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USING EXECUTIVE COACHING AS A TOOL FOR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITHIN BUSINESS SCHOOL EDUCATION

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This paper reflects what has been learned in using Executive Coaching as an educational method within an Executive MBA program. Students work in a one-on-one coaching relationship throughout the program. This paper presents a rationale for such an educational method, examines the nature of executive coaching, and introduces a model of coaching used in the program. The article provides lessons learned in creating and implementing this executive coaching program as a tool to develop students as leaders. It concludes with some thoughts regarding executive coaching as an educational method for personal and professional leadership development.

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly changing business environment, business schools are being challenged to produce a new kind of graduate. Whereas traditional business education has focused on the functional areas of business, e.g., finance, accounting, economics, business law, management, and marketing, the gauntlet has been cast for business schools to start producing graduates who combine business acumen with the skills required to lead organizations (Mitzberg 2004, Bennis & O'Toole 2005, Andrews & Tyson 2004). A survey of 100 top executives indicated that business schools must move beyond just equipping people with business knowledge and teach the necessary interpersonal skills so that individuals can act upon their knowledge to achieve business results (Andrew & Tyson 2004). Top companies have come to realize that sustaining peak performance requires a firm-wide commitment to developing leaders (Goldsmith & Morgan, 2004). In fact, the Management Education Task Force of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) issued a report in 2002 that called for instruction in communication, leadership, and interpersonal skills to make the curricula more relevant to today's global workplace (Dorai, Rozanski, & Cohen, 2003). In a bigger is better business environment, the need for intrapersonal awareness and interpersonal communication skills is greater than ever" (Myers & Tucker, 2005).

One of the most rapidly growing and effective methodologies for dealing with this issue within actual business organizations is the use of executive coaching (Goldsmith & Morgan 2004). A 2003 study by Hewitt Associates of "Top Companies for Leaders . . . found

that companies with stronger leadership practices outperformed their industry peers in long-term measures of both financial growth and return. One practice specifically separating the top companies from others was the use of executive coaching" (Effron, 2005: xix).

While there has been limited academic research into measuring the effectiveness of executive coaching, several studies have supported the claim by Hewitt Associates. The most widely quoted study included 100 executives from the northeastern and mid-Atlantic regions. In that study, the authors stated that the return on investment in executive coaching was 5.7 times greater than the cost of the coaching to the organization. The stated primary benefits included improved relationships with direct reports, peers, and stakeholders as well as improved teaming ability. In addition, it was noted that executive coaching led to increased job satisfaction, reduced conflict, and lowered turnover (McGovern, Lindemann, Vergara, Murphy, Barker, & Warrenfeltz 2001).

Other studies have produced similar results with the recipients indicating that they had increased their self-awareness, improved their ability to communicate, and developed better relationships with their co-workers. The range of improvements reported in these studies was from 70.9 percent to 93.8 percent (Underhill & Koriath, 2005, Miller 2001). In all instances, the vast majority of respondents indicated that they had changed their behavior in positive ways and that the changes had lasted across time (Underhill and Koriath, 2005, Braddick 2003). As coaching continues to expand as a profession, it is also being recognized as a core competency for today's managers/leaders at all levels (Wright & Tab 2001).

Such results have not gone unnoticed within academic circles, and a growing number of graduate business programs are now considering how to incorporate executive coaching into their curriculum both as a topic for learning and as an experience to enhance the student's leadership development. In the first instance, executive coaching has been taught as a skill to be used by managers/leaders in the workplace to improve the overall performance of employees. In the second situation, schools have used executive coaching to help students improve their personal and professional leadership development during their educational experience.

Students need to learn more about coaching, and one of the most effective methodologies for learning is to experience the learning first hand. Faculty should teach content around coaching through course work but also allow students to experience it. Doing so will allow students to integrate theory with practice in a manner similar to the training of counselors. Students would then emerge from their coursework with a deeper understanding of what is involved in this important function in the workplace having "been there – experienced that."

