The Development of Coaching as part of a University Leadership Project – a pilot.

A Case Study Approach

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OVERVIEW

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AIM

To analyse and reflect on the impact on individuals of their participation in a coaching and leadership learning programme.

Method (1)

The Kirkpatrick (1959, 1975 & 1994) model aims to measure the impact of training upon an organisation.

The model consists of four levels

- **reaction** of participant – what they thought and felt about the training
- **learning** – the resulting increase in knowledge or capability
- **behaviour** – extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application
- **results** – the effects on the business or environment resulting from the participant's performance.

Method (2)

- Why the Kirkpatrick model?
- Criticism has focused on the implied hierarchy of value attached to the levels with the highest being the impact on organisational performance, as well as the underlying assumption that there is a necessarily a related association between levels (Tamkin, Yarnall and Kerrin, 2002, p.1).

Method (3)

- However, it is still the most popular evaluative model (QIA, 2007, p.2; Bates, 2004, p.341) although it has reportedly been hardly used beyond level 2 (Dyer, 1994, p.1; Eseryel, 2002, p.95).

- A strength of the model is its inherent simplicity (Bates, 2004, p.346).

Method(4) Coaching interviews - process

- 5 interviews took place involving 12 participants who had undergone the coaching training
- Interviews were semi-structured based on Kirkpatrick levels
- Interviews were transcribed
- Transcriptions were thematically analysed

Thematic analysis (1)

- A general inductive analysis approach was employed (Thomas, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994)

- Independent coding followed by joint agreement with 6 categories emerging (see next slide)

Six categories

1. Cross university working
2. Course design
3. Engagement
4. Application of coaching
5. Reflection
6. Outcome

Thematic analysis (2)

- All the transcripts were then coded according to the 6 themes using qualitative data analysis software

- This allowed all the coded text segments to be collated and presented together

- These groups of collated text segments were then themselves thematically analysed for emergent themes

Categories and Emergent Themes(1)

• Cross University Working	• Networking opportunity • Confidentiality
• Course Design	• Participant preparation
• Engagement	• Enjoyment/anxiety

Categories and Emergent Themes(2)

• Application to coaching	• Alternative approach • tools
• Reflections	• On coaching • Personal
• Outcome	• Need to gain something • organisational

Themes and Kirkpatrick levels

The participants' comments from each theme were given a Kirkpatrick level following discussion between two researchers:

- reaction (1)
- learning (2)
- behaviour (3)
- results (4)

There follows some example comments from participants for some of the selected themes.

Category 1: Cross university working (1)

Theme - **Networking opportunity (K1)**

"… it was a really good opportunity to talk to people in a way that you don't normally do, to meet new people and I think we've set up some good networks that we can still use now."

Category 2: Course design (1)

Theme - **Action Learning Sets (K2)**

"I think the main thing there was the chance to practice in a safe environment with trusted colleagues, so it was a nice interim stage between going out to practice coaching without any support and practicing coaching in a supportive environment."

"I didn't find the action learning sets particularly helpful, I thought they were quite, it felt for me they were very contrived and therefore I wasn't very comfortable in that situation."

Category 2: Course design (2)

Theme – **Balance (K2)**

"I think it was the practical side that was the most useful, the theory was fine but a lot of that could have been read in advance and indeed I think you adjusted the papers that you presented to us in the second group, but some of the theory could have been included in the papers and it was the practical session, watching people coaching each other, picking up on the techniques and having a crack at it yourself was the most useful part."

Category 3: Engagement (1)

- Theme – **Enjoyment / anxiety (K1)**

"And in a masochistic way, quite enjoyed the exercises afterwards but I didn't enjoy the thought of them!"

"Yeah, I did enjoy it, I enjoyed it for a number of reasons, I always enjoy things like that anyway, I like engaging in things which are real learning events, both in terms of making you reflect personally on your own skills and how you do things and the assumptions which are made … "

Category 3: Engagement (2)

- Theme – **Practical application (K2)**

"… reading the theory, you don't really get much from it until you've actually had a go at it, so for example one of the issues that I read about was the conflict between the coach and the line manager and you read this, you think 'fairly straightforward', but I don't think you really appreciate it until you actually have a go and having performed some coaching with people I'm the line manager for, I can now appreciate it deeper …"

Category 4: Application of coaching (1)

Theme – **Alternative approach (K1)**

"I think it's a matter of making you aware of another approach that you can take … you do sometimes sit back and deliberately think, 'I wonder whether I could try this'"

Category 4: Application of coaching (2)

Theme – **Examples (K3)**

"… once it's part of your mindset, you do tend to use it elsewhere, I certainly use it with my peers on the senior management team …"

Category 5: Reflection (1)

Theme – **Personal reflective capability (K2)**

"To me personally I think it's helped me become more reflective and it's helped me get to a deeper level of problem solving really in a way, in a structured way as opposed to perhaps a more haphazard way in the past, it's given me a kind of framework which I think is particularly useful."

"I think I learned things about myself, effectiveness, learned things about what I'm good at, what I'm not so good at …"

Category 5: Reflection (2)

Theme – **Reflections on coaching (K3)**

"… we now see course leadership as not course management, as not just a group of things that people will tick but actually a way of developing a member of staff and giving them the responsibility and the ownership to look after a course."

"… it's been really valuable in (my work) situation, because very often there isn't a solution, other than the one that this person wants to pursue and actually the coaching approach to that is really valuable."

Category 6: Outcome (1)

Theme – **Personal K2 - 3**

where people ….come out of it with new understanding or with some learning points that you can feel you've achieved something. But I feel it has to be some formal programme, I think if you asked people to go away and develop it themselves in anyway, I think it will just fall off the table at some point and will be forgotten, which I think would be a shame.

Category 6: Outcome (2)

Theme – **Organisational (K$\rightarrow$4)**

"… coaching is giving people a tool kit but there are other parts that need to be operationalised for there to be significant organisational change."

Kirkpatrick (indicative) level summary

Category	K1	K2	K3	K4
Cross Uni. Working	2	1	0	1
Course design	7	4	0	0
Engagement	8	2	0	0
Application of coaching	5	2	2	0
Reflection	2	2	1	0
Outcome	4	0	1	→2

Critique and the Future

- Reconsider participant sampling
- Maintain the continual reflection as an integral part
- Revisit the research methodology and associated methods
- Design the research process as part of the learning programme.

References

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