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# The International Journal of Management Education

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/ijme](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/ijme)

## Developing management effectiveness: The nexus between teaching and coaching

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

Business schools  
 Management effectiveness  
 Management development  
 Executive education  
 Adult learning  
 Coaching  
 Teaching

### ABSTRACT

As a contribution to the evolving debate about the future of business schools, we explore the complementary value of teaching and coaching in executive education to offer a more holistic individualised learning experience. Beginning in each case with teaching, some enriching differences are: focus on knowing at a macro-level *versus* doing at a micro-level; pre-determined context-free knowledge *versus* self-determined context-specific knowledge; impersonal access to many subject experts *versus* personal access to one process professional; directly taking people out of themselves *versus* nondirectively taking people into themselves; critical feedback centred on normative reference points *versus* supportive feedback centred on personalised, formative reference points. The differences reveal limitations in each approach that the other can address. We propose that the greatest benefit for adult learning and management performance can be found at the nexus of the two approaches, when teachers and coaches integrate the qualities of both approaches. This entails not just appreciating some value in the other, but actually incorporating insights and methods from the other approach into their practice.

### 1. Introduction

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world –

Nelson Mandela, 2003

*“The student was pondering his dilemma on his way to campus. He listened attentively in class but found it difficult to actually apply the models and frameworks practically at work. He felt that his situation was unique and believed that he had limited influence to change things ...”*

Business schools hear this complaint regularly from both students on the MBA and delegates on Executive Education programmes. In this paper the authors draw on literature and their experience in several business schools to explore the respective strengths and contributions of teaching and coaching on executive education in company specific or customised programmes and open programmes for specific levels of management. Teaching in this paper refers mainly to traditional class-room based lecturing to transfer knowledge, as captured by Goldstein's classic research on learning (Goldstein, 1980) and in the review of Tannenbaum and Yukl (1992). Coaching refers to facilitated discussions, individually or in groups with business executives, that is holistically focused on transformative learning – a shift in thinking, feeling and action (Kitchenham, 2008).

The comparison of teaching and coaching and illustration of how they could create a complementary and individualised learning

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2019.100334>

Received 21 October 2018; Received in revised form 29 August 2019; Accepted 23 October 2019

Available online 26 November 2019

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experience, intends to be of value to teachers, coaches, those who design executive education programmes and companies that make use of them. Including coaching in the design of the executive development journey, admittedly increases the cost of the overall programme slightly, however an enhanced and lasting impact on the customer/delegate experience is seen by many companies to outweigh the investment. The schools to which the authors are affiliated have seen a rapid increase in the demand for coaching by companies contracting for executive development programmes. There is both a practical context and a theoretical foundation from a particular body of knowledge that shapes this article.

The area of practice that the article is concerned with is management education as delivered in business schools and in particular executive education. The article is concerned with management education, since the authors are all associated with business schools, and business schools operate in the context of business that requires sound judgment (Christensen & Garvin, 1991), from an integration of theory and practice, towards practical application. Kolb, Fröhlich and Schmidpeter (2017) describe business schools as the link between knowledge generation and knowledge transfer into businesses and society. Business schools have therefore a particular approach to teaching due to complex, integrative and application-based learning objectives (Salas, Wildman, & Piccolo, 2008), that lends itself to the theme of this article, and many business schools draw on the use of coaches. Theoretical insights are drawn from the field of adult learning, executive coaching and theories of education. We will begin by describing management education in business schools and discussing adult learning as it relates specifically to teaching and coaching.

## 2. Teaching and coaching in business schools

### 2.1. Business schools

The main purpose of business schools has been to enable their students to develop the competencies required to become business leaders who practise their skills in the business world and contribute to their organisations (Abraham & Karns, 2009; Benjamin & O'Reilly, 2011; Starkey & Tempest, 2008), and therefore business schools have to adapt to global challenges (Kolb, Fröhlich, & Schmidpeter, 2017). Garvin (2007) suggests that MBA programmes have three primary goals: providing students with a broad base of business understanding, developing students' management and leadership skills, and improving students' job and career prospects.

Executive education, the primary focus of this discussion, shares with the MBA the aims described above, but is differentiated from MBA's in that the traditional MBA model assumes that the teaching focus is on knowledge and that students are focused on achieving a qualification that will help them enhance their career prospects, whereas participants in executive education have a different interest – they are adults with experience, who are interested in the immediate application of learning to their careers and managing and leading effectively. They are less concerned with the pursuit of credentials (Garvin, 2007). Engagement in the MBA can be driven through grades, whereas this does not work with the senior managers attending executive education programmes.

Starkey and Tempest (2008) suggested that business schools, as professional schools, should train individuals to practise management as a profession and, based on knowledge acquired from business and social sciences, develop new and relevant knowledge aimed at improving business operations. The current paper advocates that more than knowledge is required of professional managers and thus learning outcomes must be multidimensional. In this regard, Muff (2016, p. 147) contends that “entrepreneurial business schools are custodians of society” [and therefore] a “whole-person learning pedagogy” is required. Already in the 80s, education scholars like Goldstein (1980) defined education broadly as the systematic acquisition of attitudes, concepts, knowledge, rules, or skills that should result in improved performance. Kraiger, Ford, and Salas (1993) also advocated that affective and skill capacities should be added to changes in cognitive capacities as evidence of learning. The notion of adding affective and skill capacities was based on the earlier taxonomies of Bloom (1956) and Gagne (1984), who reinforced the need for attitudinal learning outcomes. Unfortunately, the classic learning evaluation typology of Kirkpatrick (1976) has ignored affective based measures as indicators of learning, instead he emphasised perceptions around education's usefulness. Students' motivation to master their newly acquired knowledge and skills were neglected.

