

Managerial coaching – A literature review

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Abstract

The term managerial coaching is often used to describe the leader's role in developing people, but views differ as to the optimal process by which this is achieved. Although managerial coaching is often regarded as a 'cut down' or simplified version of external coaching, it is suggested here that the role of the managerial coach is, in many respects, more challenging than that of the external coach, such that managerial coaching may be more usefully regarded as a discrete and equally demanding discipline, albeit related to external coaching. The article concludes with suggestions for future research, suggesting that a systemic approach is likely to prove more fruitful than traditional approaches focussed on individual behaviours.

Key Words: coaching, managerial coaching, organisational change, systemic theory, literature review

Introduction

The demand for managers to demonstrate a 'coaching style' has been increasing for the last decade (Beattie et al., 2014; Ellinger, Hamlin & Beattie, 2016; Joo, 2005; Joo, Sushko & McLean, 2012) and shows no signs of abating. The 2015 CIPD Learning and Development Survey reported that 80% of organisations in the UK expect their managers to coach. Forty percent of respondents to the survey, named coaching by line managers or peers as one their organisation's most effective learning and development interventions, and a net 62% said they expected to see this form of coaching increase over the next 12 months. Yet while there has been an exponential growth in coaching research over the last decade (Grant, 2014a), little of that research has focussed on managerial coaching. There is little agreement as to how managerial coaching is best defined, how to measure it, or what value it adds (Dahling, Ritchie Taylor, Chau & Dwight, 2016). With researchers focused primarily on external coaching, there is a danger that practitioners assume the same insights apply equally to managers coaching direct reports. This would be a valid approach should it be proven that 'executive coaching' and 'managerial coaching' are indeed the same thing, but there is little evidence to support such an assumption.

There have been few formal literature reviews conducted in this area. Hagen (2012) outlined a history of managerial coaching and in reviewing different definitions, concluded that most highlight the role of managerial coaching in enhancing learning. She also reviewed empirical evidence of the effectiveness of managerial coaching, concluding that more research is required. She suggested that further research focus on exploring the antecedents of managerial coaching, indicators of managerial coaching, and causal links between managerial coaching and organisational outcomes. Beattie et al. (2014) focussed on empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of managerial coaching. In reviewing definitions of managerial coaching, they concluded that all forms of coaching are essentially the same, varying only in their focus and emphasis. Drawing heavily on their own studies, they also concluded that managerial coaching is essentially synonymous with the facilitation of learning. They recommended future research focus on exploring the benefits and limitations of e-coaching, multicultural/cross-cultural coaching, and the impact of different demographic variables.

The purpose of this review is to explore further the following questions. First, to what extent is it generally accepted that the essence of managerial coaching is the facilitation of learning? Beattie et al. (2014) and Hagen (2012) might argue that coaching generally has evolved from something quite directive into something more facilitative. This is not a universally held view within organisations at least, and it remains to be shown that the facilitative approach is always most effective. Second, to what extent is it useful to regard coaching and managerial coaching as essentially the same? Settling upon a definition of managerial coaching as the facilitation of learning leaves open the question as to how this is achieved. The task of the managerial coach in this domain may be quite different to the task of the external coach. If managerial coaching is, after all, qualitatively different, then this must be recognised, for example, in the design and implementation of training programs. Much of the training in the managerial coaching domain is being provided by external coaches. If those external coaches are training managers to coach in a way that doesn't reflect the nature of their roles, then this is likely to result in sub-optimal outcomes. This review considers evidence that suggests the role of the managerial coach is significantly different to that of the external coach. Third, whilst both Hagen (2012) and Beattie et al. (2014) acknowledge the importance of culture in supporting managerial coaching behaviours, in seeking to enhance management's capability to coach, should we be taking a step further by focussing our efforts on collective change rather than the development of individuals?

It was decided not to limit the scope of this review to more recent publications. References from the late twentieth century are included here despite having been reviewed earlier by Hagen (2012) and Beattie et al. (2014). This is because many of those earlier definitions, with their emphasis on the coach as teacher or instructor, remain relevant today. It is not necessarily the case that the evolution of coaching as defined by academics is mirrored by the evolution of managerial coaching in practice. An exploration of these questions ought to enable organisations to better facilitate the collective adoption of more effective managerial behaviours.

Methodology

An integrative review methodology was deployed, based on the first four stages described by Whittemore and Knafl (2005).

1. **Problem Identification.** The purpose of this integrative review was to better understand the concept of managerial coaching.
2. **Literature search.** Three databases were interrogated for the terms 'managerial coaching', 'leader as coach', 'leader-as-coach', 'manager as coach' and 'manager-as-coach'. The databases referenced were PsycINFO, Scopus and ProQuest Central. Searching the databases yielded a total of 89 references of which 26 were discarded, because areas of study were not deemed relevant (e.g. articles focusing on sports coaching), or because articles were published in newspapers or trade journals. The literature search was conducted in parallel with the data analysis (see below), and a further 60 references were accessed as cited by authors of the original data set. These 60 references did not show up in the original search for various reasons. For example, i) some were published in books or journals not covered by the three databases, ii) in some, managerial coaching was not described in terms that differentiated managerial coaching from other forms of coaching, iii) others referred to specific subjects considered by some authors to be key aspects of managerial coaching, such as giving feedback and organisational learning.
3. **Data evaluation.** Articles from trade journals and newspaper were discarded, with most texts sourced being peer-reviewed journals and other scholarly texts.
4. **Data analysis.** Data analysis was conducted in parallel with the literature search. References were analysed in search for common categories with reference to grounded research methodology

(Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Four primary categories emerged, which form the framework around which the rest of this article is structured, namely:

- i. Definitions of managerial coaching
- ii. Evidence for the effectiveness of managerial coaching
- iii. Challenges facing the managerial coach
- iv. Challenges facing the organisation attempting to build managerial coaching capacity

These themes were explored with reference to the three research questions outlined earlier.

Definitions of managerial coaching

Managerial coaching as subset of coaching or standalone discipline?

There are two ways in which managerial coaching is effectively defined in the literature. First, managerial coaching is referred to as if there exists a generic set of coaching skills and competencies, such that managerial coaching is defined in essentially the same way as other forms of organisational coaching. Second, managerial coaching is defined as if it was a separate discipline. Where it is defined with reference to generic definitions of coaching, it is often depicted as a 'cut down' or limited version of executive coaching, the basic premise being that the external coach has superior skills to the manager-as-coach (Carter, 2005; Anderson, 2013; Fatien & Otter, 2015).

Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie (2008) asked "*is a coach a coach a coach?*" (p. 288). Drawing on the work of Grant (2001), Joo (2005), and others, they collated 37 definitions of coaching and concluded that there are few substantive differences between these forms of coaching in terms of purpose and process, and that all these definitions have in common "*the explicit and implicit intention of helping individuals to improve their performance in various domains, and to enhance their personal effectiveness, personal development, and personal growth*" (p. 291). The authors also contested assertions by Grant (2001) and Clegg, Rhodes and Kornberger (2003), that coaching is substantively different from training, and were similarly dismissive of the efforts of Clegg et al. (2003) to differentiate business coaching from consulting.

