Do Coaches Get Coached

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by

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Abstract

In this paper, the authors examine what coaching supervision is, particularly the developmental function and how it compares with a coaching relationship for a coach. They offer a conceptual schema for coach development, containing both supervision and coaching as a discussion point for coaches to consider.

Origins of Coaching Supervision

Kadushin (1976) in his work on social work supervision describes the three roles of supervision as "educative, supportive and managerial". Similarly, Proctor (1988) in considering counselling supervision, uses the terms "formative, restorative and normative". Hawkins and Shohet (2002) have linked these processes to create three main functions for supervision in the helping professions:

- Educative/Formative, which develops the skills, understanding and abilities of the supervisees by encouraging reflection on their work.
- Supportive/Restorative, which concentrates on allowing the supervisee time to become aware of how the impact of the work they are involved in is affecting them and to deal with these reactions and emotions.
- Managerial/Normative, which in reality is the quality assurance aspect of supervision, the supervisor helps the supervisee to consider their work, identify their blind spots and work within ethical standards.

Hawkins and Smith (2013) evolved these three functions further by identifying supervision in coaching around these three revised main functions.

- A resourcing function to provide a supportive space for the coach to process the experiences they have had when working with their clients,
- A qualitative function concerned with work standards and ethical integrity and
- A developmental function, concerned with the development of skills, understanding and capacities of the coach, providing an opportunity to monitor the coachee's work and develop skills in a supportive environment, utilising feedback to help advance practice and identifying areas for their future development.

The Developmental Function

This third developmental function of Hawkins and Smith (2013) is echoed by Einzig (2017): 'Complexity, rich and layered learning, taking supported risk…these are the capacities nurtured in supervision, that porous space where we can take supported risk, confront our fears and uncover our blind spots. As coaches we offer this 'growth lab' to our clients; I truly believe it is incumbent upon us as professionals to make sure we continue to enjoy the same learning space for ourselves.' Bachkirova (2008) emphasises this also, 'Coaching supervision is a formal process of professional support which ensures continuing development of the coach'. De Haan (2012) refers to this third function as the role of 'the developer' and expresses this development function as the supervisor basing his personal summary of the situation, including patterns and connections within the 'material' brought in and by sharing openly and frankly what seems to be going on, helping the supervisee in his self-development as well as his longer-term aspiration for his career.

Coaching Literature

There is relatively little importance placed on coaches being coached, in the coaching literature. Writers such as Starr (2016:289) imply that coaches should/ are being coached/mentored:

> "Consider the benefits of coaching supervision: e.g. getting **your own mentor or coach** to talk through your assignments confidentially, and give you guidance and support with issues or challenges" (emphasis added).

However, she does not spell this out and argue for why being coached might be an important piece of ongoing development. Similarly, Hawkins & Smith (2013) in their chapter on Developing Coaches emphasise the importance of being coached in training - they use what they call 'shadow coaches' to coach the coach. However, this has strong links to supervision as it is about coaching the coach on their coaching within Practicum Groups. Like Starr (2016), they do not explore the potential importance of this for developing coaches, despite emphasising the importance of lifelong learning for a coach. Rogers (2012), in her chapter on Practising Professionally, is very clear as the personal and professional value of a coach engaging in continuous professional development, particularly via supervision. However, in her list of other forms of development - "such as training to update our skills and qualifications, attending seminars and conferences, reading and vigorous networking with other coaches" - being coached is not mentioned (Rogers, 2012:227). As with Rogers (2012), Brockbank & McGill (2006), before her, emphasised the importance of supervision but, again, the notion of being coached as development for the coach is not present as a recommendation. Unlike them, Garvey, Stokes &

Megginson (2018) are critical of supervision as a process, due to its connotations of it magnifying barriers to entry for coaches and suggesting that this should dominate over other forms of coach development. However, despite emphasising the importance of personal reflexivity throughout their text, fall short of recommending/suggesting that coaches should consider being coached as a form of their development.