In fact, a criticism levelled at business schools has been that they do not teach relevant skills for the business environment (Abraham & Karns, 2009; Bruce, 2010; Dyllick, 2015). Missing skills include interpersonal skills or so-called “soft skills” (Mamabolo, 2018) and a critical consciousness towards ethical behaviour (Jagger & Volksman, 2014), managing human capital, creativity and innovation (Bruce, 2010; Colby, Ehrlich, Sullivan, & Dolle, 2011). Business schools are criticized for not being responsible and are even blamed for preparing executives in a way that led to some of the recent corporate scandals (Bendell, 2007). In addition, students' abilities to think in a critical, creative and integrative manner are said to be limited because the teaching focuses too much on analytics and single, small problems that are limited in scope, the result of the narrow focus of faculty publishing research papers that are technically competent, but not related to management practice (Somers, Passerini, Parhankangas, & Casal, 2014; Starkey & Tempest, 2008).

In their critical review of business schools, Datar, Garvin, and Cullen (2010) argue that whereas the majority of MBA programmes have focused almost exclusively on a cognitive curriculum, good programmes should cover “doing” and “being” as well as “knowing”. “Knowing” refers to the content of the curriculum; “doing” refers to skills, capabilities and techniques, and “being” to the development of the managers' identities and worldviews (Rousseau, 2012). Most business schools now understand that “doing” is a key part of management development, but “being” (the manager's identity) has not received the attention it deserves. As Warren Bennis (1989: 38) put it, ‘A person does not gather learnings as possessions but rather becomes a new person with those learnings as part of his or her new self’.

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2001) illustrate this point well with the example of Juan, a senior manager who needed to be more empathic. Juan had read the books and attended the seminars, yet he complained that this did not make him more empathic. At

this point he undoubtedly *knew* what empathy was, but this had not translated into behaviour. So he wisely chose to volunteer for a crisis centre to help him practise more empathy. This experience of *doing* led to his change in *being* and by extension his identity of himself as a caring and empathic person. His being empathic came from doing empathy. As [Pascale and Athos \(1982\)](#) claim, good doing leads to good being. This is particularly important in executive education, since executive education deals with managers in transition to senior executive positions, where issues of identity emerge. These transitions entail shifts in values ([Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2001](#)). Changing roles or careers require managers to change themselves. This is not about switching one identity for another but a process of reconfiguring the set of identity possibilities and of growth through unlearning and re-learning key insights about the world and themselves ([Ibarra, 2004](#)). This is therefore a process of growth and development of effectiveness through the unfolding identity of the leader ([Barbulescu & Ibarra, 2008](#); [Ibarra, 2004, 2004](#); [Ibarra, Snook, & Ramo, 2010](#); [Verplanken, Trafimow, Khusid, Holland, & Steentjes, 2009](#)). The self is a social construct built up through interactions with others ([Ibarra et al., 2010](#); [Petriglieri, 2011](#); [Verplanken et al., 2009](#)), so the 'others' that a manager engages with become a key part of this identity unfolding. The interaction with participants in the executive education class room provides just this opportunity to interact with senior and experienced others, who provide the additional value of a benchmark for the participant to calibrate his/her identity.

Are business schools too academic? Criticisms nearly sixty years ago (e.g. [Gordon & Howell, 1959](#)) that business schools were not rigorous enough academically were followed by decades of increasing academic rigor but also increasing distance from the field of practice and reduced emphasis on non-analytic aspects of business management. The study by [Porter and McKibbin \(1988: 64–65\)](#) pointed out that this correction had swung the focus away from business practice and people.

[Datar et al. \(2010: 7\)](#) summarized their conclusion from studying a number of leading business schools as follows:

“The core of our conclusion is that business schools need to do two things if they are to develop effective leaders and entrepreneurs, as opposed to individuals trained primarily in analysis: reassess the facts, frameworks, and theories that they teach (the “knowing” component), while at the same time rebalancing their curricula so that more attention is paid to developing the skills, capabilities, and techniques that lie at the heart of the practice of management (the “doing” component) and the values, attitudes, and beliefs that form managers' worldviews and professional identities (the “being” component).

In [Fig. 1](#) this history of business schools is oversimplified into three eras.

From the initial formation of business schools in the USA in the two decades before 1900 until about 1960, business education focused on the practice of the student as a manager. The critique represented by [Gordon and Howell \(1959\)](#) led to a pivot towards greater academic rigor over the next forty years. Then [Porter and McKibbin \(1988\)](#) suggested that this pendulum had swung too far. It takes time to change the momentum of as massive an enterprise as the global business school community, but 2010 is an arbitrary but convenient date when the pendulum might have reached its furthest point, with an increasing number of books calling for change in business schools (such as [Datar et al., 2010](#)) and journal articles calling for business school research to move beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries (e.g. [Muff, 2013; 2017](#)).

Business schools' accreditation bodies, the Association of MBAs Association (AMBA); Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), explicitly require integrated teaching, including cross-disciplinary delivery of course material and assessments.

In addition, the United Nations (UN) Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) require of their signatories, including South African business schools, commitment to sustainability. That is, incorporating into academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact ([Forray &](#)

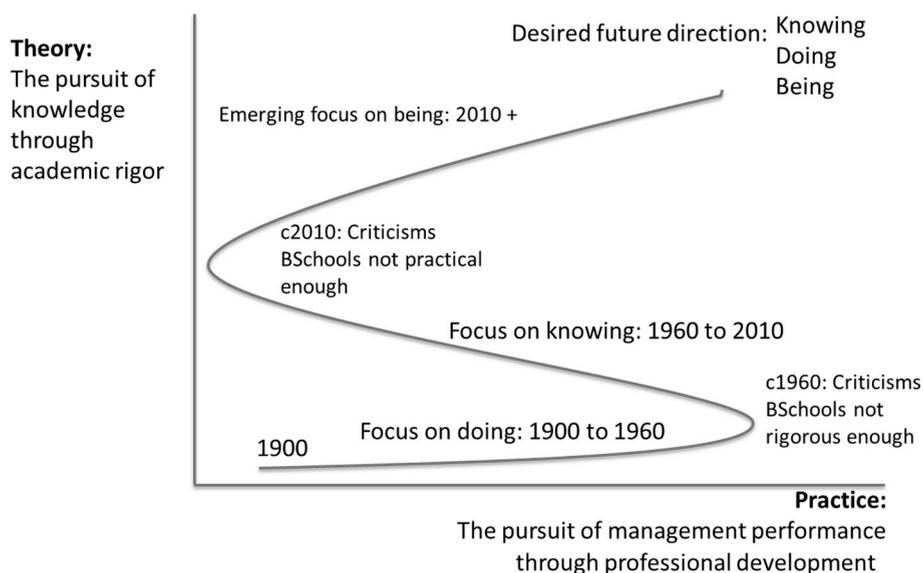


Fig. 1. Three eras in the evolution of business schools.