This definition is very broad and is unlikely to address ongoing confusion as to what the word 'coaching' means (Evered & Selman, 1989; Hamlin et al., 2008; Ives, 2008; Joo et al., 2012; Maltabia, Marsick & Ghosh, 2014; Orth, Wilkinson & Benfari, 1987). Ives (2008) highlights three dimensions around which there is disagreement. The first dimension is *directive/non-directive*. Many early definitions of coaching were quite directive. Stober and Grant (2006) cite Parsloe (1995), who wrote that coaching is "*directly concerned with the immediate improvement of performance and development of skills by a form of tutoring or instructing.*" (p. 2). Such definitions may be contrasted with that of Whitmore (2009), "*Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them*" (p. 10). Whilst Hagen (2012) may imply there was a shift in the way coaching was regarded in the late 1980s, from 'command and control' to a more empowering model, Ives (2008) suggests that a growth in therapeutic coaching has elicited a partial return towards more directive coaching perspectives in recent years. Indeed, some contemporary authors explicitly validate advice-giving as a coaching behaviour (e.g. Cavanagh, 2006). The second dimension is *personal-developmental/goal-focused*. Some coaches focus squarely on solutions, while others explore the nature of underlying issues. Grant (2006), for example, suggests that coaching supports "*solution construction in preference to problem analysis*" (p. 156). Other coaches argue that an exploration of issues is necessary to help the coachee formulate a meaningful way forward. The third dimension is *therapeutic/performance-driven*. Therapeutic approaches place particular emphasis on the coach-coachee relationship, on empathy and unconditional positive regard. Other writers

suggest that coaching and therapy are qualitatively different, and that effective coaching is characterised by a primary focus on outcomes (Grant, 2014b).

From this perspective, managerial coaching, as defined by Hagen (2012) and Beattie et al. (2014), would appear to be non-directive, both developmental and goal focussed, and silent on the extent to which managers are encouraged to explore underlying issues. As Beattie et al. (2014) suggest, their perspective on managerial coaching doesn't clearly differentiate it from other forms of coaching. Other writers position managerial coaching more explicitly as a subset of a single broader discipline. Hawkins and Smith (2006), for example, suggest that there are four types of coaching; *skills coaching*, *performance coaching* (a focus on outputs and outcomes), *development coaching* (including development of the whole person), and *transformational coaching* (enabling the coachee to transition to a higher level of functioning). The authors suggest that the manager/coach should focus more on *skills* and *performance coaching*, leaving other forms of coaching to specialists, on the basis that specialists experience a broader range of coaching contexts and undertake more training. The inference from this analysis is that managerial coach is a less skilled version of an external coach.

By contrast, some writers suggest that managerial coaching should be regarded as its own discipline (Anderson, 2013; Dahling et al., 2016; Fatien & Otter, 2015; McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Anderson (2013) presented 521 line managers with 12 behaviours highlighted in the coaching literature, and asked them which of those behaviours they associated with workplace coaching. Respondents agreed that five behaviours were relevant to the managerial coach and that seven were less relevant. The less relevant behaviours included; asking questions instead of providing solutions, spending more time listening than questioning, and helping people come up with their own solutions. Chong, Yuen, Tan, Zarim and Hamid (2016) surveyed 140 managerial coaches working at 30 telecommunications companies in Malaysia. They asked respondents to evaluate each of the International Coaching Federation (ICF) competencies. Correlating responses with self-reported coaching effectiveness, the authors reported that only five of the eleven core competencies related to coaching effectiveness. Those not deemed relevant included establishing trust and intimacy, active listening, and creating awareness. These studies suggest that certain skills regarded as core by the external coach may not be so important to the managerial coach, and that workplace coaching may be more directive than other forms of coaching.

Managerial coaching defined

In reviewing those papers marked with an asterisk in table 1, Hagen (2012) suggested that they all imply a learning process through which the individual (or team, in some cases) is helped to perform better. These definitions are less obviously aligned as to the nature of the learning process. Some definitions describe a facilitative process (e.g. Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie, 2009), others imply a more directive process (e.g. Dahling et al., 2016), while others are altogether silent on process, defining coaching solely in terms of outcomes (e.g. Burdett, 1998).

Various authors have attempted to define managerial coaching in terms of specific, measurable, skills and competencies. Table 2 presents different perspectives on the skills required to be an effective managerial coach. Again, we see some versions placing more focus on empathy, facilitation and relationship building, including both early articles (e.g. Evered & Salman, 1989) and later articles (e.g. Ellinger et al., 2016). Ellinger, Hamlin and Beattie (2008) conducted a mini-meta study, concluding that dictatorial behaviour, ineffective communication and ineffective behaviours generally, are all associated with ineffective coaching. Other writers however, do include more directive behaviours, such as recognising performance, goal setting and advice giving, including some more recent works (e.g. Longenecker & Neubert, 2005). When it comes to the nature of the process through which learning is facilitated these models differ to each other,

and these differences do not necessarily represent a temporal trend toward more facilitative definitions.

Orth, Wilkinson & Benefari (1987) (*)	A day-to-day, hands on process of helping employees recognise opportunities to improve their performance and capabilities.
Evered & Salman (1989)	The managerial activity of creating, by communication only, the climate, environment, and context that empowers individuals and teams to generate results.
Mink, Owen & Mink (1993) (*)	Coaching is the process by which one individual, the coach, creates a relationship with others that makes it easier for them to learn.
Kalinauckas & King (1994) (*)	Coaching is a process by which a manager, through discussion and guided actively, helps a member of staff to solve a problem or carry out a task better. The focus is on practical improvement of performance and the development of specific skills.
Peterson & Hicks (1996) (*)	The process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective.
Burdett (1998)	Coaching is, exclusively, a process focusing on enhanced performance.
Ellinger & Bostrom (1999)	A supervisor or manager serving as a facilitator of learning by enacting behaviours that enable employees to learn and develop work-related skills and abilities
Redshaw (2000) (*)	Systematically increasing the capability and work performance of someone by exposing him or her to work-based tasks or experiences that will provide the relevant learning opportunities, and giving guidance and feedback to help him or her to learn from them.
Hunt & Weintraub (2002) (*)	The coaching manager is a business leader and manager who helps his or her employees learn and develop through coaching, who creates a workplace that makes learning, growth and adaptation possible, and who combines leadership with a genuine interest in helping those around him or her.
Ellinger, Ellinger & Keller (2003) (*)	A coaching manager is one who encourages the development of a high-performance work environment through management practices that value and support the facilitation of learning.
Heslin, VandeWalle & Latham (2006)	A process through which supervisors may communicate clear expectations to employees, provide feedback and suggestions for improving performance, and facilitate employee's efforts to solve problems and take on new challenges.
Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie (2009) (*)	A helping and facilitative process that enables individuals, groups/teams, and organisations acquire new skills, competence, and performance, and enhance their personal effectiveness, personal development, or personal growth.
Gregory & Levy (2010)	A developmental activity in which an employee works one-on-one with his/her direct manager to improve current job performance and enhance his/her capabilities for future roles and/or challenges, the success of which is based on an effective relationship between the employee and manager, as well as the use of objective information, such as feedback, performance data, or assessments.
Hicks & McCracken (2011)	A collaborative process designed to help people alter perceptions and behavioural patterns in a way that increases their effectiveness and ability to adapt and accept change as a challenge, rather than an obstacle.
Hagen & Aguilar (2012)	The process by which a manager, through guided discussion and activity, helps a member of his/her staff to solve a problem or carry out a task more efficiently and/or effectively.
Dahling, Ritchie Taylor, Chau & Dwight (2016)	Managerial coaching is a process of feedback provision, behavioural modelling, and goal setting with subordinates to improve their performance and address their personal challenges.