Like Garvey, Stokes & Megginson (2018), Wildflower's (2013) text emphasises the importance of personal reflexivity. She draws out the implications for coach development from wide range of historical and psychological paradigms and makes a series of recommendations for coaches to pay attention to - being coached is not in these recommendations. Western's (2012) approach is similarly reflexive and his views of coach development are reasonably similar to Hawkins & Smith (2013), albeit with the addition of a psychoanalytic lens, employing what he refers to as the P-M-P process. Bachirova's (2011) text, too, is strongly reflexive and reflective in terms of becoming a developmental coach. However, even in this highly developmental text, the question of whether a coach should be coached themselves is not really debated.

Given this emerging picture, it is important to ask why this is the case. One argument is that, as we have already suggested above, is that the rise of supervision in coaching has meant that those who write about coaching see the coaches ongoing developmental needs being largely met through their supervision. Hence, there may seem little point in exploring the development that being a coachee can offer. However, this seems to be at odds with the claims made, particularly by Western (2012) and by Hawkins & Smith (2013) in this selected review, that coaches in training should be encouraged to work in triads where they take up the role of coachee.

Tension in counselling and psychotherapy supervision models

Carroll (1996) writes of three phases in the evolution of models of supervision within the fields of counselling and psychotherapy. Initially supervision was largely informal, but in1922 the International Psychoanalytic Society formulated a set of standards within which personal analysis of the trainee was the cornerstone. This began a tension between supervision and therapy, which remains unresolved to this day. So in some models of supervision, the supervisor provides both supervision and personal therapy to the supervisee – a blurring of roles, which is interesting when we consider the supervision versus coaching role of the coaching supervisor. A second phase with the introduction of counselling models in the 1950s, placed more emphasis on skills development. The final phase, starting in the 1970s, was associated with developmental and social role models that emphasized the roles and tasks of the supervisor and the learning stages of the supervisee.

With the abundance of developmental models of supervision in counselling and psychotherapy, it is relevant to consider the evolution of these in our consideration of coaching supervision versus coaching development.

Coach maturity or mastery

Another consideration is how a coach develops and whether the need to be coached or supervised alters during their development journey? Clutterbuck & Megginson (2011) offer a heuristic for coach maturity, which does not depend on certification, client satisfaction or fee rates! They offer four mind-sets for coaching:

Four Mind-Sets for Coaching

Coaching Approach	Style	Critical Questions
Models based	Control	How do I take them where I think they need to go? How do I adapt my technique or model to this circumstance?
Process based	Contain	How do I give enough control to the client and still retain a purposeful conversation? What's the best way to apply my process in this instance?
Philosophy based	Facilitate	What can I do to help the client do this for themself? How do I contextualise the client's issue within the perspective of my philosophy or discipline?
Systemic eclectic	Enable	Are we both relaxed enough to allow the issue and the solution to emerge in whatever way they will? Do I need to apply any techniques or processes at all? If I do, what does the client context tell me about how to select from the wide choice available to me?

An alternative framework for coach development is Drake's Mastery Window (2011). Drake draws on Schon's (1983) work on reflective practice to develop mastery, which he defines as the ability to draw on one's own experience and expertise to recognise patterns, discern incongruities, reflect on what is discovered and develop a new pattern of response, the reflexivity alluded to by Garvey, Stokes & Megginson (2018), Wildflower (2013), Western (2012) and Bachirova (2011). Drake suggests four phases in coach development: "as novices they learn the rules, as intermediates they break the rules, as masters they change the rules and as artisans they transcend the rules. An artisan-level coach is someone who has mastered the core internal and external competencies to the point where they are less tied to the explicit rules, processes and cues and more able to draw on implicit heuristics and the knowledge and evidence they need to be effective in the moment." (Drake 2011:143)