Leigh, 2012; Forray, Leigh, & Kenworthy, 2015). It requires the purposeful development of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large. For business schools to focus only on knowing will thus not be adequate to meet these future needs of an inclusive sustainable global economy. Editors of a special issue in *The International Journal of Management Education* dedicated to PRME, referred for example, to our “agency [in business schools] to facilitate the mindsets, commitments and potential behaviours of scores of organizational leaders for decades to come” (Parkes, Buono, & Howaidy, 2017: 64).

The third era thus lies ahead. The question is whether it will remain in the academic quadrant, regress to the practical, but academically light quadrant, abandoned in the 1950s, or move forward to the ideal of academic rigor supporting optimal management performance, with students emerging with interpersonal, ethical and critical thinking skills. Fig. 1 introduces the third dimension of Being to these two of Knowing and Doing, to suggest that as business schools address both Knowing and Doing fully, they should also focus on Being.

## 2.2. Educational philosophies underlying instructional methodologies

Ardalan (2006) explains that foundational philosophies or worldviews underlie educational philosophies and in turn, favour particular instructional methodologies. Drawing on four paradigms identified by Burrell & Morgan (1979), he demonstrates this by illustrating how those teachers who prefer to lecture differ in their philosophical underpinnings from those who prefer to teach using discussion based on cases. In this regard Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) classic contribution highlights the basic questions on the nature of society that underlie the various philosophies of education, including the ontological assumption about whether reality exists external to, or is a product of, individual consciousness; and the epistemological assumption about how knowledge can be obtained through study or have to be experienced. Together, the ontological and epistemological assumptions make up the paradigm or worldview (Lindsay, 2010).

In Ardalan’s (2006) analysis, the functionalist paradigm assumes for example, an objective value-free social science that offers rational explanations of social affairs, rooted in the positivism tradition of the philosopher, Auguste Comte (Lindsay, 2010), as assumed in the physical sciences.

In contrast, the interpretive paradigm assumes that social reality is based on the subjective interpretations of individuals, as described by the philosophy of phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger (Lindsay, 2010). As a result, human values affect the process of scientific enquiry and science can only be understood within a specific context.

Based on the two worldviews described above, Ardalan (2006; 2008) offers corresponding educational philosophies. For example, realism promotes the scientific method and knowing the world through facts, and this approach to education is primarily technical and leads to specialisation. Realism supports the lecture methodology as an efficient, orderly way to gain dependable knowledge from an organised teacher as role model.

In contrast, pragmatism seeks out the processes which work best to achieve desirable ends. Both process and content are thus important. The focus is on education towards proper mental and moral attitudes to tackle contemporary problems. Educators should thus focus on the cognitive, physical and emotional aspects of learning.

For the realist, the teacher is a guide who introduces the student to the real objective world through lectures, whereas the pragmatist perceives truth as relative and phenomena as complex. In cases where learning objectives include integration of theory and practice, development of understanding, problem-solving, critical thinking and judgment, the latter discussion-based pedagogy offers significant benefits (Ardalan, 2008). The current paper proposes coaching as a form of discussion pedagogy that enables subjective interpretation of knowledge. As such, coaching supports a pragmatic educational approach.

Ardalan’s (2006) analysis shows quite clearly that case teachers belong to a large extent on the side we will associate in this article with coaching rather than teaching. Many teachers, including the authors, would believe that much of what they seek to do in the class room is already based on assumptions that we associate with coaching. We applaud that. It is precisely the intention of this article to draw the attention of teachers to the value offered by the assumptions underlying coaching, and vice versa. If we offend those teachers who are already aware of this and those coaches who already understand the limitations offered by coaching, we apologise and hope they will allow us to use these two words as ideal types describing ends of a continuum we hope most practitioners transcend. We do so to reveal useful insights and describe an integrated approach whereby the designers of executive education curricula and processes may draw on both teachers and coaches to provide a full learning experience, and whereby both teachers and coaches can develop a degree of awareness that would make them willing and effective participants in such an integrated approach.

Next we turn to a discussion on how teaching and coaching historically align with adult learning theory and then we will come back to their application in business school programmes for improved learning experiences and ultimately management effectiveness.

## 2.3. Adult learning

In this section, some core principles of adult learning are defined, with particular reference to teaching and coaching. In doing so we shall draw on three learning models that have been important in the emerging understanding of adult learning, namely Knowles (1973); Kolb (1984) and Mezirow (1991). Lastly we expand on the conditions for enabling optimal learning in business school executive education programmes.

Adult learning is self-directed, voluntary, experiential and problem-based (Cranton, 2005). Knowles was the first to use the term andragogy to refer to the learning process of adults (Knowles, 1973). While the learning field has advanced since Knowles’ set of assumptions and they were met with criticism from some scholars, they are still regarded as ‘a set of well-grounded principles of good

practice' (Brookfield, 1986: 98). Knowles (1973) represented andragogy in adult learning by six principles, that help to highlight the respective contributions of teaching and coaching.

Knowles (1973) pointed out that adult learners need to perceive what they learn as useful, and therefore that adults must be engaged as partners, seeking validation that the time they are investing will yield returns that they want. In this regard, teaching can help students identify what they do not know, while coaching helps students focus on what they know they need to learn in order to perform effectively. For example, a student reported after a group-coaching session that, "*The coaching has made me openly acknowledge my areas of weakness and request assistance from the team without judgement.*" (2016 MBA Group Coaching).