Table 1. Definitions of managerial coaching

	Orth, Wilkinson & Benfari (1987)	Evered & Salman (1989)	Graham, Wedman, Garvin-Kaster (1994)	Ellinger & Bostrom (1999)	Ellinger, Ellinger & Keller (2003)
Name of tool					Coaching Behaviour Measure
Source			Schelling (1991)	Critical Incident Technique (CIT) & structured interviews	Literature review and reference to previous own studies
No. items	4	10	27 (8 categories)	322 (13 categories)	8
Skills or categories of skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observational skills • Analytical skills • Interviewing skills • Feedback skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing partnerships • Commitment to producing results • Compassion and non-judgmental acceptance • Speaking and listening for action • Responsive to employees • Honouring the uniqueness of individuals • Practice and preparation • Willingness to coach and be coached • Sensitivity to team and to individuals • Willingness to go beyond what's been achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate clear performance objectives • Provide regular performance feedback • Consider all relevant information when appraising performance • Observe performance with clients • Know the staff well enough to help them develop self-improvement plans • Recognise and reward high performance • Provide help, training and guidance • Build a warm, friendly relationship 	<p>Empowering behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question framing • Removing obstacles • Transferring ownership • Holding back - not providing answers <p>Facilitating behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing feedback • Soliciting feedback • Setting expectations • Stepping into other to shift perspectives • Broadening perspectives • Using analogies, scenarios & examples • Talking It through • Creating a learning environment • Engaging others to facilitate learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question framing • Removing obstacles • Providing feedback • Soliciting feedback • Setting expectations • Stepping into other to shift perspectives • Broadening perspectives • Using analogies, scenarios & examples

Table 2. Managerial coaching skills and behaviours

	McLean, Yang, Kuo, Torbert & Larkin (2005)	Noer, Leupold & Valle (2007)	Longenecker & Neubert (2005)	Beattie (2006)	Heslin, Vandewalle & Latham (2006)
Name of tool	Measurement Model of Coaching Skill	Coaching Behaviours Inventory			
Source	Literature review, expert panel, testing	Literature review, focus groups, expert interviews. Kinlaw model (1996)	Focus groups	CIT & structured interviews	Literature review and testing
No. items	20 (4 categories)	30 (12 categories)	10	22 (9 categories)	10 (3 categories)
Skills or categories of skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open communication • Team approach • Value people • Accept ambiguity 	<p>Assessing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data gathering • Gap analysis • Goal setting • Measurement <p>Supporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending • Inquiring • Reflecting • Affirming <p>Challenging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confronting • Focusing/shaping • Reframing • Empowering/engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify outcomes • Provide feedback • Know how well managers are performing • Understand strengths and weaknesses • Provide expert advice • Develop a working relationship • Understand the context, pressures, and demands of the coachee's job • Support problem solving • Help prioritize • Create accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring • Informing • Being professional • Advising • Assessing • Thinking • Empowering • Developing others • Challenging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance: Communication of clear performance expectations and constructive feedback • Facilitation: Helping employees to analyze and solve problems. • Inspiration: Challenging employees to realize their potential.

Table 2 (cont.) Managerial coaching skills and behaviours

	Park, Yang & McLean (2008)	Zhang (2008)	Gilley, Gilley & Kouider (2010)	Gregory & Levy (2010)	David & Matu (2013)
Name of tool	Measurement Model of Coaching Skills			Predicted Quality of the Coaching Relationship (PQECR)	Managerial Coaching Assessment System (MCAS)
Source	McLean (2005) revised	Literature review and interviews	Literature review and testing	Literature review, SME review and testing	Literature review with and testing
No. items	20 (5 categories)	28 (4 categories)	4	12 (4 categories)	15
Skills or categories of skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open communication • Team approach • Value people • Accept ambiguity • Facilitating development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness enlightenment • Psychology support • Vocational development • Role modelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess skills necessary for the job • Communication • Motivation • Encourage growth and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuineness of the Relationship • Effective Communication • Comfort with the Relationship • Facilitating Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage others to find own solutions • Empower others • Offer guidance rather than solutions • Offer positive feedback • Offer negative constructive feedback • Ask for feedback • Develop plans • Offer learning opportunities • Set expectations. • Establish clear goals • Look at things from others' perspective, • Encourage different perspectives • Use analogies, scenarios, examples • Bring in others to facilitate learning when required.

Table 2 (cont.) Managerial coaching skills and behaviours

Reviewing how this body of work has evolved over time then, we can see an ongoing narrative of managerial coaching as a means of managing performance (e.g. Orth et al., 1987; Evered & Salman, 1989; Longenecker & Neubert, 2005) alongside three subsequent schools of thought; the ‘*Ellinger school*’, based on the premise that coaching is specifically the facilitation of learning; the ‘*Graham school*’, influenced by sales management practices, and in particular the work of Schelling (1991), and the ‘*McLean/Park school*’ whose origins included reference to sports coaching, an aspect of their work critiqued by Peterson and Little (2005). Most subsequent studies based their models on some, or all, of these references.

As will become evident later in this paper, the Ellinger et al. (2003) and Park et al. (2008) scales have been used most often by researchers exploring the effectiveness of managerial coaching. However, not only were these scales originally derived from organisational learning and sports coaching literature, but the validity of both instruments has been questioned. Hagen and Peterson (2013) tested the two instruments with 316 leaders/members of Six-Sigma teams and concluded that the Ellinger scale, in particular, lacked validity, suggesting that there may be other aspects to coaching than the facilitation of learning. Other measures are quite derivative. Noer, Leupold and Valle (2007) referenced the Centre for Creative Leadership’s (CCL) approach to leadership development in structuring their ‘Coaching Behaviours Inventory’ around assessment, support and challenge. They then populated each of those three dimensions with behavioural components from other models. Behavioural items for the supporting dimension, for example, were derived from Kinlaw’s (1996) ‘Superior Coaching Model’. Gregory and Levy (2010) and Gilley, Gilley and Kouider (2010) developed their respective models from a study of literature reviews. Dahling et al. (2016) noted discrepancies between different definitions of managerial coaching, and suggested that several common elements can be identified across those various definitions, namely; delivering feedback, role modelling, and a collaborative approach to setting goals. However, the authors do not provide a detailed rationale as to how they came up with these three categories. Furthermore, the authors go on to suggest that managerial coaching is a term used specifically to describe the coaching of lower level subordinates, in contrast to ‘executive coaching’, a distinction for which there does not appear to be any empirical evidence.