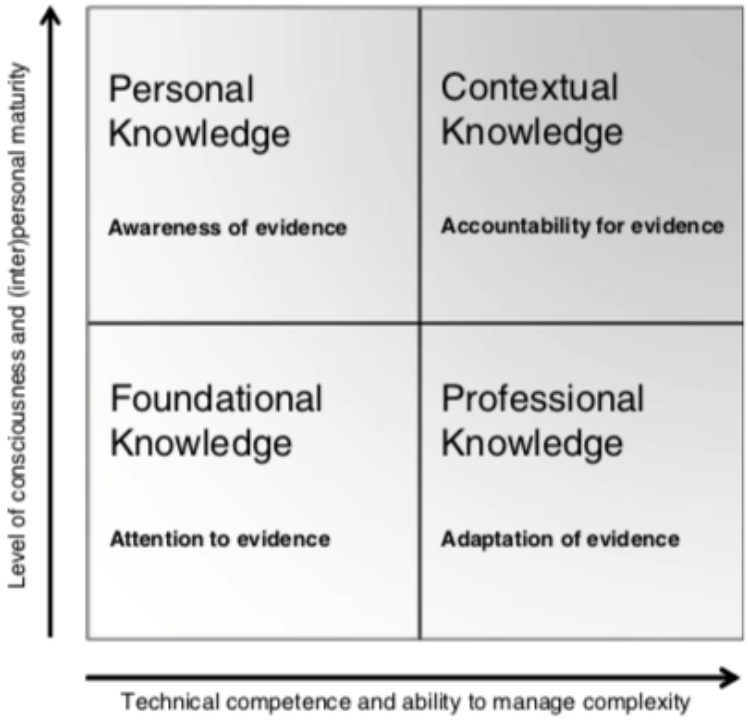

Figure 1. The *Mastery Window* model.

Drake sees The Mastery Window as providing a method of tracking a coach's development and providing supervision. Interesting he emphasises the growing requirement for peer and professional supervision, but also acknowledges the need for a move to more 'agile alliances' to be able to respond to more

emergent needs more quickly, suggesting different routes to doing this without mentioning 'coaching'. The interconnectedness and iterative ways that coaches use the four domains in the model and the integration of the domains supports the way a coach develops both their coaching performance but also takes into consideration their personal maturation as a person. This aligns with Kegan's (1994) Stages of Adult Development as individuals move from a Socialised Mind, to a Self Authoring Mind and ultimately to a Self Transforming Mind, another critical and implicit facet of the development of a coach as an adult.

Developmental models for supervision appear to be more plentiful in the counselling and psychotherapy literature and tend to focus on how the trainee supervisee develops from a state of dependency on the supervisor to more of a peer relationship, as they become more skilled and confident. For instance Stoltenberg & Delworth (1987) have a three level model where the trainee progresses in relation to three primary structures – self-awareness and other-awareness, motivation and autonomy. This resonates with our Merrick and Stokes Model of mentor supervision (2003), which can also be used in coaching. We identify four levels of novice mentor, developing mentor, reflective mentor and reflexive mentor.

However, Chagnon & Russell (1995) question developmental models, as they feel developing coaches may 'ebb and flow from one developmental level to the next'. Chagnon & Russell's study of 48 supervisors of different abilities raised the possibility that levels overlap and can be interdependent.

Methods

In order to explore this, we conducted a brief online survey that was completed by 80 people, using Survey Monkey. The summary statistics from this was then analysed and some tentative conclusion and questions were generated. These will be explored in more depth in the conference presentation.

Data Summary

Our initial data demonstrates some 'ebb and flow' in the coaching and supervision arrangements of the participants in our research. One of the most interesting findings is summarised in the table below, where participants were asked if they were being coached at the moment:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	27.85%	22
No	18.99%	15
No, but I have been in the past	46.84%	37
Other (please specify)	6.33%	5
TOTAL		79

Interestingly, a majority of respondents were not. There was an interesting contrast with participants' espoused theory when they were asked whether coaches should receive coaching in addition to supervision:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	86.15%	56
No	13.85%	9
TOTAL		65

To us this suggested that there may be a dynamic to a coach's journey that has not yet been well understood/ researched. Are there plateaus in a coach's development when they are 'moving' to a new stage when they may go for coaching rather than supervision, or the other way around? Within the conference session, we unpack some tentative hunches in terms of what this may mean for coaching & supervisory practice.

Our next piece of research is to see if indeed, there is a pattern between the developing maturity of the coach and their participation in coaching and supervision or not.

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