Keeping Up With The Cheese!
Research as a Foundation for Professional Coaching

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Overview

- The Coaching Journey – The Crossroads
- Professionalism
- Is Coaching a Fad?
- Overview of the Research
- Implications for Coach Education
- Where to next?
The Coach’s Journey

- The Coach as the Guide in the Woods
  - Coaching and the art of trekking
The Coach’s Journey

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  - Coaching and the art of trekking

- Coach’s Own Development as a Journey
  - Tenuous first steps
  - Changing and choosing new paths
  - Self-doubt
  - Self-development & professional development
A Mental Time Journey

➢ Think of your first ever coaching session

➢ What was the knowledge level that you brought to that first session?
  ● Superficial?
  ● Unsophisticated?
  ● Naive?
  ● Over-confident?
A Mental Time Journey

- Think of a recent (successful) coaching session

- Compare your current knowledge level to your first session?
  - What is the difference between now and then?
A Mental Time Journey

➢ Think of where your knowledge will be in five years time …
Think of where your knowledge will be in five years time ...

What got us here ...

... won't get us there !!

- We need much much more ...
  ... if we are to keep up with the cheese!
The Coaching Industry's Journey

1: Coaching Industry as Naive Explorer

- Coaching as a mixed-group on a day-trip
The Coaching Industry's Journey

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2: Coaching Industry as Emerging-Profession
   - Formation of associations – ICF & others
The Coaching Industry's Journey

1: Coaching Industry as Naive Explorer
   - Coaching as a mixed-group on a day-trip

2: Coaching Industry as Emerging-Profession
   - Cross-disciplinary occupation
   - Formation of associations – ICF & others

3: Maturation of the Coaching Industry
   - Increasing sophistication clients / students
   - University-level coach-specific education
   - Foundational coach-specific research
   - Development of evidence-based coaching
Why Research (& S-P) is Vital

- True professionalism rests on evidence
- Extend shared knowledge base
  - Stop selling – start sharing!
- Ethical practice demands it
- Demonstrate effectiveness
  - Human change and ROI $
- Basis for coach training
- Critical thinking skills
Is Coaching a Fad?

- First mention of Workplace Coaching in academic press in 1937 (1)
  - A long-standing “fad”!

- Genuine interest from business (2)
  - Business looking for credibility and substance

- Coaching touted as a huge growth industry
  - Driven by coach training schools & credentialing mills

- Many claim to be qualified coaches (EMAHD Coach Accreditation) – many are not well trained (3)
  - Do they have an understanding of coaching that goes beyond their own personal “coaching system” and explicitly links to established theory and practice?
Coach-Specific Research
Four Key Phases of Coaching Research

N = 128

Phase 1 – Internal MAC

Phase 2 – PhD & Internal MAC

Phase 3 – Evaluations of effectiveness

Phase 4 – Aimed at prof. coach

Human change

• Articles
• Case Studies
• Group Studies (pre/post)
• Group Studies (Controlled)


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Peer-reviewed Coaching Papers
from PsychInfo & DAI (1937 – Nov 2003)

Total Citations: (N = 128)
Types of Papers
from PsychInfo & DAI (1937 – Nov 2003)

Total Citations: N = 128

- **Articles**
- **Empirical Studies**
Coach-Specific PhDs
from PsychInfo & DAI (1937 – Nov 2003)

PhD Citations (N = 33)
My Own Research Journey
2001 - Comparing cognitive and behavioral approaches to coaching

- **Cognitive only group**
  - Increased well-being – no impact on performance

- **Behavioural only group**
  - Small impact on > well-being
  - Short-term increase in performance

- **Combined group**
  - Increased well-being
  - Long-term increase in performance
My Own Research Journey

Life Coaching Study #1 (Grant 2003) (6)

- Solution-focused CBC approach (N = 20)
- Group-based coaching (Pre/post only)
- Pre/post increase in goal attainment ($d = 2.85$)
- Decrease in depression, anxiety, stress
- Decrease in “Self-reflection”
- Increase in “Insight”
My Own Research Journey

Life Coaching Study #2 (Green, Oades & Grant 2003) (7)

- Intervention / Control group study (N = 46)
- 10-week group life coaching SF/CBC
- Increases in goal attainment
- Increase in well-being
- Impact measured over 40 weeks
Life Coaching Study #3 (Spence & Grant 2003) (8)

- Individual / Group / Control study – (N = 64)
- 10-week life coaching SF/CBC
- All coaching > higher levels of purpose in life, personal growth, openness to experience & goals
- Increase in EI (Emotion perception facet)
- Individuals benefited more than group
My Own Research Journey

- Problems with Organisational Research
  - Life Coaching easier to run studies

- Clinical issues in coaching populations
  - Screening for mental health impacts on outcome measures

- Measurement issues
  - Use positive psyc measure – and others

- Caught between several “worlds”
So, What Does The Literature Tell Us About Coaching Effectiveness?