In summary, there is no generally accepted definition of managerial coaching any more than there is a generally accepted definition of coaching generally. There is general alignment as to role of coaching in facilitating learning and improving performance, but less clarity as to the nature of that process. Some models emphasise the value of relationship building, inspiration and facilitation, while others, including some recent studies, include reference to establishing expectations and setting goals, and providing feedback in service of improving performance. Nowhere in these definitions do we see a clear distinction between managerial coaching and other forms of coaching.

Managerial coaching and training

Some authors suggest there is no qualitative difference between managerial coaching and training. Lawton-Smith and Cox (2007), for example, argue that since there is no generally accepted definition of coaching, then organisations can call anything they like coaching. Evered and Salman (1989) suggest that managerial coaching in the eighties was generally regarded as a training technique. As the responsibility for developing employees transitioned from HR to the line managers, coaching emerged as a new label for on-the-job training delivered by managers (Longenecker & Neubert, 2005). Liu and Bat (2010) suggest that coaching, defined as the provision of “*individualized guidance and instruction*” (p. 266) is still commonly regarded as an informal mode of training. Lawton-Smith and Cox (2007) suggest that much of the coaching that takes place within organisations is little more than training, re-branded, re-labelled and re-packaged. Various authors have attempted to differentiate between managerial coaching and training. Elmadag, Ellinger and Franke (2008) suggest that managerial coaching and training have similar objectives,

but coaching is more informal and is delivered on the job. Bond and Seneque (2003) suggest that coaching is a means of facilitating growth, while traditional training is a medium through which growth is directed. Dahling et al. (2016) suggest that managerial coaching is more focussed on the individual and is more open ended in nature. All these distinctions can be questioned, particularly with reference to individualised on-the-job training. Lawton-Smith and Cox (2007) suggest that coaching is qualitatively different to training in that coaching is person-centered, whereas trainers generally assume there is a single 'right answer' to any issue. However, they see a narrow boundary between the two disciplines. Action learning, for example, they say may be regarded as "*a training technique which sits plainly on the boundary with coaching*" (p. 4).

Evidence for the effectiveness of managerial coaching

Table 3 provides an overview of 22 studies providing evidence for the efficacy of managerial coaching in enhancing job satisfaction, commitment to the organisation, individual and team learning, role clarity and individual and team performance. Although more than half these studies have been conducted since Hagen (2012), most issues identified by Hagen remain to be addressed. Limitations include:

i. Coaching definitions

Sixteen of the 22 studies measured coaching behaviours using the Ellinger et al. (2003) scale and/or the Park et al. (2008) scale, neither of which have been shown to be universally valid. Woo (2017), for example, had to remove two of the eight items from the Ellinger et al. (2003) scale in order to establish an acceptable reliability coefficient. Of the remaining six studies, four used proprietary measures and two referenced generic behavioural databases. Liu and Batt (2010) measured the coaching behaviour of managers in a call-centre environment in which coaching behaviours were already defined as consisting "*of individualised feedback based on monitoring of calls, behaviours and keystrokes*" (p. 276), training, and providing information on the business. Dahling et al. (2016) used an eight-item proprietary measure that assessed the line manager's coaching skill in terms of feedback delivery, behavioural modelling, and goal setting behaviours. Both Weer, DiRenzo and Shipper (2016) and Lin, Lin, & Chang (2017) referenced generic behavioural databases to come up with coaching definitions. The majority of studies therefore, defined coaching in developmental terms, as defined by Ellinger et al. (2003) and Park et al. (2008). Other studies deployed various definitions, making it hard to compare study outcomes.

ii. Large scale surveys

Of 22 studies, 18 reported the results of large-scale surveys, most of which were conducted online. Of these 18 studies, 10 involved sending a survey out to a single population. The same criticism may be levelled at all these studies, namely the limitations of a convenience sampling approach. Eight studies involved sending surveys to both managers and direct reports. In two of these studies the managers were asked to choose which direct reports to include in the survey (Elmadag et al., 2008; Wang, 2013) thereby introducing another level of sampling bias.

iii. Measures of performance

Fifteen of the 22 studies included a performance measure. In seven of those 15 studies direct reports were asked to evaluate their own performance. Of the remaining eight studies, five used manager ratings to evaluate the performance of direct reports, either on a team basis (Ellinger et al., 2003; Weer et al., 2016) or an individual basis (Huang & Hsieh, 2015; Kim & Kuo, 2016; Wheeler, 2011). Although Wheeler (2011) had access to sales data, she concluded that her data demonstrated no clear links between coaching behaviours and sales performance, largely because relatively few managers surveyed appeared to be demonstrating coaching

skills. Only two studies included direct quantified measures of performance. Liu and Batt (2010) measured the time that supervisors in a call centre spent talking to direct reports in call centre with handling times. They found that the more time supervisors spent talking to staff, the more handling times were reduced. Coaching in this case was defined primarily in terms of giving feedback, and the content/quality of conversations was not directly measured. In a similar study Dahling et al. (2016) compared managerial coaching skills and frequency of coaching with quarterly sales performance data. The authors found that managerial coaching skills were associated with sales performance, but frequency of coaching was not. Coaching in this study was again a proprietary definition and line manager coaching skills were evaluated by senior managers. Furthermore, coaching frequency was defined as the number of field visits line managers attended with direct reports, and no direct observations were made of the conversations between line managers and direct reports. Hannah (2004) cited case study evidence that managerial coaching led to improvements in performance of customer-facing staff working for a rail company. However, close inspection of the data suggests that coaching, as most commonly defined, didn't seem to be taking place. Hannah conducted 45 interviews with frontline staff over a six-month period and interviewees reported a total of just 32 coaching sessions having been conducted compared to 202 performance assessments. At the end of the program participants characterised the role of their coach as much in terms of training and enforcing as they did coaching. Some important aspects of coaching declined over the duration of the program, and the author concluded that there was no evidence of generative coaching having taken place.

iv. *Sampling and level of management*

Eleven of the 22 studies did not target specific levels of management. Ten of those 11 studies selected staff at random without providing data on seniority levels. Zhang (2008) also selected staff at random, but surveyed respondents level of seniority, the majority of whom were middle managers. Of the remaining 11 studies, seven focused on frontline staff (Dahling et al. 2016; Elmadag et al. 2008; Hannah, 2004; Liu & Batt, 2010; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015; Wheeler, 2011) and functional staff working in warehouses (Ellinger et al., 2003). Agarwal et al. (2009) studied sales staff, including national and regional management as well as direct sales staff. Hagen and Aguilar (2012) studied six-sigma teams working in heavy-industry, manufacturing, sales and service and high-technology. Wang (2013) studied R&D teams working in high-tech organisations in Taiwan. Weer et al. (2016) studied mid-level management in multinational, technology driven organisation. As yet therefore, there has been little research conducted at the middle management level, and none at the executive level.

