Introduction

The concept of coaching has taken on a fad-like status in recent years, probably due to the familiarity we have with it in the sporting environment. This familiarity has also probably spawned the many initiatives that we have made to include coaching in both leadership and personal development settings. A visit to a local bookshop will show how the books on coaching have proliferated over the last few years due to the great demand for something on coaching. One can even buy a handbook for prospective coaches titled *Coaching and Mentoring for Dummies* (Brounstein, 2000), so coaching is out there for everyone!

Interestingly, the expectations surrounding its value far outweigh its results, with no commonly accepted definition and little research in educational leadership done on its efficacy. The books are resplendent with claims about personal growth and transformation, improved personal quality of life, spiritual renewal and heightened self-confidence, simply delivered with the help of a devoted coach. But there is precious little on the results attributed to coaching (Bacon and Spear, 2003).

Leading the charge are many sporting books where coaches are ready to offer words of wisdom and advice, drawn from the fields of sporting endeavours, to those willing to listen. But as Bacon and Spear (2003, p. xv) suggest, "these books offer little beyond the standard platitudes about leadership and motivation". They reduce coaching to mere cheerleading and the coach to a dynamic dispenser of various pearls of wisdom. Moreover, they misplace the responsibility of successful coaching interventions. They tend to portray coaching from a simplistic viewpoint, in that people being coached change simply by virtue of following a coach. They accept the coach's direction because it is assumed that the coach knows best, and people bear no responsibility for their own development. These claims become staggering oversimplifications. This book provides a serious attempt to clarify the nature and application of coaching in various contexts and structures to promote professional learning and growth.

This book has been designed with several purposes in mind. First, it is intended as a resource for helping leaders and teachers develop a culture of coaching in their own schools. It is not intended as a prescriptive way to coach, but as a resource guide for those who want to involve specific groups of leaders, teams and individual teachers wishing to engage in and help improve teaching and learning within the school. Second, the book provides a conceptual way of envisaging coaching and what it is, and how it can contribute to school life and improvement.

This book is an attempt to help those interested in using coaching to develop a sound approach based on research and models of good practice.

In **Chapter 1**, the focus is on helping the reader understand the concept of coaching by providing a clear picture and definition of what coaching is and is not. The subsequent chapters in this book provide examples of how coaching as a form of professional learning can be applied to different contexts.

Chapter 2 describes how coaching can be used for leadership development, and how it has been applied in that context.

Chapter 3 focuses on team coaching.

Chapter 4 focuses on individual teacher instructional coaching for classroom improvement.

Chapter 5 contains a vast storehouse of coaching ideas that can be readily applied by coaches as they develop their coaching partnerships. It is awash with practical ways that can build the repertoire of coaching skills and make the coach more effective.

What is coaching as we see it in this book?

Coaching is not new. In fact, it has existed in many forms throughout the ages. However although it has maintained its focus on helping others, we must establish, from the outset, that we do not see coaching as a form of snake-oil therapy, nor a caustic treatment to be applied where something is done to somebody. It is certainly not just applying sports coaching models to the realm of education. Coaching in education takes on a special role and needs to be recognised. As Whitmore (1992) suggests, it is about "unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn, rather than teaching them".

In our research with school leaders and teams, and working with school coaches and teachers (Barnett, O'Mahony & Matthews, 2004), we have been able

Chapter 1

Why coaching?

"I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think."

– Socrates

Why use coaching?

The main push underlying coaching in the school workplace

While we are all familiar with using sporting coaching models, and because we see them saturated in the media, we tend to think it natural to extend these models into the organisations in which we work, as well as our personal lives. But, nevertheless, we fail to realise the essence of any coaching is not about using models, but essentially begins with helping people develop and empower themselves through their own learning. Coaching has certainly become the latest fad to capture the minds and hearts in education as some form of panacea to help change others. It has also been simply cast as the new work-related intervention for reshaping and building leadership capacity (Zeus & Skiffington, 2003).

Before we proceed we need to distinguish between coaching and mentoring, two processes that are often confused. By and large, the major differences are in the focus over time. Coaching is normally over a shorter timeframe and skill-oriented, while mentoring is focused more on career development. Some other differences are included in the table below, adapted from Zeus and Skiffington (2000).

Coaching	Mentoring
• Needs well-developed interpersonal skills • Both shorten the learning curve • Focused on the individual • Provides support without removing responsibility • Both are role models	Mentoring invents a future based on the wisdom of another. Coaching invents a future from the individual's possibilities. • Mentors are recognised experts in their field • Mentoring is more career-focused • Mentors are usually experienced managers • Mentors have power and influence in the organisation • Mentors recognise the organisation's values and culture.

Chapter 2

Coaching to build leadership capacity

Purpose

If it takes strong direction and moral purpose to develop leaders, then professional learning needs to be aligned and focused on learning-centred leadership and personalised development (Southworth, 2002). Pre-packaged leadership development programs are unlikely to help create the types of leaders necessary for effective school leadership for future schools (Gronn, 2002). Account must be taken both of the context and culture in which leadership is taking place, so that emphasis on workplace professional learning and application are required. This is where coaching comes to the fore.

Robertson (2005) argues that there has been a greater emphasis and growth on initiatives to support leadership, such as developing professional learning teams and communities (Stoll & Louis, 2006), coaching and mentoring (Barnett, O'Mahony & Matthews, 2004), peer-assisted leadership (e.g. Barnett, 1987; Barnett, 2001), problem-based learning (Hallinger & Bridges, 1997) and action research communities. All of the above approaches focus on building individual capacity and personal learning within the context of a culture of trust (Harris & Lambert, 2003). This helps in the inculcation of a greater belief in developing informed professional judgment, intuition and wisdom as leaders (Barber, 2002).

We would argue that coaching is deeply embedded within some existing communities of practice, and the above initiatives are indicative of a common community of purpose and a community of commitment to honour coaching as a support for change (Collison & Parcell, 2004). In the communities of practice, coaches and coachees together build a relationship to discuss and examine aspects of their common leadership practices. They are both stewards of knowledge, and come together to discuss practical ways that this common knowledge can be jointly developed for the benefit of the coachee. The community of commitment, while shared with the coachee, becomes the domain of the coach so as to ensure that there is a clear result and envisaged goal that is collectively developed and

Chapter 5

Tools for coaching

The essence of this chapter will be to offer a framework and a series of practical approaches for school coaches to implement an effective role. The first section examines how the role can be envisaged as a coach and then the start-up techniques in developing a relationship with teachers. The final sections focus on profiling techniques and tools for using through the stages of the coaching relationship. The chapter emphasises what the coach who is passionate about coaching brings to a coaching relationship, while adding recognisable value to the life of a teacher as a skilful helper and wise counsel.

1. The role of the coach is to become reflective

The specific nature of the requirements for the coach's role for leadership, teams and teacher coaching have been delineated in each of the earlier chapters of this book. Most definitions of the role of the coach often centre on the qualities of the person (supportive; challenging, genuine or open) as it involves dealing with the coachees as a whole person, their attitudes, experiences, motivation, skills and outlook. Good coaches naturally need to be self aware and to understand how personally and professionally they might impact upon others. The guiding principles for the role of the coach therefore lie within how the coach and coachee define the role and the purpose for coaching (Robertson, 2005).

The following sections provide some activities for the coach to engage in when considering and developing their coaching role (O'Mahony & Barnett, 2006; Barnett & O'Mahony, 2008).