Need to Define Executive Coaching

One of the issues facing any individual or organization that wants to leverage executive coaching is to define what it is and what it is not. Coaching is a term that is quite diverse, and much clarification is needed to understand what coaching is. (Stober & Grant, 2006). The confusion has been further exacerbated by a lack of understanding on how it differs from other helping behaviors such as counseling and mentoring. Indeed, people often used mentoring and coaching interchangeably). The result has been that now there are about as many definitions of coaching as there are definers. Three different examples are presented below:

- "Executive coaching is a collaborative, individualized relationship between an executive and a coach, the aims of which are to bring about sustained behavioral change and to transform the quality of the executive's working and personal life" (Zeus & Skiffington, 2003: 9)
- Coaching is "someone from outside an organization us[ing] psychological skills to help a person develop into a more effective leader" (Peltier, 2001: xx)
- "Coaching is about challenging and supporting people, giving them the gift of your presence" (Hargrove, 1995:15)

As can be noted, there are several nuances that make each of these definitions somewhat different from each other. Before undertaking a coaching initiative, an organization must make a decision regarding the nature and purpose of the executive coaching program prior to implementing it. A second issue is that often the definitions of the coaching *process* vary considerably in clarity, succinctness and, also, the extent to which they emphasize teaching or direct instruction as opposed to facilitation of self-directed learning (Stober & Grant 2006). A third issue comes from the fact that the field of executive coaching has evolved to have many different foci. Goldsmith, Morgan, and Harkins (2005) have identified five specific types of executive coaching depending on the desired outcomes. The first is *Coaching Leaders/Behavioral Coaching* in which the focus of attention is on the leader's style and practice of leadership. A second focus is *Career/Life Coaching*, which concentrates around changes in circumstances being experienced by the coachee, e.g., a promotion or involvement in a merger. It may also examine the issues around the career development of the individual. A third type of coaching is *Coaching for Leadership Development*, which may include teaching coaches how to become effective coaches as well as developing their overall capacity for leadership. A fourth type is *Coaching for Organizational Change* where the coachee is responsible for bringing about a significant shift in an organization's structure or culture. Finally, there is *Strategy Coaching* where the efforts are concentrated on helping the leader discern the competitive environment in which he or she is doing business and learn how to address that environment more effectively. Clearly, any organization considering coaching must have a clear understanding of the type of coaching needed as well as the desired learning objectives.

This paper contributes to executive coaching literature by clearly describing an executive coaching process and identifying how coaching may be used to enhance the leadership development of current and future leaders. Learning from experience is even more important in the "new economy" and leaders are required to use even more on-the-job reflection (Fleenor, 2000). According to Seibert and Daudelin (1999), success in managerial and leadership positions requires continual learning from reflection, which this example of a coaching process requires. Dixon (1990) believes that critical reflection is necessary for adult learners to bring to conscious awareness the assumptions that underlie current skills and to test those assumptions as to desired goals. This article emphasizes the importance of employing a coaching

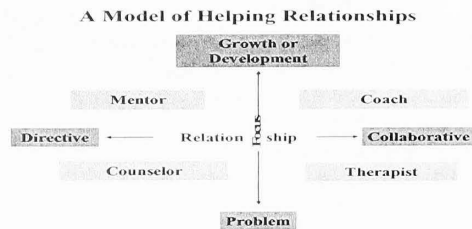
process that also teaches a reflective practice that will enable students to incorporate reflection into their daily lives.

This paper provides a model of helping relationships, explain the ACT coaching model, highlight necessary coaching competencies needed in the coaching relationship, provide guidelines regarding establishing and building a coaching relationship, present preliminary data obtained from students and coaches, and conclude with lessons learned in the experience of creating and implementing an executive coaching program within an executive-format MBA.

Helping Relationships Model

To resolve the issue of 'What is coaching?' the authors created the helping relationship model. This model was based upon the common understanding that coaching, however it is defined, is universally viewed as a helping relationship. Using that as a starting point, they defined all helping relationships along two continuums. The horizontal axis focused on the help needed. For

example, was help needed around a particular issue or problem or was it needed for personal development? The vertical axis was based on the degree of intervention required by the "helper". For example, should the helper be more directive or collaborative in his or her approach to the relationship? Then four different types of helping relationships were identified: mentoring, counseling, therapy, and coaching. In this model, **mentoring** is defined as a strategic approach to developing an individual (the mentee) by pairing him or her with a more experienced individual (the mentor) who will teach, counsel, sponsor, and encourage. **Counseling** is a tactical intervention typically used by a manager to correct the behavior of an employee. **Therapy** is reserved for a therapist to help an individual to understand the inner dynamics of his or her personality and learn new ways of adjusting and dealing with life situations. While **coaching** is a situation where one person works with another individual to discover, access, and leverage his or her abilities to enhance personal and professional leadership development.