Challenges facing the managerial coach

Whatever managerial coaching is, and however effective it may be, it does not seem to happen very often (Dixey, 2015; Ellinger et al., 2003; Ellinger et al., 2016; Gilley et al., 2010; Heslin et al., 2006; Longenecker & Neubert, 2005; Misiukonis, 2011; Turner & McCarthy, 2015). Many managers suggest they do not have time to coach (Chong et al., 2016; Dixey, 2015; Ladyshevsky, 2010; Orth et al. 1987; Wilson, 2011). Many writers see it also as a skills issue (Beattie et al., 2014; Fatien & Otter, 2015; Misiukonis, 2011; Orth et al. 1987; Turner & McCarthy, 2015). A review of the literature suggests there are other factors at work besides coaching skills, including mindset and thinking style. First though, let us consider managerial skill levels.

Authors	Methodology	Coaching measure	Outcome
Ellinger, Ellinger & Keller (2003)	Surveys administered to 438 employees and 67 supervisors from 18 distribution centres and 6 organisations in the US.	Coaching Behaviours Measure (Ellinger et al., 2003)	Managerial coaching behaviour associated with employee job satisfaction and employee performance.
Hannah (2004)	Case study using Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) in the UK.	ACER model (Assess, Challenge, Encourage, Review)	Managerial coaching behaviour associated with enhanced competence in role and customer satisfaction
Elmadag, Ellinger & Franke (2008)	Surveys administered to 310 frontline staff and 161 line managers from 81 logistics firms in the US.	Coaching Behaviours Measure (Ellinger et al., 2003)	Managerial coaching behaviour associated with frontline staff commitment to service quality, job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation.
Har (2008)	Questionnaires distributed by e-mail to 208 MBA students, HR practitioners and 'other workers' in Malaysia.	Measurement Model of Coaching Skills (Park et al., 2008)	Managerial coaching behaviour associated with enhanced organisational commitment & lower turnover intentions
Park, Yang & McLean (2008)	Online survey administered to 187 employees of US technology company.	Measurement Model of Coaching Skills (Park et al., 2008)	Managerial coaching behaviour associated with personal learning, organisational commitment & turnover intentions
Zhang (2008)	Survey administered to 340 employees from 38 organisations in China.	Proprietary instrument derived from Ellinger et al., (2003) & Noer (2005)	Encouraging self- awareness, psychological support, vocational development and role modelling associated with enhanced non-job specific performance. Encouraging self- awareness and role modelling associated with enhanced job-specific performance.
Agarwal, Angst & Magni (2009)	Surveys administered to 328 sales staff and 93 sales managers in US organisation three months after attending coaching skills training.	Definition not directly cited, but said to be 'developmental' and not 'directive'	Coaching intensity associated with sales performance. Coaching effects stronger at middle manager level than at senior manager level.
Liu & Batt (2010)	Survey administered to 666 workers and 110 supervisors at a US call centre.	Length of time supervisor spent coaching workers. Coaching defined as provision of individualised performance feedback and on-the-job training.	Managerial coaching associated with reduced call handling time.

Table 3. Evidence for the efficacy of managerial coaching

Authors	Methodology	Coaching measure	Outcome
Ahmadi, Jalalian, Salamzadeh, Daraei & Tadayon (2011)	Surveys administered to 110 executives in 10 organisations in Iran.	41 item version of McLean et al. (2005).	Managerial coaching behaviour associated with Quality of Work Life (QWL)
Wheeler (2011)	Unstructured interviews and semi-structured questionnaires. 6 line managers and 7 frontline staff in UK visitor attraction organisation.	Coaching themes identified from responses to open-ended questions.	Providing information, transferring ownership, role modelling and dialogue led to enhancements in performance
Hagen & Aguilar (2012)	Online surveys administered to 212 team members and 167 team leaders from 5 US organisations.	Team empowerment and facilitation of development, each measured using 4-item scales developed by Park et al. (2008)	Both behaviours associated with enhanced team learning outcomes
Kim, Egan, Kim & Kim (2013)	Online questionnaire administered to 482 South Korean employees of a public organisation.	Coaching Behaviours Measure (Ellinger et al., 2003)	Managerial coaching behaviour associated with role clarity, work satisfaction, career commitment, job performance, and organisation commitment
Wang (2013)	Surveys administered to 127 senior R&D project team members + 23 R&D managers from 23 hi-tech firms in Taiwan.	Coaching Behaviours Measure (Ellinger et al., 2003)	Managerial coaching behaviour positively moderated the relationship between employee characteristics and innovative behaviours.
Kim (2014)	Paper & pencil questionnaire administered to 234 South Korean employees of a conglomerate organisation.	Five-item version of the Coaching Behaviours Measure (Ellinger, 2003)	Managerial coaching behaviour associated with role clarity, work satisfaction, commitment to the organisation and job performance
Kim, Egan & Moon (2014)	Online questionnaire administered to 534 US employees of two public service organisations, and 270 South Korean students in public administration and education graduate programs.	Coaching Behaviours Measure (Ellinger et al., 2003)	Managerial coaching behaviour associated with role clarity, work satisfaction and job performance
Huang & Hsieh (2015)	Online survey administered to 324 manager/direct report dyads from 11 hotel service companies in Taiwan.	Measurement Model of Coaching Skills (Park et al., 2008)	Managerial coaching behaviour associated with In Role Behaviour (IRB) and Proactive Career Behaviour (PCB)

Table 3 (cont.) Evidence for the efficacy of managerial coaching

Kim & Kuo (2015)	Paper/pencil survey administered to 280 manager/direct report dyads from unspecified number of life insurance companies in Taiwan.	Eleven item version of Measurement Model of Coaching Skills (Park et al., 2008)	Managerial coaching behaviour directly associated with Organisational Citizenship Behaviour towards Individuals (OCBI), and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour towards Organisation (OCBO). Managerial coaching only indirectly influenced employee in-role performance.
Pousa & Mathieu (2015)	Online survey administered to 122 financial advisors working for a large Canadian bank.	Coaching Behaviours Measure (Ellinger et al., 2003)	Managerial coaching behaviour increases employee self-efficacy, which in turn mediates the effects of coaching on results and behavioural performance.
Dahling, Ritchie Taylor, Chau & Dwight (2016)	136 district managers and 1,246 sales representatives working in a US based global pharmaceutical company. Study conducted over 12 months.	Nine item proprietary measure focussing on i) feedback delivery ii) behavioural modelling, and iii) goal-setting behaviours	Managerial coaching skill directly related to the sales performance, with effect partially mediated by team-level role clarity. Coaching skill also had cross-level moderating effect on the relationship between coaching frequency and sales performance.
Weer, DiRenzo & Shipper (2016)	Online survey administered to 714 middle management team leaders and reports in a multinational technology firm, three times over 54 months	Items selected from Survey of Management Practices (Wilson & Wilson, 1991)	Facilitative coaching had an indirect effect on team effectiveness by fostering greater commitment among team members, which then translated into increasing team effectiveness. Pressure-based coaching had a direct negative effect on changes in team effectiveness over time.
Lin, Lin, & Chang (2017)	Survey distributed to 119 employees of a petrochemicals organisation in Taiwan.	18 items adapted from Lockwood, Jordan and Kunda's (2002) 18-item scale designed to positive/negative goal orientation.	'Promotion' goal orientation associated with employee performance.
Woo (2017)	Survey distributed to 247 employees from 17 companies in South Korea.	6 out of 8 items of the Coaching Behaviours Measure (Ellinger et al., 2003)	Managerial coaching associated with enhanced organisational commitment, its impact being moderated by separate mentoring relationships.

