including the quality of the mentoring, the capability of the protégé, and the fit of the mentor-protégé pairing, may have had more of an impact on the protégé learning process.”* (Bear, 2018)

Both these studies push heavily towards the positive nature of mentoring and suggest that it not only presents a great source for guidance but also job satisfaction. Despite all of that, Illies suggests that there are some negative factors that employers must be aware of before starting the mentoring process. She talks about the power relationship between the tutor and their student could lead the mentor to a feeling of superiority and safeguarding of their position, leading to purposely bad teaching methods: *“Results also indicate that those who perceived their mentor to have self-enhancement values, which are values that support more individual gain, experienced more negative mentoring.”* (Illies, 2020) Furthermore, Janssen et al suggest that perceptions of negative mentoring lie not only with the mentor but the mentee’s perception of the training they have been given. They suggest that although those who may talk positively about the process, will quickly begin to turn as they begin to indulge in a negative mentor relationship that has tainted their perceptions: *“Some participants were mainly positive when talking about their general perceptions on mentoring relationships but were mainly negative in the description of a specific mentoring relationship.”* (Janssen, et al., 2019) It’s this level of subjectivity, based around the individual experiences and viewpoints of two people, that makes the effectiveness of mentoring hard to judge. While the results themselves may point towards a positive professional maturation, personally, if one party sees the experience as lacklustre or at worst doesn’t like the other, on a personal level, it becomes a failure.

Part ii

It's this level of subjectivity, in combination with the stereotype of being associated with trade-based industries, that makes the concept of mentoring within the PCET sector so interesting. In this section I will be evaluating the effectiveness of the mentoring system within post-compulsory education with consideration for the historical, social, and cultural aspects that come from the process. The aim is to not only look how mentoring has been viewed at the turn of the century but also see how professionals have taken such points and tried to push the model into a different (in some cases more contemporary) from.

Before looking into contemporary thoughts and opinions on mentoring within PCET, it's important to look back towards the early 2000's, when both academics and government officials began questioning the effectiveness as well as the level of mentoring training that occurred within the post-compulsory education sector. Woodd spotted early on that there was not only a need for the mentoring process within higher education but also saw it's need for not only a learning tool, but also that the process needed evolving from just a system to develop more 'masters', towards one that will open them up on a personal level for the wellbeing of their mentees:

"Evidence from other research shows that for mentoring to be the agent for change, it must be part of a larger human resource development strategy (Zagumny, 1993). So perhaps just training the mentors may not lead to more in-depth mentoring nor a greater desire to explore the more complex issues arising for the mentee."

(Woodd, 2001)

However, despite this positive outlook of the psychological benefits that this method could bring forward, Ofsted found that within their 2002/3 report that the sector was not only underperforming but also was heavily underfunded and staff lacked the sufficient skills to perform as effective coaches (Ofsted, 2003). Eilahoo used this investigation as the basis of a survey that looked specifically investigated mentee's experiences within English post-compulsory education and tried to identify whether the problem lay with the institution, the mentor, or the individual. She had found that it was mostly the perception of the instructor's actions that often lead to dissatisfaction, particularly if a rather menial task takes longer or is not dealt with at all, which itself clashed with the mentor's opinion on how they performed:

"Without the mentors' interventions, occasionally trivial occurrences could escalate quickly, with negative consequences for both mentee and institution. Mentors' accounts suggested that they demonstrated skills in listening, questioning and re-framing problems, so that mutually satisfactory solutions could generally be found." (Eliahoo, 2016)

It once again return to Illies argument, that the feedback that is often associated when judging mentoring's effects is so subjective that, despite a strong drive over the last twenty plus years to increase its use in post-compulsory education and suggests that no matter how hard individual organisations (educational or otherwise) try to push it, there will always be resistance found through negative experiences. Cunningham further throws his criticism into the fold as he suggests that publishing results from studies into education organisations may in fact be damaging or inconclusive as the need for anonymity amongst staff not only makes it hard to find willing participants but also runs the risk of shaming individuals: *"On the face of it, the function of identifying underperforming (in one regard at least) members of a college's staff is, in any event, significantly beyond the*

jurisdiction of a HEI that happens to use the institution for teaching practice placements.”