This model of helping relationships provides a clear distinction between each of these important relationships and allows both parties to understand the goal of their relationship. When this model has been presented to students, to coaches, and to interested parties, individuals have shared that it clearly helped them understand the differences between the four relationships.

ACT Coaching Model

The ACT coaching model provides a framework for the coaching experience while clarifying roles and responsibilities of both the coach and the coachee. The ACT Coaching Model stands for awareness, choice, and tenacity.

A is for Awareness

Students begin the self-discovery journey with an opening residency. They are faced with an ever-

increasing awareness of their strengths and vulnerabilities as leaders through the use of multiple assessment experiences. Some of the assessments include the Leadership Practices Inventory, a Five Factor Personality Inventory, the Competing Values Skills Assessment, a Learning Style Assessment, and the Herrmann Brain Dominance Indicator. These assessments provide insights for the students regarding their current behaviors as leaders while identifying inherent strengths and vulnerabilities.

An additional way of increasing awareness is through critical reflection. "If we look at learning as defined by Kolb (1984), as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (p.38), we can see that gaining the ability to do critical reflection on one's personal experience is central to the educational endeavor." This has been recognized in the learning standards for AACSB (the accrediting body of colleges of business) that include reflective thinking skills (website,

p.18). Thus, reflection should be a critical skill for students to enable them to internalize their learning beyond simple memorization, so that it becomes a part of their behavioral interaction with others.

Because reflection leads to greater awareness, students are required to reflect throughout the program in a journal that is reviewed each month by the faculty. Some entries are required ones that are linked to material presented in class; however, many other entries are more free flowing as students are encouraged to use the journal regularly to “wander and capture” other insights about themselves and their personal and professional life that are generated by their interactions with their team members, their family, their boss, and their coach (Roebuck, Sigler, & Tryan, 2006).

Students and coaches are encouraged to discuss the results of any assessments as well as to share some of their journal entries. This dialogue provides opportunities for students to deepen their self awareness and their reflective abilities. While working with their coaches, students should gain a broader understanding of the issues they face and receive coaching from someone who has encountered many of these same issues. The dialogue between student and coach enables the student to better see the relevant, practical application of what he or she is learning in the classroom.

C is for Choice

For individuals to truly change and grow, they must choose to do something on the basis of their increased awareness. “Deep change requires discipline, courage, and motivation” (Quinn, 1996: 24). It is obvious that little or no change takes place in people until they commit themselves to making that change. This requires deliberate choice that can be exercised through the development of realistic plans that are undertaken to create the identified behavioral changes. Within the EMBA program, students are required to identify SMART goals for both personal and professional leadership growth and to discuss these with their coach. These SMART goals are part of a Personal and Professional Leadership Development Plan that is initiated in the first semester and revised over the following semesters, culminating in a Final Personal and Professional Leadership Development Capstone Plan directed at their post-graduation career. The generation of a formal plan of action transforms their choices into behavioral change. The coaches serve as monitors throughout this process helping their students identify the

changes they want to make while listening carefully to choices and plans. They also ask thought-provoking questions and provide ongoing feedback to help the students stay on a SMART path.

T is for Tenacity

For individuals to make a change, they must be tenacious for that change to occur. Simply identifying a desired potential change or development goal does not result in that outcome being achieved. Rather, the behaviors required to transform that development into a “habitual outcome” requires the student to apply the new skill or knowledge over an extended period of time. “From a developmental perspective, real growth requires some qualitative shift, not just in knowledge, but in perspective or way of thinking. Growing is when the *form* of our understanding changes. . .” (Berger 2006: 79). “What is often difficult to understand is that this all takes time. It takes a high level of energy to rewrite neuro-physiological wiring and conditioning” (Jay, 2003: 6). Repetitive use of any learning is required for that learning to be fully integrated as part of the individual’s functioning and that is why a coach must support and encourage his coachee to stay focused and to keep trying.

The coaches provide continual feedback to the students as to what they see happening while the students work on their development plans. Additionally, the coaches hold the students accountable when they lapse into old, less productive behavior. In that way, the coaches are serving as a support system for the students’ development throughout the life of their EMBA experience. Hence, coaches must both encourage and challenge students to achieve the goals set for both personal and professional leadership development.

Competencies Needed for the Coaching Relationship

Some authors have offered specific, practical guidelines for coaching, particularly, as it is applied to enhancing specific skills (Hargrove, 1995; Whitmore, 2003). In this EMBA program, four key coaching skills were identified. The coaches would need observational skills to monitor their students, analytical skills to assess progress toward goals, interviewing skills for managing coaching interaction, and finally, feedback skills for sharing observations and suggestions. Using the ACT Coaching Model, the faculty created the following matrix to help both the coach and the coachee know what methods and skills would enhance their coaching relationship.