Knowles (1973) argues that adults prefer self-directed learning over being told what to learn. In that sense, coaching clearly comes closer to what Knowles intended than does the pre-determined curriculum offered by teaching. But if we understand this also to have a formative aspect, then teaching helps to expand the possibilities in students' identities and exposes them to new social identities. Conversely, coaching helps students choose from possible identities and helps these to emerge.

Knowles (1973) notes that prior experience can be both a platform for, and a gatekeeper of, further learning. While experience is clearly more evident in coaching and experiential learning, the skilled case teacher uses the case as a shared set of surrogate experiences to enable the class to discuss practice in a shared context, and then helps the students to relate this to their own experiences. Teaching can be enriched by introducing elements of experience through the use of cases, guided class and small group discussion, personal reflection, assignments and exercises (Ardalan, 2008).

According to Knowles (1973), readiness to learn naturally precedes the decision to seek either teaching or coaching. But once the decision is made, business schools can help stimulate readiness in participants through teaching in a way that reveals what others have done, and through coaching in a way that reveals the participant's own potential and links it to the participant's current life stage and opportunities. The importance of inner sources of motivation rather than external rewards applies to both teaching and coaching. In executive education the control of participant behaviour through external means such as grades and qualifications is much less powerful than is the case for degree programmes, encouraging teachers to turn to ways to stimulate participants to discover the intrinsic interest and value of what they are learning to know, do and be. When it comes to coaching, those designing the programme need to ensure that participants realise the value of coaching, rather than seeing it as a distraction from what they perceive to be the main purpose of attending a business school.

This principle of self-direction within the process model of andragogy clearly supports the practice of coaching as an effective mechanism of learning.

Kolb's learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) provides another useful guide to the design of executive education as it deals comprehensively with both thinking and doing as well as the integration of learning aspect. This is recognised by business schools in the use of action learning. Students on executive education programmes come into the business school with their concrete experience. They gain knowledge through their own experience and filter their world view through their experience. In teaching, case studies provide a shared experience that a skilled teacher can use to generate conversation that links knowledge to the participants' experience through shared reflection. Similarly, through reflecting on concrete experience in the coaching environment, these students can transform experience into useable knowledge. Some of them prefer to step into the experience itself, others prefer to watch, reflect and review, some like to conceptualise, hypothesise and theorise, others like to experiment with doing something new (Stout-Rostron, 2014). While students will have a preference of one or two, they would all integrate all four learning modes, namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation.

Both teaching and coaching should cover the full cycle, but within the whole learning experience, teaching would be strongest in abstract conceptualisation, while coaching would be strongest in reflective observation. Both need to ensure that the participants then go on to experiment actively with their new insights and design opportunities for them to receive feedback on the outcome. Various scholars in the coaching fraternity, confirmed this aspect of critical reflection as an essential element of coaching (For example, the student in the opening vignette of this discussion paper found it difficult to learn through merely hearing about models and frameworks in class. He had to integrate the learning and apply the models practically, which he could have done through a method like action learning. Action learning was originally created by Revans (Yeo & Marquardt, 2015), to enable students to learn by working in groups to solve a real life business problem. The student's learning would thus have been further enhanced, if he could **experience** real life application of the learning, and then also afterwards, **reflect** on it, through coaching discussions, either individually or in group coaching, where he would have learned about his peers' application of the content. Coaching could therefore assist in personalising the learning to his own unique circumstances. The vignette further illustrated the student's assumptions or frame of mind or paradigm regarding his lack of influence in his milieu. Shifting this mindset or world view could further be achieved through coaching, in transformative learning, as the next section illustrates:

A discussion on adult learning would indeed be incomplete without mentioning the seminal work of Mezirow. Mezirow's transformative learning theory (1991; 1994) emphasises the ability of adults to examine the assumptions they hold critically and then reframe them in order to have a more inclusive and less dysfunctional world view. By acknowledging the relative viewpoints on reality, transformative learning is positioned on the subjective side of the continuum and supports the pragmatic educational philosophy. Coaching offers business executives thus the opportunity to examine their assumptions in a safe learning climate (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014) through rational discourse, while questioning beliefs and perspectives to become more open (Cranton, 2005). As a process well suited to adult transformative learning, coaching has particular contributions to make to management effectiveness.

The transformative learning theory of Mezirow was influenced by Paulo Freire (1972), who describes the empowerment of the student to learn critical reasoning through problem-posing education. Business executives have to develop their power to perceive the way they exist in the world critically and come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in the process of transformation.

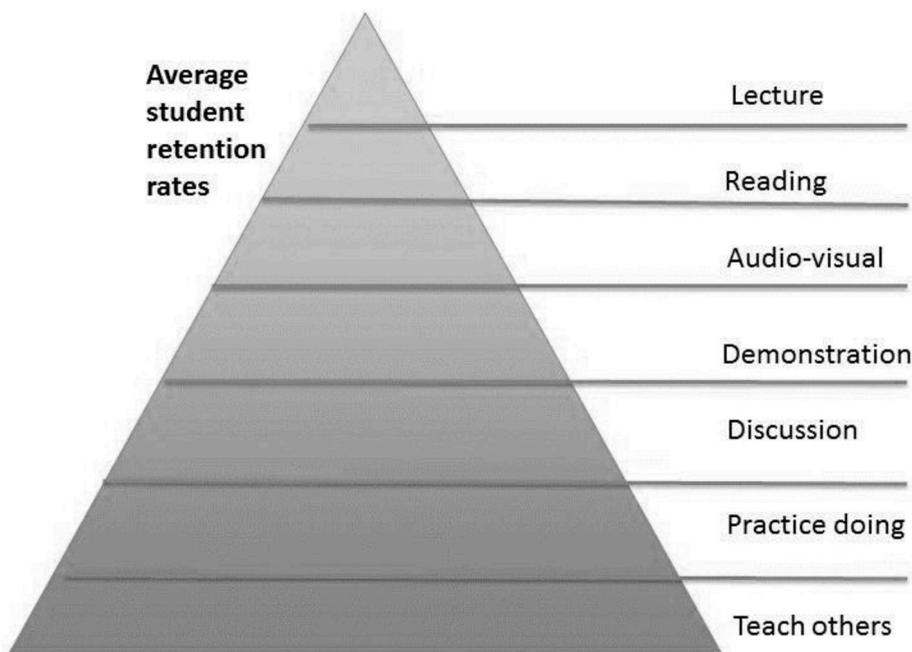


Fig. 2. The learning pyramid (adapted from Letrud, 2012).