(Cunningham, 2004)

Further investigating into the effects of how an individual's experiences are shaped around not only their environment but also the culture in which they are nurtured, brings in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. However, Shabani and Ewing decide to take a different stance on perception when discussing how a theory, that is mostly concerned with the analysis mental development, can be applied across multiple teaching methods. When discussing mentoring, they suggest that it is not only the mentor's role to use their expertise in combination with their experiences as a base point but also steer their trainee teachers towards seminars and other social events in an effort to expand the learning opportunities taking place on the programme: *“Attending in-service workshops, language teaching education (LTE) course rooms, and conferences could serve as a crucible for the novice teachers to continually test and change their emerging pedagogical concepts and practices and, in this way, sustain their professional development.”* (Shabani & Ewing, 2016) This presents an interesting alternative to the stereotype of the mentoring relationship and portrays a different dynamic than those criticised in other studies. Instead of looking at the mentor as this sole source of knowledge to which the experience is entirely based around, they are now acting more as a guide to get the best possible education by expanding their research by networking and trying to absorb as many differing perspectives as possible.

Another different perspective on the mentoring experience and one that could have implication towards not only the future of the learning model, but also PCET, is the concept of distant-learning or 'e-mentoring'. Described in a study by Kovalchuck and Vorotnykova, they describe e-mentoring as maintaining the same mentor-mentee relationship but instead of having exclusively face to face meeting and sessions, instead they use information technology such as email or services such as Skype as a way to remain in contact while also pursue their development more individually.

(Kovalchuck & Vorotntkova, 2017) Researchers such as Kahraman and Abdullah are beginning to

identify the potential academic benefits that such an approach could have with teacher training, especially as technology and its uses advance:

“Today, especially the web-based online learning environments have become varied, and search for effective use of these environments has increased. Parallel to these developments, it could be stated that studies on e-mentoring will be one of the subjects that researchers will get engaged with for a long time.” (Kahraman & Kuzu, 2016)

Given the rise in distant learning, utilisation of services such as Moodle, and an increasing number of overseas students, the advancement towards a digital platform which the act of mentoring can happen, seems to be an appropriate step to take in the near future. With this, as mentioned before with Shabani and Ewing, both mentor and mentee gain their own individual spaces for their work (in the case of PCET, placement), to take place while meetings and goal setting can be arranged at a time an convenience that suits either party rather, which would hopefully lead to more positive feedback. While this method work in terms of convenience, Ongoz argues that the switch to digital could have its limitation as, in her study, students found e-mentoring useful but missed the human interaction that makes the traditional mentor-mentee relationship: *“It seems that the mentees were satisfied with the FtF interactions. Since some mentees did not have the opportunity of FtF meeting with their mentors, this means of interaction was regarded as a handicap.”* (Ongoz, 2018) Having conversation allows for spontaneity, the reading of body language, question-asking in times where someone doesn’t understand, if one limits themselves to just an online form of communication, you begin to become cold, matter of fact, and could be left confused or misinterpreting information without the option of query.

To summarise, mentoring within PCET is becoming a rapidly evolving area, with researchers trying to move away from the traditional, subjective mentor relationships that would be formed through placement and attempting to not only contemporise them but also give the learner as much personal satisfaction as possible (whether it be for their benefit or because of negative feedback). Concepts such as e-mentoring offer an interesting pathway going forward but would better be served as an additional option to the existing formula, albeit to avoid the complete eradication of the human qualities that allow for quality personal and professional developing within a mentoring environment.