Table 3 (cont.) Evidence for the efficacy of managerial coaching

Skills

Any efforts to enhance manager's skills should begin by helping managers to understand what coaching is and its value (Agarwal et al., 2006; Evered & Salman, 1989; Misiukonis, 2011; Orth et al., 1987; Turner & McCarthy, 2015). Given the confusion that currently exists as to what managerial coaching is, this understanding cannot be assumed (Misiukonis, 2011). This lack of understanding may also be true of specific coaching skills. For example, managers may not have been trained how to listen (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Tyler (2011) suggests that the meanings of 'listening' and 'active listening' have evolved over the years such that listening is now implicitly deployed as a technique for placating people into believing that they have been heard when they have not. In the next section four further skills will be reviewed, aspects of coaching that appear to present a particular challenge to the managerial coach.

i) Relationship building

The relationship between coach and the coachee is an essential success factor in managerial coaching (Anderson, 2013; Bond & Seneque, 2013; Dixey, 2015; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012; Ladyshevsky, 2010; McCarthy & Milner, 2013; Misiukonis, 2011; Turner & McCarthy, 2015) and is typically longer term for the managerial coach than for the external coach, involving more frequent interactions (Agarwal et al., 2009; Ellinger & Bostrom 1999; Evered & Selman 1989; Joo et al., 2012; Liu & Batt, 2010; Peterson & Little, 2005). Anderson (2013) found that LSX measures (Leader Member-Exchange, a measure of the quality of the dyadic relationship between coach and coachee) predicted individual's propensity to coach. Turner and McCarthy (2015) asked ten managers to talk about 'coachable moments' and what factors influenced their decision to coach in the moment. The managers said they made a conscious choice whether to coach or not, and that a key factor was the level of trust and respect in the relationship. People working with external coaches usually have some degree of choice as to who they work with. There is an opportunity for both parties to test the degree of 'chemistry' between coach and coachee at the beginning of an assignment, and the assignment can be broken off at any time. The managerial coach may be faced with the prospect of having to work with more problematic relationships (Milner & McCarthy, 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010; McCarthy & Milner, 2013). The managerial coach must work with positional power differentials (Milner & McCarthy, 2014; Dixey, 2015) and a reluctance on the part of the coachee to disclose (Milner & McCarthy, 2014; Chong et al., 2016; Dixey, 2015; McCarthy & Milner, 2013; Turner & McCarthy, 2015). Accordingly, Ladyshevsky (2010) suggests that managers should be educated as to the mechanics of trust.

ii) Feedback

Feedback skills are particularly important for the managerial coach (Dahling et al., 2016; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012; Heslin et al., 2006; Joo et al., 2012; Longenecker & Neubert, 2005; McCarthy & Milner, 2013; Turner & McCarthy, 2015). Longenecker and Neubert (2005) found that most managers receive little or no on-the-job coaching or feedback, partly because many managers find giving feedback hard (Wheeler, 2012). Misiukonis (2011) reports the results of a survey in which 70% of managers said the hardest thing about coaching is giving feedback and 87% said they found it hard to give feedback to employees who become defensive. Gregory and Levy (2012) administered an online survey to 479 employees in a US based global manufacturing organisation and found that feedback orientation was associated with the quality of the coaching relationship and managerial coaching behaviour. Steelman and Wolfeld (2016) reported similar findings in a study of 103 manager/direct report dyads in the US.

iii) Team coaching

Some definitions of managerial coaching focus implicitly or explicitly on the one-to-one relationship. For example, Gregory and Levy (2010) defined managerial coaching as "*a developmental activity in which an employee works one-on-one with his/her direct manager*

...” (p. 111). Peterson and Little (2005) query the inclusion of ‘team approach’ in McLean et al.’s (2005) ‘Measurement Model of Coaching Skill’ on the basis that coaching is dyadic. Evered and Salman (1987), on the other hand, defined coaching as “*the managerial activity of creating, by communication only, the climate, environment, and context that empowers individuals and teams to generate results*” (p. 17-18). Hamlin et al. (2009) define managerial coaching as “*a helping and facilitative process that enables individuals, groups/teams, and organisations acquire new skills, competence, and performance, and enhance their personal effectiveness, personal development, or personal growth*” (p. 18). This divergence of views can also be found in the executive coaching literature, but it matters less to the external coach. External coaches can choose whether to coach teams, or focus only on individuals. The managerial coach has less choice. Milner and McCarthy (2014) surveyed 580 managers working in Australia and found that 61% coached both individuals and teams. Coaching teams is qualitatively different to coaching individuals; the effective team coach must have some level of understanding of team dynamics and functioning (Clutterbuck, 2014; Hawkins, 2011; McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Coaching teams at the same time as coaching individuals on a team is challenging (Beattie et al., 2014), a challenge many external coaches are advised not to undertake (Hawkins, 2011).

iv) Contracting

Whilst some managers may simply not be coaching, others may be coaching covertly such that their behaviour is not being recognised. Dixey (2015) conducted in-depth interviews with six sales managers, all of whom had received formal coach skills training. They expressed a preference for an informal approach to coaching without explicitly labelling it as such. They distinguished between formal developmental coaching and informal day-to-day coaching business issues. They said that they did not name the latter type conversation as ‘coaching’ for fear that reports would feel less comfortable and withdraw from fully engaging. Other authors also suggest that managers may have a preference for informal coaching and that these behaviours may not be recognised by the coachee as ‘coaching’ (Anderson, 2013; Grant 2010; Hamlin et al. 2008; Heslin et al. 2006; Hicks & McCracken, 2011; Ives, 2008; Turner & McCarthy, 2015). If managerial coaches are to be recognised for their efforts, and to receive feedback on their performance, they may need to develop their contracting skills. Whether or not this entails labelling specific conversations as ‘coaching’ conversations, it does require checking in with direct reports to align around the most effective purpose for those conversations. The managerial coach may be called upon to be more adaptable than the external coach, faced with the challenge of wearing ‘multiple hats’ and ‘role switching’ according to the demands of the situation (Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002; Ellinger, Beattie & Hamlin, 2014; Fatien & Otter, 2015; McCarthy & Milner, 2013).