Critical reflection on problematic taken-for-granted assumptions lead therefore to perspective transformation. Reflection is the “process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 104). Coaching conversations offer the opportunity to surface underlying assumptions in order to assess them critically to form new world views. In the classroom, case-based discussions can also offer the opportunity to critically reflect on underlying assumptions.

The complementary nexus between classroom-based management education and coaching is, however, most strongly reinforced by studies conducted by the National Training Laboratories (NTL) in Bethel, Maine, US in the late 1980's. The NTL studies empirically revealed the notion of a learning pyramid, in that learning is retained at graduated stages of learning interventions (Letrud, 2012).

Coaching, as a learning intervention for adults, would fall within the learning stage of ‘discussion’, as would discussion-based teaching, in which it is shown that at least 50% more knowledge is retained than through traditional lecturing. See Fig. 2 below:

It is clear that the pyramid could also represent the increasing degree of emotional engagement of the learners towards the base of the pyramid.

The emphasis on discussion, practice and feedback in all the models described above suggests that learning happens best in a community (Richter, 1998). Class mates can be role models, idea-givers, challengers, providers of feedback and encouragers (Ibarra et al., 2010; Verplanken et al., 2009). For example, young managers exposed to the grit, determination and late night work of a study companion might discover reserves of energy and discipline in themselves that they never realised were possible or desirable. So learning that makes the real difference might often happen at the level of implicit rather than explicit knowledge, expressed in moments of unconscious competence, when an appropriate action or word emerges without managers paying explicit attention to the new capability they are expressing.

#### 2.4. Teaching at business schools

Business schools often use the case method to encourage a participant-centred approach, in which the essence is guided discussion to enhance the ability to apply knowledge. In that sense, teaching at its best in a business school is facilitated learning rather than instructor-centred teaching. Hence the standard design of the business school class room is a tiered semi-circle so that all participants can see and hear all other participants. The case teacher poses a dilemma embedded in a real context for the class to solve on behalf of the case protagonist (with whom the class is encouraged to identify), in order to teach the skills of decision-making. Knowledge is thus always embedded in terms of the human factors involved. Carefully prepared questions guide the discussion into areas the class needs to explore (Harvard Business School, Christensen Centre for Teaching and Learning, undated). The discussion appears to be spontaneous, but follows a teaching plan prepared to lead to insights the instructor believes to be important. This carefully orchestrated debate is a feature of business school learning that could not easily be created in other settings.

The process teaches people to express and defend their points of view and listen to learn. So business schools want participants wherever possible to learn in a group in which they can discuss their insights and questions, debate points of view, encourage each other, challenge each other's conclusions, and provide feedback on each other's attempts to be a better manager. Done well, this could

supply some of the value provided by coaching. It requires paying attention to both the setting for learning (in a group where each can hear and address each other) and the process (designing events that stimulate sharing, asking, debating, encouraging, challenging and giving feedback). Each of these is important.

### 2.5. Coaching

While teaching, in the traditional sense, is about imparting knowledge or skills to groups of people, coaching is a learning process customised to the individual (Cheetham & Chivers, 2001; ICF, 2011; Rock & Page, 2009; Stout-Rostron, 2006; Whitworth, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 1998). Historically, individual coaching has its roots in the same theories of adult learning and psychology that gave rise to teaching and facilitation approaches (Rock & Page, 2009), but it was also shaped by new ways of thinking about human growth and development.

Coaching is about using listening, dialogue, trust and the coaching relationship itself as tools for change (Baron & Morin, 2009; Stout-Rostron, 2006; Whitworth et al., 1998). Recent research of Grant and Gerrard (2019) found that solution-focused coaching questions mitigated the negative impact of dysfunctional attitudes. Coaching has intensely personal meaning, based on self-knowledge, self-learning and self-creation (Griffiths & Campbell, 2009; Rock & Page, 2009; Stout-Rostron, 2006; Whitworth et al., 1998). For example, a student reported feedback after a group coaching session, *“After the session I felt different. I was never exposed like that before (in a very good way). It has helped me to talk more about my feelings and not let the past voice dictate my future”*; as well as a manager on an Executive Education Programme, *“Slightly scary in a way, but a great exercise. Helped me see the changes I need to make”*. Coaching focuses on the existential and ‘being level’ of an individual (Griffiths & Campbell, 2009; Rock & Page, 2009; Stout-Rostron, 2006; Whitworth et al., 1998) with a forward-moving and future-focused orientation (Stout-Rostron, 2006; Whitworth et al., 1998). A manager on an Executive Education Programme for example reported, *“Though very emotional, it was a great experience unlocking the real me and realising the painful truth of personal weaknesses. However, a great stepping stone for change.”*

Coaching is therefore at its core about adult learning because it's about creating greater capacities and abilities, including sense-making and meaning-making, and is individually and socially transformative (Knowles, 1970; Rock & Page, 2009), as illustrated by this quote from a manager on an Executive Education Programme: *“This was a big ‘aha’ moment for me. It helped me put many puzzles together and has also helped me understand my study group members better”*.

### 2.6. Linking coaching to management performance

With the transition from command and control management styles of the past to an emphasis on empowering interpersonal relationships, coaching became a strategic business tool (Dalakoura, 2009; Day, 2001; Kets de Vries, Guillen, Korotov, & Florent-Treacy, 2010; Solansky, 2010). As a developmental activity for leaders and managers (Nelson & Hogan, 2009; Stout-Rostron, 2006) it became known as executive coaching and grew quickly in popularity because it links individual and organisational performance, with the aim of improving both (Chapman, 2010; Joo, 2005; Kahn, 2011; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Levenson, 2009).

