

**Reciprocal peer coaching: a constructivist
methodology for enhancing continuous formative
assessment strategy within undergraduate
business education**

Annual Westminster Symposium 2017

Dr Lisa Matthewman



Overview

- Background to the research
- Introduction
- Research objectives
- Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusions
- Implications for innovating the learning and teaching experience
- Discussion
- Limitations of the Research
- Future Research



Aims

- Level 6 Psychology of Coaching and Mentoring
- – includes reciprocal peer coaching
- Understand reciprocal peer coaching (RPC) as a formative assessment in itself
- To qualitatively explore the benefits of Reciprocal Peer Coaching as a formative assessment strategy.
- Impact of coaching upon personal and professional development goals

Introduction: Peer assisted learning

- Peer assisted learning (PAL) covers a range of collaborative and co-operative educational strategies that include learning and teaching of knowledge, understanding, and skills among active equal partners (Topping & Ehly, 2001).



Reciprocal Peer Coaching

Reciprocal peer coaching (RPC) is a term often used in the literature, it can be regarded as a form of peer assisted learning that can encourage individual students to coach each other in turn so that the outcome of the process is a more rounded understanding and skilful execution of the task (Asghar 2010).



Reciprocal Peer Coaching (RPC)

- Peer coaching lends itself to a much deeper conversation (Damon & Phelps, 1989)
- Listening, questioning and summarizing. Zeus & Skiffington, (2006)
- Novices are encouraged to coach one another with the guidance and support of a tutor (Ladyshevsky, 2001, 2006, 2014)
- Vygotsky (1878) zone of proximal development

The criteria for effective peer coaching

- Acknowledging the need for personal development, skills enhancement and good understanding of coaching psychology prior to the actual coaching sessions
- Use of reflective practice in coaching and developing deep insight in problem-based and/enquiry-based coaching
- Respecting confidentiality, ethical issues and professional liabilities in all coaching sessions



Rewards and Gifts

- Increases in performance have been linked to practice and feedback according to (Ackland, 1991; Joyce & showers, 1995; Skinner & Welch, 1996).
- Strengthen knowledge frameworks and enhance awareness (Ladyshevsky & Varey, 2005)
- Improve interpersonal skills (Ladyshevsky, 2006).
- Peer coaching can provide benefits in terms of insight, personal reflection, goal setting and prioritising (Short and Baker 2010 and Short, Kinman and Baker 2010)
- Develop personal identity constructs relevant to their field (Asghar, 2010)



Formative Assessment

- Asghar (2009) cited Shepherd (2000) who describes the historical evolution of assessment processes within the context of changing educational theory
- As a socio-constructivist perspective –promoted the integration of assessment as a means of facilitating a learning culture,
- FA is where knowledge of results is used as an instruction for further learning
- FA has value through the use of students as peer assessors (Bloxham and Boyd 2007)

RPC Intervention

Performance Coaching – the GROW Model



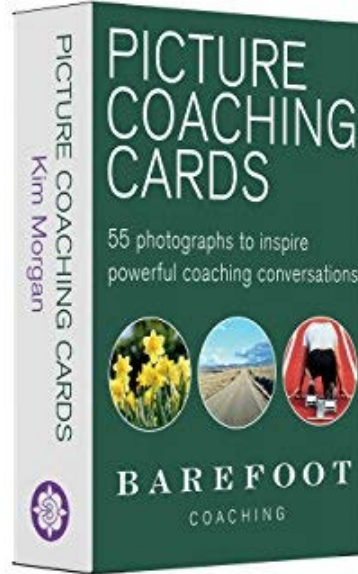
- Acknowledging the need for personal development, skills enhancement and good understanding of coaching psychology prior to the actual coaching sessions
- Use of reflective practice in coaching and developing deep insight in problem-based and/enquiry-based coaching
- Respecting confidentiality, ethical issues and professional liabilities in all coaching sessions

Metaphors

The word "metaphor" comes from the ancient Greek word *metapherein*, which means "to carry over" or "to transfer." A metaphor "carries" meaning from one concept to another by stating or implying that one is the same or like the other.

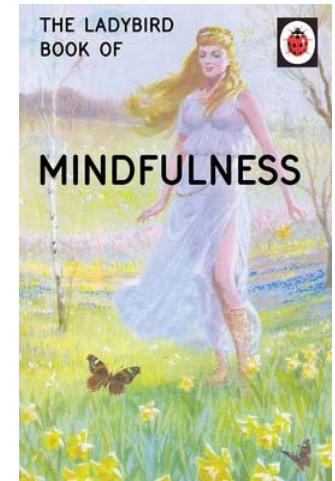
Definition:

A type of figurative language in which the author compares two very different things, and as a result, reveals creative similarities between the two.