Mindset

A lack of skills is not the only factor that gets in the way of coaching. To coach someone (as coaching is commonly defined) requires a particular mindset. The required mindset has been variously defined as non-directive, humanistic, motivating and empowering (Elliott & Reynolds, 2002; Fatien & Otter, 2015; Joo et al., 2012). This may require a ‘shift’ away from a ‘command and control’ philosophy (Ellinger and Bostrom, 1999; Evered & Salman, 1989; Ladyshevsky, 2010; Misiukonis, 2011; Orth et al., 1987; Turner & McCarthy, 2015). With reference to IPT (Implicit Person Theory), Heslin et al. (2006) contrasted people who hold an ‘entity theory’; that human attributes are innate and unalterable, with people who hold an ‘incremental theory’; that personal attributes can be developed. People ascribing to entity theory are unlikely to invest in developing others because they do not believe such efforts are likely to succeed. Heslin et al. (2006) found that manager’s IPTs did indeed predict employee evaluations of their coaching. Ellinger and Bostrom (2002) interviewed 56 managers, all identified as being exemplary facilitators of learning.

Participants defined management as telling, judging, controlling and directing, and coaching as empowering, helping, developing, supporting and removing obstacles. Participants talked about needing to switch from role to role depending on the context. The authors suggest that recognising the distinction between the two approaches constitutes an initial step in a mindset shift toward a more collaborative, empowering, coaching style.

Thinking style

Anderson (2013) found that OSE measures (Occupational Self Efficacy) predict individual's propensity to coach. Other writers suggest that the individual's level of emotional maturity may predict their propensity to coach (Dixey, 2015; Ellinger et al., 2014). Anderson (2013) suggests that measures of OSE may reflect the individual's reflexive 'order of development' as defined by adult development theorists. Fatien and Otter (2015) suggest that becoming an effective coach demands an enhanced ability to navigate complexity, which in turn requires a shift in 'orders of consciousness' (Kegan, 1998). Theories of adult development suggest that development is to an extent age related. Levinson (1978) suggests that a healthy transition into middle/late adulthood may be characterised by the individual assuming the role of 'wise elder'. In that context, London and Smither (2002) suggest that while some people are natural coaches, others acquire the role over time, reaching a point in their career where they want to help others and feel more comfortable in that role. To become a more effective coach then, may not require only the acquisition of new skills. It may necessitate undergoing a transformative process that enhances the individual's capacity to manage complexity (Fatien & Otter, 2015). To facilitate a transformation in an individual, or in an organisation, requires a sophisticated approach that is likely to include immersive learning, structured reflection, and ongoing support (Lawrence, 2016).

Challenges facing the organisation

Many writers recognise the limitations of traditional training in facilitating the acquisition of new skills. Some point to the difference between intensive training and blended learning (Grant, 2010; Grant & Hartley, 2013; McCarthy & Milner, 2013) while others believe such programs must address organisational culture (Anderson, 2013; Fatien & Otter, 2015; Misiukonis, 2011). We may consider the individual manager's propensity to adopt a more collaborative and humanistic leadership style, but the individual's behaviour is likely to reflect the culture of the rest of the organisation (Whitmore, 2009). Efforts to encourage managerial coaching are more likely to be effective in collaborative cultural environments (Noer et al., 2007; Wheeler, 2011; Ye, Wang, Wendt, Wu & Euwema, 2017). Fatien and Otter (2015) suggest that organisations must look beyond the acquisition of skills at an individual level to review the extent to which prevailing cultures are likely to support desired behaviours.

It has been pointed out that for managerial coaching to be effective, the coachee must want to be coached and be open to coaching (Dixey, 2015; Evered & Salman, 1989; Gregory & Levy, 2012; Joo, 2005; London & Smither, 2002; McCarthy & Milner, 2013; Steelman & Wolfeld, 2016). Again, to make that happen often requires a consideration of the organisational culture beyond the relationship between coach and coachee. Misiukonis (2011) interviewed four middle managers, all previously trained to coach. He explored with them their propensity to coach and what factors might inhibit coaching. The managers said that direct reports' hesitancy to engage in coaching may not be a symptom of the dyadic relationship with the line manager; it may be a function of the culture of the organisation as a whole.

Traditional theories of OD have operated to a basic premise that the behaviour of an organisation can be changed individual by individual (Werkman, 2010). Most articles written about leadership still focus on the individual, but this approach is conceptually problematic and is now much criticised (Grant & Marshak, 2011; Thurlow & Mills, 2009; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld,

2005; Werkman, 2010). The individualistic perspective overlooks the social and reciprocal nature of relationships between leaders and their team members, and a more relational perspective on leadership suggests that seeking to change the behaviours of leaders across an organisation must be regarded as a social, cultural agenda (Avolio, Wulumba & Weber, 2009; Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2010; Dachler & Hosking, 1995; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007. Ye et al., 2017).

Organisational efforts to encourage widespread adoption of managerial coaching practices are often couched in terms of building a 'coaching culture'. Schein (2017) defines organisational culture as accumulated learning, "*a pattern or system of beliefs, values and behavioral norms that come to be taken for granted as basic assumptions and eventually drop out of awareness.*" (p. 6). In other words, to change a culture is to facilitate a change in subconscious organisational identity (Thurlow & Helms Mills, 2009) and is therefore complex. Many workers appear to over-simplify what is required to achieve this kind of change. For example, approaches based solely on providing managers with coaches and providing skills training, or linear x-step models based on implicit assumptions as to the sovereignty of positional power (e.g. Bock & Conlinn, 2011; Jones & Gorell, 2014; Wilson, 2011). Evidence suggests, perhaps counter-intuitively, that being coached has no impact on the likelihood that a manager will adopt new behaviours to coach themselves. Agarwal et al. (2006) surveyed 328 sales associates, 207 middle managers and 32 executive managers, and found that middle managers who were coached were no more likely to coach their direct reports than middle managers who were not coached. Lawrence (2015) found that senior managers expected to be coached according to their prevailing model of coaching and were likely to withdraw from coaching if their needs were not met. O'Connor and Cavanagh (2014) found a *decline* in perceived quality of interaction between employees and 20 managers being coached in an academic organisational network.

Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005) suggest that coaching culture strategies must be based on at least one core business driver, and should be integrated with other components of the HR strategy, including recruitment, training, reward and recognition. Both Evans (2011) and Jones and Gorell (2014) reiterate the importance of aligning a coaching culture with organisational strategy, and Hawkins (2012) suggests, "*It is foolish to create a coaching strategy without first ensuring there is the requisite strategic foundation upon which to build it*" (p. 33). This analysis suggests that to shift the collective capacity of an organisation's capacity to coach effectively may be best regarded as a culture change program, and that change advocates ought familiarise themselves with contemporary change theory if they are to be successful.

Conclusions and next steps

Managerial coaching is said to have emerged and evolved in response to a transition in responsibility for people development from HR functions to management (Ellinger et al., 2003; Evered & Salman, 1989; Fatien & Otter, 2015; Hagen & Aguilar, 2012; Ladyshevsky, 2010; Liu & Batt, 2010; Misuikonis, 2011) and so it is not surprising that most definitions of managerial coaching emphasise the role of leader in facilitating the development of their direct reports. These definitions are less clear as to the nature of the coaching process, to the extent that some authors suggests there are no substantive differences between managerial coaching and training or performance management. Is it useful to bracket together leaders who spend all their time telling subordinates how to do their jobs better, with leaders who encourage their direct reports to work out for themselves how to perform better, with leaders who seek to facilitate some kind of transformation in the people with whom they work? Such a perspective provides little insight as the specific developmental needs of managerial coaches.