Coaching improves individual performance, by directly affecting productivity and goal-achievement and improving people management capability through better interpersonal skills (Hymes, 2008; Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker, & Fernandes, 2008). It supports individual performance indirectly by modelling effective leadership behaviours (Grant, Curtayne, & Burton, 2009; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2005; Hymes, 2008; Kombarakaran et al., 2008; Smither, London, Flautt, Vargas, & Kucine, 2003) and enhancing individual well-being and self-confidence (Boyatzis, Smith, & Blaize, 2006; Hymes, 2008; Kombarakaran et al., 2008; Theeboom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2014).

Coaching contributes to organisational performance through better team effectiveness or customer retention with reported ROI's of up to 17 times, or between 529% and 680% (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008; Longenecker & Neubert, 2005; Olivero, Bane, & Kopelman, 1997; Rock & Donde, 2008; Theeboom et al., 2014). Due to demand, the coaching industry was generating approximately \$1.5 billion annually as early as 2010 (Britton, 2010; Brown; Grant, 2010; Hawkins, 2011) and it is claimed that coaches now serve well over a \$2 billion dollar market annually (Harvard Institute of Coaching, 2015).

Students on Executive Education Programmes offered feedback on the impact of coaching on their performance at work as follows, *“Coaching was great in making me understand my behaviour at work. The awareness provide good understanding on how we can improve”*; and another one reported, *“[Coaching] helped me realise the power I have in me to change and be a good leader in my organisation”*. This quote illustrates how coaching could enhance the confidence of the student to apply knowledge of leadership in the real life work environment. For example, the student in the opening vignette could benefit from receiving individual coaching and group coaching too, where his assumption of not having influence would be surfaced and he would be challenged by the coach or his peers to rethink his assumption and to focus on the areas where he in fact does have influence.

## 3. The nexus between teaching and coaching

Coaching, on its own, has certain limitations. It is not easy to scale to high volumes or to transfer learning to the organisation. While it must be acknowledged that forms of group coaching are increasingly used especially in management development (Britton, 2010; Thornton, 2010; Woodhead, 2011), traditional coaching usually only involves two people, reducing the number of new or ‘unknown’ perspectives. The evidence suggests that combining coaching with other interventions increases the impact on business performance (Levenson, 2009) and that coaching can have a multiplier effect on the impact of training programmes (IEC, 2012). This results in better feedback (Smither, London, Flautt, Vargas & Kucine, 2003), enhanced leadership skills, increased speed to market

and employee retention (Finn, Mason, & Griffin, 2006; Stober, 2008; Wasylyshyn, Gronsky, & Haas, 2006), which maximises the effectiveness and investment in leadership development, particularly in the longer term (IEC, 2012; Olivero et al., 1997). Where conventional training methods are more theory-based, coaching focuses more on skills-based learning, experience and the practice of capabilities outlined in theory, such as interpersonal and emotional intelligence skills (Butler, Forbes, & Johnson, 2008; De Haan & Duckworth, 2013).

This may be especially relevant in supporting a lifelong learning orientation to leadership development. Individuals whose careers and therefore identities unfold across their roles in different organisations may use business school courses as a way to expand their opportunities and facilitate transitions (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Coglisier, Davis, & Dickens, 2011; Ibarra, 2004; Ibarra et al., 2010; Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010). Business school programmes can help participants ‘connect the dots’ over several role transitions, through observation and real-time feedback with coaches (Itah, 2013).

It’s clear that teaching and coaching can amplify each other. This article suggests that the integration of classroom teaching and personal coaching as equally core elements in management learning will help business schools move towards the ideal target.

As the debate within the business school community continues to grow in intensity and creativity, it is tempting to speculate that the direction promoted in this article may lead to a new category of business school faculty whose expertise is in learning process and context-specific application. This implies that faculty development must purposefully include facilitation skills towards effective learning processes. Coaches would also work alongside the traditional faculty whose expertise lies in content and abstraction. Drawing on the theory referenced above, we now outline the possible comparisons and complementary contributions of each:

On the face of it, business schools and coaches are in the same business of developing executives, and could therefore be seen as competitors. In fact, however, many business school programmes incorporate coaching and make extensive use of coaches. The contribution of teaching is to help managers open their minds to new worlds, multiple perspectives and introduce new concepts they might never have encountered before. The contribution of coaching is to help managers focus their energy towards agreed purposes or towards their own context. Opening minds and focusing energy are very different but entirely complementary processes. As we shall show, one without the other could be limiting or at least sub-optimal, and each needs to be in tension with the other to deliver best results.

While coaching enables people to make intentional change, teaching allows for unintentional change. Coaching at its best facilitates a person-centred exploration of what they want, if the goal is not yet clear, or how to achieve it if the goal is clear (Grant, 2012). Teaching at its best surprises participants by revealing opportunities both within themselves and in business that transcend their past experience and make available to them future experiences, and a whole new world of information and expertise they might never have encountered without the business school intervention.

But there is a paradox in this, in that students may well be in danger of destroying themselves at the very point of feeling they are blossoming most. This could arise if the opening of options and the realization of opportunities never seen before, plus the awareness of their own potential that the student had never noticed before, all combined to leave the person directionless and excited but ineffective in achieving a particular purpose or goal. In most cases this would be a temporary stage leading to a new focus at a higher level, but in some cases the students might well need individual coaching to help them make good choices from the increased range of possibilities they encounter.

The robust feedback in class could also leave students feeling battered and lead to their losing confidence. A student referred to her first year MBA experience as being “humbling” – both from having met other very accomplished colleagues, and having uncomfortable truths about herself uncovered.

Coaching, on the other hand, helps managers to make intentional changes, even if the process is emergent, often yielding positive but unintended outcomes. Managers either arrive with an idea of what change is needed, or ask the coach to help them identify the goal. The first step in most coaching processes is identifying the change that the coachee is aiming for. Coaches then help managers focus their energies towards this agreed purpose.