ENGLISH WORDS FROM GREEK GODS

WORD	MEANING	FROM
atlas	a book of maps	Atlas, Titan who held the sky on his shoulders
cereal	wheat, oats, corn	Ceres, goddess of agriculture
cloth	fabric formed by weaving	Clotho, the Fate that spun the thread of life
chronology	list of events in time	Cronos, god of time
cornucopia	horn of plenty	Cornucopia
echo	repetition of a sound	Echo, who could only repeat other's words
fortune	chance happening or luck	Fortuna, goddess of luck
hypnosis	sleeplike state	Hypnos, god of sleep
jovial	god cheer	Jove - alternate name of Jupiter
junoesque	stately bearing	Juno - stately, majestic goddess
marital	relating to war	Mars, god of war
mercurial	quick and changeable	Mercury, messenger god
Midas touch	ability to make money	Midas
mnemonics	system to improve memory	Mnemosyne, goddess of memory
music	arrangement of sounds of harmony	the Muses
narcissism	excessive love of oneself	Narcissus
panic	sudden terror	Pan
plutocracy	government run by the wealthy	Pluto, god of wealth
psychology	science of mental behavior	Psyche
somnambulism	to act while asleep	Somnus, god of sleep
stentorian	extremely loud	Stentor, the herald
tantalize	keeping in sight but out of reach	Tantalus
terpsichorean	relating to dancing	Terpsichore
typhoon	tropical cyclone	Typhon
venerate	regard with reverence	Venus
vestal	chaste, pure	Vesta
volcano	opening in earth's crust that ejects lava	Vulcan
zephyr	gentle west wind	Zephyrus



Interpersonal Skills

Methodology

Multi method approach

Phenomenological approach

Purposive sample (n=70)

Level 6 cohorts 2012 and 2017

Questionnaire survey (Feggetter, 2007)

Analytical approach: Content Analysis

Triangulation: Documentary analysis of case study and portfolio

FINDINGS

- Three key conceptual dimensions emerged from the interpretation of the student questionnaires. The first conceptual dimension related to the process of reciprocal peer coaching, in other words the important factors that contributed to continuous formative assessment/facilitation of the relationship.
- The second conceptual dimension related to the learning process, in other words the extent to which students engaged in the experiential learning process.
- The third conceptual dimension refers to cognitive developments, meaning the extent to which knowledge and competencies were enhanced as a result of participating in the RPC relationship

Process of RPC

- to build a good relationship with the coach
- someone else listening to me was comforting
- discuss what I wanted and not feel uncomfortable
- someone ready to listen and not to judge me
- use of listening skills was valuable to our conversations
- the relationship was supportive
- to have a chance to have a one to one conversation
- social aspect of having a close relationship with someone

– **Trust**

– *“Developing trust with another”*

– **Being listened to**

“Someone else listening/discuss what wanted and not feel uncomfortable/Someone ready to listen and not to judge”

– **Coaching tips and tools**

“Tips given/Different techniques that can be used/What my Coach said/ Insight into different development tools”

– **The relationships itself between Coach and Coachee**

“The relationship/To build a good relationship with the Coach/New contacts with new people/Conversation/Social aspect”



Episkyros (Greek: ἐπίσκυρος; also called ἐπίκοινος epikoinos, "commonball") was an ancient Greek ball game



- **Pair and Group Stand up**
- In your group, sit back-to-back in a circle, arms linked and have to stand up together.
- Episkyros (Greek: ἐπίσκυρος; also called ἐπίκοινος epikoinos, "commonball") was an ancient Greek ball game



Learning process

- Time to reflect on self, greater sense of self/More self-awareness
- Getting to know myself a little better/self insight/Having more self insight
- Take time out to reflect and think about my life...

Learning about self

“Time to reflect/More self-awareness/Getting to know myself a little better:

- Human Knot
- Starting in a circle, participants connect hands with two others people in the group to form the human knot. As a team they must then try to unravel the “human knot” by untangling themselves without breaking the chain of hands.