In this paper, it is suggested that there are at least four skills required by the effective managerial coach that may not be required to the same degree by external coaches. First, unlike the external coach, managerial coaches don't always have the opportunity to decide whether or not they wish to work with a direct report. The effective managerial coach therefore must have exceptional relationship building skills. Second, the managerial coach is expected to provide feedback to direct reports on an ongoing basis, whereas external coaches may not feel obliged to offer coachees feedback of their own. Third, the managerial coach must be agile, able to switch back and forth from coaching to other types of conversation in the moment. Finally, the managerial coach must be able to coach teams, an area of coaching many external coaches avoid. Whether these differences between managerial and external coach are qualitatively different or not, it appears reasonable to suggest that i) the task facing the managerial coach may require no less skill than the task facing the external coach, and ii) the managerial coach may have different development needs than the external coach. From this perspective, it doesn't seem useful to regard managerial coaching as a 'cut down' version of external coaching.

As Hagen (2012) suggests, to enhance our understanding of managerial coaching we must invest in further observation and qualitative analysis. By contrast, most recent research has been quantitative, designed to measure the relationship between managerial coaching and particular outcomes. Looking for generic depictions of managerial coaching may not be useful at this stage either. As Beattie et al. (2014) point out, cultural differences, may mean that what is required of the effective managerial coach in the US (where seven of the evidence studies have been conducted) may be different to what is required of the managerial coach in South Korea or Taiwan (where many of the more recent studies have been conducted). It is not only a question of demographics. Most studies conducted thus far have focussed on coaching at the frontline. A few have studied middle management, and hardly any have explored the effective behaviour of senior managers.

Effective coaching is not only a matter of skills. Organisations seeking to enhance the capacity of their managers to coach might also consider other attributes, such as mindset and thinking style. To address managerial mindset without considering how culture encourages the adoption of new mindsets or retention of old mindsets, may not be useful. To facilitate the evolution of new thinking styles will likely also require a more holistic perspective, and the design of interventions that extend beyond the classroom. Designing interventions for external coaches may not require the same focus on mindset, nor are all external coaches obliged to navigate the challenges of working within a complex system to the same extent as are internal employees.

Indeed, how useful is it actually, to focus internal developmental resources on the training of individuals? External coaches, generally, work across different organisations, such that it may make pragmatic sense to focus on individual development. Such approaches may not work so well in the design of internal programmes. Complexity theory encourages us instead to focus on the emergence of outcomes from the relationships between people in an organisation. To develop a 'coaching culture' therefore may require a holistic and systemic intervention, beyond the training of individual leaders to behave differently. Accordingly, the internal interventionist may want to consider, for example, the nature of relationships within an organisation, the extent to which feedback channels are in operation, and the functioning of teams generally, as start-points to building holistic interventions designed to shift collective patterns of behaviour.

Returning to the questions posed at the beginning of this paper, first we asked to what extent is it useful to regard coaching and managerial coaching as essentially the same? The answer would appear to be – not very. Whether it's purely a matter of focus and emphasis, as Beattie et al. (2014) suggest, there are significant differences between managerial coaching and other forms of

coaching, that it is helpful to identify and to act upon. Second, we asked is it generally accepted that the essence of managerial coaching is the facilitation of learning? The answer to this question is possibly yes, but this high-level discourse isn't sufficient to enable us to understand how managers, teams and organisations, can best discharge that responsibility. Third, we asked should we focus our efforts on collective change rather than the development of individuals? To that we would answer that the need to develop individuals may emerge from a more holistic and systemic perspective on the functioning of an organisation, yet many coach skills training programs are imported and implemented without first framing the challenge within the broader perspective. From this perspective we offer the following guidance:

- i. To leaders within organisations, question the skills you are being asked to learn within the context of what you are seeking to achieve within your organisation. Many leaders today work in volatile, ever changing, contexts in which they need to work effectively with individuals and teams. Leaders must be agile and able to contract with others in the moment as to what kind of conversation is going to be most productive.
- ii. To HR/OD professionals, responsible for training and developing managers, understand the objectives of your organisation, and what implications this has for the development of leadership. How is coaching most usefully defined for your organisation, and what skills and mindsets do your leaders require, if they are to be successful? In the design of your interventions, how will you ensure that everyone involved has a shared sense of purpose, and how will you track progress as to the desired impact of your intervention?
- iii. To external coaches and consultants, delivering coach training inside organisations, to what extent have you engaged with the organisation in order to understand what skills and other attributes are required by these leaders? To what extent have you contributed to building an intervention that is likely to achieve its desired outcomes? And to what extent are you clear in your own mind as to the challenge facing these leaders versus the challenges you face as an external coach?

Further research

As Ellinger et al. (2016) suggest, the research base on managerial coaching is in its infancy. As such some of the research areas previously identified by Hagen (2012) and Beattie et al. (2014) remain to be explored. Where this paper differs somewhat in its conclusions, is in suggesting that future research into managerial coaching should come from a more holistic perspective. Seeking to further explore causal links between management behaviours and organisational outcomes, for example, may not be useful. Instead research efforts may more usefully explore the emergence of new behaviours from relationships within the organisational system. This will require positioning research into managerial coaching as a matter of organisational change, leveraging insights from that domain in ways that are not yet evident. Beattie et al. (2014) do encourage practitioners to consider aspects of the broader system, but the system is presented as being quite static. Working from this systemic perspective it is suggested there at least five areas in which further research may prove useful in the short/medium term:

- i. As Hagen (2012) suggested, research is required to further understand what behaviours are demonstrated in the effective managerial coach. Such studies are likely to be qualitative and longitudinal, seeking to understand the relationship between effective managerial coaching and aspects of particular organisational systems in which that coaching takes place.
- ii. Such studies should explore managerial coaching in different contexts within those systems. For example, what behaviours are required of the supervisor working with

- frontline staff, and to what extent do these mirror the behaviours required of the executive working with senior management? How do these behaviours intersect and interact?
- iii. Team coaching is another, so far, under-researched discipline. What are effective managerial coaching behaviours in a team context, and how do these interact with other behaviours across the organisation?
 - iv. Such studies are likely to look beyond skills, to consider mindset and thinking styles. To what extent does the development of organisation coaching behaviours relate to the evolution of culture? To what extent does the development of such behaviours relate to the maturity of leadership as characterised by adult developmental theorists?
 - v. Woo (2017) explored the relationship between managerial coaching and mentoring. From a systemic perspective, it makes sense to explore the relationship between managerial coaching and supervision. Cavanagh (2006) suggests that to coach effectively within a complex responsive system requires supervisory support. If the role of the managerial coach is as challenging as is suggested here, then to what extent are manager's ongoing developmental needs being met?

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