This makes complete sense when the goal is clear and arises from what the manager already knows about the situation, but an unseen problem arises when this goal itself is suboptimal, misses opportunities that lie beyond the manager’s (and likely the coach’s) current experience or knowledge, or fails to provide a wide enough exposure to multiple possible examples to help the unfolding identity emerge. Just as leadership at its best sometimes requires the leader to take people where they do not want to go, so coaching could be less than helpful if the coach simply works with managers to achieve what they state they wanted. Learning minds need both to be opened and focused. An open mind without focus can lose direction; a focused mind that is narrow or selectively aware can overlook possibilities.

To gain insights from the relative contribution of teaching and coaching to management development, we have compared the two approaches in the table below. We acknowledge that both teaching and coaching cover a wide range of activities, and there is a vast difference, for example, between lecturing and facilitated discussion-based teaching. Similarly there is a vast difference in assumptions and approaches between skill-based coaching and leadership/executive coaching, as well as between goal-focussed and person-centred coaching. But for the sake of revealing insights about the different contributions, we have intentionally exaggerated the pure types of both in a way that does not do justice to the professional flexibility demonstrated by good practitioners of each. See [Table 1](#) below for the comparison between teaching and coaching.

In reading the table above, many teachers may argue that they already use much that is reported as coaching, and many coaches will argue that they cover much that is reported as teaching. That is as we believe it should be – the differences have been accentuated above to reveal the contributions of each.

**Table 1**  
Comparison between pure teaching and pure coaching.

Dimension of comparison	Comparison between pure teaching in business school education and coaching	
<b>Orientation to knowledge</b>	<b>Pure teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Bias to knowledge:</b> Structured to drive insightful learning. The teacher does most of the talking and raises awareness by new inputs and by assignments.</li> <li>b) <b>Knowledge given once.</b> If the manager is not listening when a particular issue arises in class, there may not be another opportunity to hear it.</li> <li>c) <b>Impersonal access</b> to many subject experts: a business school curriculum provides a wide range of experts in many fields. When combined, this provides a full set of insights across all fields to underpin decisions.</li> </ul>
	<b>Coaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Bias to action:</b> Structured to facilitate insightful action. The coach mostly listens and raises awareness by having the manager think about/reflect on what s/he will be accountable for.</li> <li>b) <b>Insights</b> and activities dealt with <b>iteratively</b> in order for them to stick. Practice and feedback lead to new skills.</li> <li>c) <b>Personal access</b> to a single expert in process: the coach has expertise in a limited range of fields, but offers expertise in integration and application.</li> </ul>
<b>Vehicle of change</b>	<b>Pure teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The vehicle of change is <b>authoritative knowledge</b>. This is helped when faculty believe in themselves. Teachers can afford to be confident.</li> <li>b) Relatively <b>directive</b> through giving of instruction and information (although the best case teaching promotes the nondirective approach almost exactly described under coaching).</li> <li>c) Students <b>revise their identity</b> through seeing role models, cases, and challenging input.</li> <li>d) Takes people <b>out of themselves</b>, surprising them by exposing them to experiences and perspectives that they may never otherwise encounter.</li> <li>e) Then <b>moves outside in</b> – the authority (in the form of the professor and texts and fellow students) is external to the student, who needs to internalise what is of value to her</li> </ul>
	<b>Coaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The vehicle of change is <b>trusting relationship</b>. It helps when the coach believes in the manager being coached. Coaches can afford to be tentative.</li> <li>b) Relatively <b>nondirective</b>, through discovery, dialogue, questioning, listening.</li> <li>c) Coachees <b>revise their identity</b> through questioning and reflection.</li> <li>d) Takes people <b>into themselves</b>, surprising them by discovering the depth of insight within.</li> <li>e) Then <b>moves inside out</b> – the authority is the coachee herself, who needs to recognise and draw on the wisdom within.</li> </ul>
<b>The role of context in acquiring knowledge</b>	<b>Pure teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Context-free</b> knowledge, which has the advantage that students emerge with principles that are useful in all contexts. The disadvantage is that they may find difficulty in applying it in their specific context.</li> <li>b) Difficult to draw on the workplace experience of each student.</li> <li>c) <b>External benchmark:</b> Managers grow in self-confidence by passing assignments and surviving the pressure. They can compare themselves to others, and to themselves in different subjects and at different times, leading to insights about themselves and a comparative perspective on their performance.</li> </ul>
	<b>Coaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Context-specific</b> knowledge, which has the advantage that the manager understands best how to interpret and apply information in his/her context. The disadvantage is that the manager's existing assumptions and knowledge are less likely to be challenged or expanded.</li> <li>b) Draws on learning and knowledge in the workplace.</li> <li>c) <b>Internal benchmark:</b> Managers grow in self-confidence by developing a particular skill (e.g. public speaking), leading to positive feedback and then general self-confidence. They receive personal feedback about their own growth, but they have little comparison with others.</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Pure teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Pre-determined</b> Curriculum- Managers come to class to be told what they need to know and to make generic knowledge their own. They have to listen to others' opinions. By introducing them to what they did not know they do not know, teaching enables them to ask more questions to find out more. Confusion is necessary for learning, but an inexperienced teacher may create confusion that leads to withdrawal rather than engagement.</li> <li>b) <b>Normative:</b> Whether intentionally or not, business schools socialise students into a way of seeing the world and of acting as managers. As <a href="#">Garvin (2007)</a> puts it, "The aim of MBA programmes is to develop in students a managerial orientation . . ."</li> </ul>
	<b>Coaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Self-determined</b> curriculum- Managers go to the coach to achieve ends they have already identified, or that the coach helps them to identify. They gain insights, skills and affirmation that leave them with the capacity to put into practice what they know they must do. The coach asks managers questions that enable them to interrogate the knowledge they already have. In the hands of less experienced coaches, this can be a narrowing, focusing, funnelling process that confirms at times when challenge might be needed.</li> <li>b) <b>Formative:</b> The coach is expected to do his best not to impose his own norms onto the coachee, but to help her identify and apply her own values and aspirations.</li> </ul>

Note: The researchers compiled this synthesis from literature and their experiences.