Cognitive developments/gains/rewards/gifts

- Increased self-confidence/Increase levels of confidence in what I do/Confidence generally/Confidence with exams/More confident about my actions/More confident about studying
- Better sense of direction and future vision for myself/Clarity in thinking about the future
- More focused thinking, new ideas and concepts
- More positive thinking about living my life
- Improved problem solving ability
- Knowledge base has improved
- Stress management techniques
- More relaxed in life (relaxation techniques)
- Less foggy, clearer thinking about working (clarity)/More thoughtful about things
- More active-exercising-energy/More upbeat about how I do things

–Increased confidence

“More confident/That I am more approachable and more confident”

–Less stressed

“Less stressed/More relaxed/More thoughtful/More active/More upbeat”

–Improved time-management

“More organised/More committed/Stick to dates and deadlines more/Time-management improved”

–More consideration/better awareness

“More open-minded/More awareness/More considerate”



– **Better sense of direction/confidence**

“Better sense of direction and determination/More focused and energetic/More confident/More positive/Improved problem-solving”

– **Improved time-management**

“More organised/More efficient/Reached goals in timely manner/More confident in managing my time”

– **Increased listening skills**

“I listen more to help evaluate/Increased listening skills”

– **Allows everyday use of coaching tools**

“Can use on a day-to-day basis/I work hard on this each day (using coaching tools) to obtain goals”

What gifts from the Gods will you take away from today?

“It was an interesting experience”

“It has been a helping life learning curve”

“A key to providing a new and enjoyable experience”



Conclusions and Discussion Points

- Impact of coaching upon personal and professional development goals
- Positive progression in their skill development
- Coaching was a facilitative developmental process
- Development of skills
- Reflective space for students
- Enhanced employability



Limitations of Research

- Mindful that findings are based on small numbers
- Inevitable presentation bias
- Rudimentary measure (questionnaire)
- Future research expand on quantitative data collection



Implications for Learning and Teaching

- Coaching useful for supporting development of competences (Hanson 2000)
- Coaching provides students with a range of transferrable skills (Grant, 2001) which maps onto employability provision in HE (Spaten and Hansen, 2009)



- Enhance depth of learning in business studies students (Ladyshevsky (2002))
- Helps to develop deeper learning and understanding (Grant, 2007)
- Bringing coaching into the undergraduate curriculum/teaching agenda (Grant 2011)
- “Students better equipped to plan their future” (Steele and Arthur, 2012)

References

Ashgar, A (2010) Reciprocal peer coaching and its use as a formative assessment strategy for first year students. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35(4), 403-417.

Kolb, D.A. (1976). Management and the Learning Process. *California Management Review*, 18, Spring, pp. 21-31

Kolb, D.A. (1985). *Learning style inventory*. Boston, MA: McBer and Company

Feggetter, A. J. W (2007) A preliminary evaluation of executive coaching: Does executive coaching work for candidates on a high potential development scheme? International Coaching Psychology Review. Vol. 2 No. 2. 2 July 2007

Grant, A.M. (2011) Developing an agenda for teaching coaching psychology. International Coaching Psychology Review, 6 (1), 84-99.

Ladyshefsky, R.K. (2002). A quasi-experimental study of the differences in performance and clinical reasoning using individual learning versus reciprocal peer coaching. *Physiotherapy Theory and Practice*, 18(1), 17–31.

Ladyshefsky, R. (2006). Peer coaching: A constructivist methodology for enhancing critical thinking in postgraduate business education. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 25(1), 67–84.

Spaten, O. M. & Hansen T.G.B., (2009). Should learning to coach be integrated in a graduate psychology programme? – Denmark's first try, *The Coaching Psychologist*, Volume 5 No. 2 December 2009

Shame and Law (2012)"Peer Coaching Framework: An exploratory technique. *The Coaching Psychologist* June 2012.

Steele, C. & Arthur, J., (2012). Teaching Coaching Psychology to Undergraduates – Perceptions and Experiences, *International Coaching Psychology Review*, Volume 7 No. 1 March 2012

Short, E. & Baker, S. (2010). *Using peer coaching to enhance resilience project report*. University of Bedfordshire. Accessed 7 February 2011, from: www.beds.ac.uk/bridgesceti/through/reports/usingpeercoaching/usingpeercoaching.pdf

Short, E., Kinman, G. & Baker, S. (2010). Evaluating the impact of a peer coaching intervention on well-being amongst psychology undergraduate students. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 5(1), 27–35.

Spaten, O.M. & Hansen, T.G.B. (2009). Should learning to coach be integrated in a graduate psychology programme? Denmark's first try.

The Coaching Psychologist, 5(2), 104–109.

Shame and Law (2012)??

Whitmore, J. (1992). *Coaching for performance:*

A practical guide to growing your own skills (People Skills for Professionals). London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Contact Details:

L.J.Matthewman@westminster.ac.uk