- **Level 1: Reactions** ☺☺☺☺☺
- **Level 2: Learning** ☻☻☻☻?
- **Level 3: Behaviour** ☻☻☻? ?
- **Level 4: Results** ☻☻??
- **Level 5: ROI** ☻????

Kirkpatrick (1998); Phillips (2003) (9 & 10)
Evidence-Based Coaching
We Need Evidenced-Based Coaching

- If there is so little coaching-specific research how can we have evidenced-based coaching?
Evidenced-Based Coaching?

- If there is so little coaching-specific research how can we have evidenced-based coaching?

- Use the broader body of coaching-related knowledge
The Body of Knowledge

1. Philosophy – Critical Thinking Skills
   - Critical thinking skills, Socratic Method, Philosophical insights

2. Behavioral Science
   - How we think, feel and act in the way we do

3. Adult Education Principles
   - How adults best learn

4. Economics & Business
   - How business runs and economic systems function

Personal Development Genre
- Popularized, un-verified notions of motivation and change
Issues for Professionalisation
The Body of Knowledge Underpinning Coaching

Coaching Profession

Evidenced-based Coaching

Behavioural Science

Adult Education

Philosophy Thinking Skills

Economics & Business

University-level Education

Coach-specific Research

Fad!

EMAHD Credentialing (EveryManAndHisDog)

Personal Development

I read-it-somewhere -and-it-feels-right-to-me
Evidenced-Based Coaching
Education and Professionalism

- Need to explicitly link theory to practice
- Need critical thinking skills
- No “Gurus” – established body of testable & shared knowledge
- Linked shared knowledge base means greater credibility and a real future
Evidenced-Based Coach Education

- Explicitly drawn from all four areas
- Mental health issues – Coaches need basic diagnostic skills
  - 25% - 50% of Life Coaching clients have mental health issues (11)
- Basic training in psychometrics
  - Some coaching assessment / development tools are very poor
  - Little or no critical appraisal of tools
- Less focus on marketing
  - More solid theory and evidenced-based education
- Less USA-influenced coaching – OK for the USA – but not for all
  - More local cultural flavour
Avenues for Future Research

- Impact on EI and psych constructs
- Impact on personality traits
- Workplace performance / culture / wellbeing
- Executive / leadership skills
- Cognitive and behavioural change
- RIO

...and many others ....
Barriers to Future Research

- Few places to publish – uniformed reviewers
- Poor training in research skills
- Coach schools don’t teach application of research / evidenced-based approach
- Need a new model of coaching
  - Scientist-practioner model
Where To Next?

- Four Key Players ....
The Four Key Players

- **Coach Training Schools**
  - Gatekeeper’s responsibility
  - Shift from propriety systems
  - Cite and reference teaching materials

- **ICF**
  - Push for evidenced-based links
  - Sponsor **good quality** research
  - Foster critical thinking skills
The Four Key Players

Students & Practitioners

- Demand more sophistication
- Get cross-disciplinary training
- Hold no Gurus - Scientist-practitioner Model

Researchers and Us Here Today

- Take up the challenge
- Remain coachable – not the expert
- Conduct good quality research
- Collaborate ....
What’s The Take Away ..?

- Draw on a wide body of knowledge
- University-level education is vital
- Research and theory development is crucial
- Evidence-base will lead to professionalism
- We all have a role to play

… What’s yours going to be?
What’s The Take Away ..?

Enjoy coaching … conference

… and keep up with the cheese

… or be eaten by the mouse!!
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The next five years (2003-2008) will be a critical and a fascinating time for professional coaches. The coaching industry has outgrown its existing theoretical and empirical research knowledge base. Those that employ coaches and potential students of coaching are becoming more sophisticated and better informed, demanding evidence for the effectiveness of different types of coaching, and seeking an articulation of the underpinning theoretical frameworks. Consequently, many professional coaches have moved away from reliance on the proprietary coaching systems taught in many commercial coach training schools, and are seeking to work within the scientist-practitioner model as both producers and consumers of coaching-related research. This is a fascinating time, because research into coaching offers far greater opportunities than just calculating effectiveness or return on investment. Evidence-based coaching interventions are an ideal means for investigating the personal and systemic mechanisms and processes involved in real-life human change in individuals and organisations. Furthermore, the increase in coaching-related research marks a new stage in the maturation of the coaching industry, and the adoption of the scientist-practitioner model will be a critical factor as coaching seeks to further establish itself as a respected, cross-disciplinary means of facilitating human and organisational change. This paper discusses these issues, presents an overview of the key themes and emergent patterns in the peer-reviewed literature on coaching since 1937, and highlights the relevance of research to evidence-based coaching practice.