

Reviews / Comptes rendus

Coaching in Education: Getting Better Results for Students, Educators, and Parents

*Edited by Christian van Nieuwerburgh
(London, UK: Karnac, 2012, 256 pages)*

We are most familiar with coaching in an athletic context, where an individual teaches, motivates, and leads a team or individual athlete to maximize their performance. The idea of coaching in organizations has recently gained popularity as a way to improve individual performance. Coaching in this context is embedded within professional development and training initiatives in organizations, including schools, colleges, and universities. Coaching as a development approach is based in humanistic psychology and a learner-centred focus to teaching and learning. Although more specific, it fits the ideas about performance and achievement proposed in the literature on learning organization, learning communities, and self-directed learning. These ideas suggest building a learning culture where learners take an active role in their own development and teachers play a more supporting, facilitating, and coaching role. *Coaching in Education* examines the idea of coaching in educational settings at the primary, secondary, and postsecondary level. It looks at coaching both in a general sense, as it applies in educational organizations, and specifically in terms of various audiences, students, teachers, and parents. Additionally, some chapters speak specifically to coaching applications to develop mental toughness and positive education programs. The chapter authors use both empirical and experiential bases to support the case that coaching can be an effective approach for performance improvement. In addition to short case studies included in many of the chapters, the book closes with four detailed case studies, including a final chapter on coaching in higher education.

Van Nieuwerburgh's edited volume provides a range of insights into how coaching has been applied in education that should be useful to those working in adult and continuing education. Reviewing the volume more selectively within this context, five chapters appear to apply more directly. The book opens with a very good overview of coaching in education that defines coaching, differentiates it from mentoring, and provides a useful list of references of the supporting literature. The second chapter is also relevant to adult and continuing educators by addressing how coaching supports leadership development and performance. In particular, the chapter outlines the skills of effective leadership and provides a model for leadership development. Chapter Six describes a research-based instructional coaching process that proposes to improve teaching. Key to the coaching process are considering individual principles, learning

best coaching practices and methods, and setting a learning context in the organization. The fourth of the recommended chapters is again a broader examination of the topic that discusses how to create an organizational coaching culture. In this chapter, van Nieuwerburgh emphasizes that important to the implementation of a successful coaching process is the creation of a learning culture. He identifies the characteristics of effective coaching, outlines steps to create a coaching culture for learning, and introduces an appreciative inquiry model to set up the culture. Of the four case studies in Part 2 of the book, the one dealing with coaching in higher education reveals ways in which coaching was used at the University of Warwick—a research-intensive university rated within the top ten universities in the UK. Although the other chapters in the book focus on K–12 educational settings, the discussion of coaching is nonetheless interesting and informative, especially to those in adult and continuing education who work with teachers and educators in professional development settings.

As we know, good coaching produces winning teams and gold medal performances. Van Nieuwerburgh and others suggest the same performance results can be achieved in educational organizations. The editor and key contributor (who authored/co-authored five of nine chapters), Christian van Nieuwerburgh, is a globally recognized coach, researcher, and speaker on the topic. The book is a recommended read for those interested in coaching as practiced in organizational settings. As an introduction to the idea of coaching, the book is a panorama of perspectives, applications, and examples on how coaching can be used effectively in educational organizations. For the most part, these insights into coaching are supported by relevant research in the field. As with any edited volume, the book is limited in its depth on the topic; nonetheless there is sufficient content to encourage readers to consider coaching as a component of training and development initiatives. While no list of recommended resources is provided for those interested in exploring the topic further, the chapter reference lists offer guidance for further inquiry.

Reviewed by William Kops, University of Manitoba