The table compares pure teaching and coaching and to make optimal use of space, the specific elements are marked similarly, for instance (a) in the teaching row, would correspond with the "a" in the coaching row.

#### 4. Conclusions and implications

This paper has explored the contributions to management effectiveness of teaching and coaching in business school executive education, with recommendations for how each could benefit from the other and with implications for integrated solutions. The central theme is that business school executive education teaching opens up the minds of managers to a myriad of new ideas and sources of information and expertise, and that coaching allows the individual participants to focus and then discuss, with coaches, the ideas and actions that they think could be worthwhile for their jobs. In this way the coach helps the participants make the knowledge from the teaching their own and facilitates the possibility of the new knowledge being applied in the participant's work environment.

Both teaching and coaching apply adult learning principles. In adhering to these principles, in executive education, teaching the material must be tailored to the target group and engagement is encouraged through interactive teaching and small group work. Coaching is a one-on-one partnership which focuses on the individual and also focuses the individual on his or her work circumstances. Coaching should be a transformative learning experience that enables him or her to critically reflect on how the new knowledge gained can be used to improve performance. Shoukry and Cox (2018) point out that coaching education is often positioned within the business school of a university and since reflective practice is a vital part of coach learning, we argue that herein lies an opportunity for business school faculty to benefit from useful coaching skills, such as reflective practice. Closer collaboration between faculty development and coach development could therefore be beneficial to the school.

To recap on the analogy already mentioned (Itah, 2013), classroom teaching helps create dots and coaching helps the participant joining the dots. To state the analogy in a different way, teaching provides input, whereas coaching is more about how to draw from and apply the manager's existing and new knowledge. The table comparing "pure teaching" and "pure coaching" illustrates the differences between the two and highlights how they are complementary and that combining both leads to a greater impact than either on its own.

This has two major implications: firstly, teaching and coaching are complementary and should both be included in the design of executive education programmes, and secondly teachers and coaches can each learn from the strengths of the other to enrich their own practice. It is beyond the scope of this article to draw out the implications in detail, but the following illustrates the insights that arise.

Firstly, to capitalise on the nexus between coaching and teaching, the deliberate design of the overall learning experience should include both teaching and coaching. Teachers and coaches should collaborate to ensure that the best of both worlds is included in the overall management development programme. In this way, the appropriate bridges are built in the classroom to the real world, through coaching. Equally the hooks for optimal learning in the classroom are imparted through greater situational and self-awareness, developed by coaching. This should then be an effective launch pad for the final bridge back to the workplace.

Students may need coaching to cope with the pressures and demands of the course and learn new ways of managing themselves as they respond to the new challenges. They may need help to move from the highly structured environment of a business school programme, in which goals are given to the students and deadlines imposed, to a state in which they are self-disciplined and adept at assigning themselves their own objectives.

Coaches provide a very helpful function in allowing managers' half-formed insights to mature by affirming what they say, helping them to clarify it, and then allowing it to evolve into even greater insight. Most managers are at least partly unsure of themselves, especially as they move into new roles, and need the affirming audience to allow insights to take form. Study groups could serve a similar purpose in business schools, but the un-facilitated peer group process is more risky for sensitive participants, so business schools can consider coaching to allow half-formed expertise to be birthed.

Knowing, Doing and Being are three desired outcomes of management development. It is apparent that teaching in executive education is better suited to Knowing and less suited to ensuring Doing and changing identity (Being). Coaching, on the other hand, is better suited to being a catalyst for doing and equally, through promoting reflection and self-awareness, to developing managers' identity (Being).

In the absence of a definitive view on the best timing of which comes first it might be that they should be integrated in parallel or iteratively. Coaching can follow teaching to personalise and apply the insights; or it can precede teaching to raise personalised questions and provide people with "hooks" with which to trawl through the ocean of the input in a class room session.

But there is more to it than simply learning from the strengths of each approach. So the second implication is that not only do both class teaching and individual coaching in a business school have very considerable and complementary contributions to make to individual and corporate performance, but each has insights that could enrich the practice of the other.

For example, when coaches work, they should be aware of both the value and the limitations of focusing. Whilst offering this valuable support to a manager, coaches might increase their effectiveness by helping managers to consider ways of expanding their minds and growing their networks through whatever means might be suitable. In the coaching process, this might include adopting a more challenging set of questions or feedback when appropriate.

When teachers work they could consider how to complement the value of broadening and challenging the students. For example, they could allow time in class for personal reflection in which students apply the knowledge, consider the implications for themselves and think about their thinking. By careful preparation of questions they could allow students to take the material in directions that relate directly to their own challenges. They could ensure a class culture of respect for diverse opinions and create a safe environment for self-disclosure and attentive listening. They could design experiences and group assignments outside the classroom that not only apply the material practically, but require students to make experiments, receive peer feedback, and focus the context-free theory into context-specific action.

Lastly, as a service to organisations that employ managers, management development should be concerned with management

effectiveness. By drawing on the respective strengths of teaching and coaching, business schools can provide transformative experiences that stretch participants supportively and enable executives to negotiate the transition points in their lives and careers constructively and learn to manage and lead more effectively.

The current ferment within the business school community (Datar et al., 2010) suggests that the next era in business education may be emerging. The indications are that this would entail being closer to the context of business, going deeper than just the transfer of knowledge, and being more responsive to the individual formative needs and interpersonal effectiveness of the student as leader. While the approach proposed in this article does not address the ethical, social and environmental sustainability goals contained in the six principles of PRME directly, the approach is ideally suited to addressing issues embodied in the Principles. By focusing on the sustainable personal development of leaders and showing how deep dialogue can be part of business school learning, the approach opens the door to the kind of encounters that could lead to ethical development in participants. The mutually enriching contributions of good teaching and coaching may therefore point to what the effective business school of the next few decades may look like.

## Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2019.100334>.

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