Bibliography

- Bear, S., 2018. Enhancing Learning for Participants in Workplace Mentoring Programmes. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 16(1), pp. 35-46.
- Beverly J. Irby, J. N. B. et al., 2020. *The Wiley International Handbook of Mentoring*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons.
- Boysen, S., Cherry, M., Amerie, W. & Takagawa, a. M., 2018. Organisational Coaching Outcomes: A Comparison of a Practitioner Surevy and Key Findings from the Literature. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 16(1), pp. 159-166.
- Clutterbuck, D., 2004. *Everyone Needs a Mentor: Fostering Talent in Your Organisation*. London: CIPD Publishing.
- Cox, E., Bachkirova, T. & Clutterbuck, D., 2014. *The Complete Handbook of Coaching*. London: SAGE.
- Cunningham, B., 2004. Some have mentoring thrust upon them: the element of choice in mentoring in a PCET environment. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 9(2), pp. 271-282.
- Cunningham, B., 2011. *Mentoring Teachers in Post-Compulsory Education: A Guide to Effective Practice*. Abington: Routledge.
- Daloz, L. A., 2012. *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners (with New Foreword, Introduction, and Afterword)*. Hoboken: john Wiley & Sons.
- de Haan, E. & Duckworth, A., 2013. Signalling a new trend in executive. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 8(1), pp. 6-19.
- Eliahoo, R., 2016. An analysis of beginning mentors' critical incidents in English post-compulsory education. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, 5(4), pp. 304-317.
- Evans, C., 2018. Trust and connection in formal, virtual mentoring. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, Volume 12, pp. 154-164.
- Gravells, J. & Wallace, S., 2007. *Mentoring in the Lifelong Learning Sector*. London: SAGE.
- Illies, M. Y., 2020. The effect of perceived values on negative mentoring, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived career success. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 18(1), pp. 20-30.
- Illies, M. Y. & Reiter-Palmon, R., 2018. The Effect of Value Similarity on Mentoring Relationships and Outcomes. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 16(1), pp. 20-34.
- J. Jones, R., Woods, S. A. & Guillaume, Y. R. F., 2016. The effectiveness of workplace coaching: A meta-analysis of learning and performance outcomes from coaching. *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*, 89(2), pp. 249-277.
- Janssen, S., Tahitu, J., van Vuuren, M. & Jong, M. D., 2019. Coworkers' Perspectives on Mentoring Relationships. *Group & Organisational Management*, 43(2), pp. 145-272.
- Kahraman, M. & Kuzu, A., 2016. E-MENTORING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 17(3), p. 76.

Kovalchuck, V. & Vorotntkova, I., 2017. E-COACHING, E-MENTORING FOR LIFELONG PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF POST-GRADUATE PEDAGOGICAL EDUCATION. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 18(3), pp. 214-218.

Kram, K. E., 1988. *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life*. Lanham: University Press of America.

Ladyshevsky, R. K., 2017. Peer coaching as a strategy to increase learning and development in organisational life – a perspective. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 15(1), pp. 4-10.

Ofsted, 2003. *Quality and standards in secondary initial teacher training*. [Online]
Available at:
[https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4742/7/Quality_and_standards_in_secondary_initial_teacher_training_\(PDF_format\)_Redacted.pdf](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4742/7/Quality_and_standards_in_secondary_initial_teacher_training_(PDF_format)_Redacted.pdf)
[Accessed 11 March 2020].

Ongoz, S., 2018. THE USE OF ICT TOOLS IN E-MENTORING: A CASE STUDY. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 19(4), pp. 76-90.

Pask, R. & Joy, B., 2007. *Mentoring-Coaching: A Guide For Education Professionals: A Handbook for Education Professionals*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Shabani, K. & Ewing, B. F., 2016. Applications of Vygotsky's sociocultural approach for teachers' professional development. *Cogent Education*, 3(1).

Sherlock-Storey, M., Moss, M. & Timson, S., 2013. Brief Coaching for Resilience During Organisational Change - An Exploratory Study. *The Coaching Psychologist*, 9(1), pp. 19-26.

Wenger, E., 2000. *Communities of Practice: A Breif Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Woodd, M., 2001. Learning to leap from a peer: a research study on mentoring in a further and higher education institution. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 6(1), pp. 97-107.