Beyond the buzzword; why bother with coaching for CPD?

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Let’s start with you. Find a partner. Become persons ‘A’ & ‘B’.

**Person A** – please have a conversation with your partner to elicit their views on the question: *Why bother with coaching in education?*

Give them your attention, ask them useful questions to prompt their thinking, but focus only on their experiences and ideas – you will have your turn soon. You have 3 minutes.

Swap. **Person B** – please give your partner your full attention as they consider the same question.
Complex context for coaching in England

- Coaching in Education for Professional Development
- Coaching takes many forms
- Coaching has many functions
- School-led system
- Instructional Coaching
- Coaching integrated in leadership CPD
- Chartered College CTeach Coaches
- Freelance coaches in CPD market
- Tools for DfE career development (eg. Early Career, Women in Leadership)
Spectrum of intent, context and quality

Mentoring
- Induction
- Support
- Gatekeeping

Coaching
- Facilitation
- Development
- Self-determination
Re-imagining mentoring as a dynamic hub in the transformation of initial teacher education

The role of mentors and teacher educators

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Developing practices in teachers’ professional dialogue in England: using Coaching Dimensions as an epistemic tool
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Purpose – Coaching in educational settings is an alluring concept, as it carries associations with life coaching and well being, sports coaching and achievement and improving educational attainment. Although there are examples of successful deployment in schools, there is also evidence that coaching often struggles to meet expectations. This article aims to use socio-cultural theory to explore why coaching does NOT transplant readily to schools, particularly in England, where the object of coaching activity may be in contradiction to the object of dominant activity in schools – meeting examination targets.
Shared labour for a common purpose

Combined effort was for a common purpose with a focus on students and their learning

Parity and link to productive dialogue

Working productively as well as building relationships

A safe forum for professional challenge

Make choices about practice beyond QA & PM processes

https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/teacher-peer-coaching-a-story-of-trust-agency-and-enablers
A series of conversations between coaches

Why bother with coaching in education?
Some one-to-one coaching, some group coaching

Dialogue creates opportunities for learning and change; striking balance between organisation’s agenda and individual’s motives & interests.

Coaches use structures, disciplines and tools to underpin coaching (e.g. video, listening mode, Thinking Environment).
Coaching is introduced often to "close the gap", "sharpen practice", and "solve the problem".

Coaching is not about "saving people", a "quick fix", or "performative".

Coaching means being "listened to", being "attentive to", allowing coaches to "open up" and "do their best thinking".

Coaching is "reciprocal", "exploratory", "authentic", and allows coaches and coaches to "share", "learn" in relation to "bespoke" approaches.
Use of coaching in educational settings often sought as new approach to existing issue.

Coaches bring expertise and experience to role from former professional roles.

Coaching experienced by coaches as formative process, developing skills and capacity. Coaching not static – evolves over time.
Discussion; key themes


Coaching is not easily defined (Bloom et al., 2005)

Potential to be transformative form of CPD (Kennedy, 2014)

Links to ecological agency (Priestley et al., 2015)

Links to collaborative professionalism (Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2017)

Coaching can be a counter-balance to performativity (Lofthouse & Leat, 2013)

Coaching can build teacher collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2017)
Coaching in education: a professional development process in formation

Rachel Lofthouse

Coaching has been evolving as a form of professional development for teachers and school leaders for several decades, and now exists in many forms. This study focused on the work of six coaches in England, using an adapted focus group approach to discover how they explained and conceptualised the value of their practices. As the coaches’ conversations with each other emerged details of the nature of their work, and their reflections on it, were elicited which were analysed thematically while also paying due attention to individual narratives. Although coaching is not easily defined this study demonstrates the significance of relationships and dialogue in coaching and the structures and protocols that support that. It suggests that coaching is suited to helping individuals dealing with authentic challenges, professional interests and dilemmas experienced in complex educational settings, while also acting as a counterweight to some of the consequences of performativity. The study also suggests that coaching may be a valuable means to deploy the expertise of experienced professionals to support an education system exposed to problems of retention of both teachers and school leaders.

Find a NEW partner

Share your responses to this new question

Who do you talk to about your work in education and why?
Western Québec is an English school board dedicated to developing lifelong learners who contribute to society and are prepared for their future. All teachers and staff are committed to academic excellence and the provision of quality education which encourages social, emotional and moral development. Western Québec respects and promotes the rights and responsibilities of every individual while maintaining a student-centred, safe and healthy learning environment. Parents and communities are valued as collaborative partners in enriching programs and achieving goals.

We encourage dialogue. Feel free to contact us with your comments and concerns.

Symmes-D’Arcy McGee High School

Hadley Jr High School / Philemon Wright High School
Focusing on Mentor-Coaches for Teacher Induction & Coaching as part of ‘how we do things around here’

“This is my first time being mentored; it changes the way you see yourself as a teacher.”

“This school is like a family; when I wake up in the morning I feel no stress. If I have a problem with a student, I know I will get the help I need. It’s not a secret. In a family we work together.”

“I do not see coaching as adding to our workload as the benefits are real”.

“There is a lot of power in this building; people are observing each other all the time, our doors are open, we are always asking questions.”

“It is our job to create this environment, we hear teacher voice and we make changes”. (Principal)

https://www.nfer.ac.uk/teacher-workforce-dynamics-in-england/
Please contact me if you have questions about this session, about the work of CollectivED, or would like to write for our Working Papers

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