Coaching Competencies

Coaching Action	Methods	Skills
Awareness	Assessments Observation Feedback Journaling Diagnostics Measuring Results	Listening Giving Feedback Dialogue Analysis EQ skills Analytical Thinking
Choice	Setting SMART goals Brainstorming Planning Benchmarking	Planning Objectivity Creativity Reflection Negotiation
Tenacity	Setting SMART goals Brainstorming Planning Benchmarking Evaluation	Commitment to the coachee Encourage Accountability

Establishing and Building the Coaching Relationship

Each student had to contract with someone of their own choice to serve as their coach. Since the average class size was 45, having students choose their coaches eliminated the need for faculty to identify and recruit coaches. In the selection process, each student used criteria that were given to them as they entered the program. Some of the required criteria included: the coach cannot be an immediate family member or close friend; the coach must have Internet access and an established e-mail address; and the coach must be able to provide two to four hours each month to the coaching relationship.

While most students found coaches using this method, some required assistance from the faculty. This assistance was provided by offering students a chance to select from a group of individuals the school had identified as potential coaches, principally alumni of the program.

All coaches were asked to confirm their willingness to serve as a student coach by signing an agreement with the faculty supervisor. They also had to commit to attending four training sessions throughout the 18 months of the program. The initial training session was a joint all day orientation that was attended by both students and coaches. This session introduced all individuals to the Helping Relationship Model, the Act Coaching Model, and the Herrmann Brain Dominance Indicator [HBDI]. The HBDI, which both students and coaches had taken, helped them to explore the strengths and potential gaps in their thinking styles. Coaches and students were given the book "*Coaching for Performance*," by John Whitmore, as a text for exploring the key skills of coaching.

The remaining sessions focused on presentations by coaches as they shared their experiences of working with their student. These sessions were held in a small group setting so that coaches might benefit from hearing the

work others were doing. Discussions revolved around what was going well, where the coach faced specific challenges, and what alternative approaches might be of help. Meetings were held under the supervision of the faculty charged with oversight for the personal and professional leadership development portion of the EMBA.

Feedback from the Students and their Coaches

Since implementation of the pilot program in 2006, feedback has been collected to determine the initial impact and to gain insights into what was working and what needed to be changed. To gather this data, the faculty developed a six item evaluation form that was administered to both students and coaches. Students and coaches were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the six statements using a 5-point response scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The student survey included the following six questions:

- Question 1: My coach and I are meeting two to four hours each month
- Question 2: I select and inform my coach of a specific topic for discussion for each meeting
- Question 3: I have shared some of my journal entries with my coach
- Question 4: We have discussed and are using our Herrmann Brain Dominance Inventory results in our coaching
- Question 5: My coach is holding me accountable for my work on my Personal and Professional Leadership Development Plan
- Question 6: My coaching experience has been helpful in advancing my personal and professional leadership development

While not identical, the survey created for the coaches contained very similar questions so that similarities and differences in perception could be noted. For example, if a student stated that he or she was meeting with his or her coach two times each month and the coach reported that he or she hasn't seen the student for several months, there was substantial evidence that the relationship might not be working as effectively as needed. The questions for the coaches included:

- Question 1: My student and I are meeting for 2-4 hours each month
- Question 2: My student informs me of a topic for discussion for each meeting
- Question 3: My student has shared some journal entries with me
- Question 4: We have discussed and are using our Hermann Brain Dominance Inventory results in our coaching

- Question 5: I am monitoring and holding my student accountable for his or her work on the Personal and Professional Leadership Development Plan goals
- Question 6: My experience of coaching is beneficial to me

Based upon the student and coach questions, data was collected from both groups who represented our 2006 and 2007 programs. The 2006 student survey was completed by 28 out of 58 students, which provided a response rate of 48 percent. The coach survey was completed by 44 out of 50 coaches for a response rate of 88 percent. The 2007 student survey was completed by 32 out of 65 students for a response rate of 49 percent, while the coach survey was completed by 23 out of 65 coaches for a response rate of 35 percent. Figure 1 compares the student responses from the 2006 and 2007 classes, while figure 2 compares the coach responses from both classes.

Figure 1: Comparison of 2006 and 2007 Coach Responses

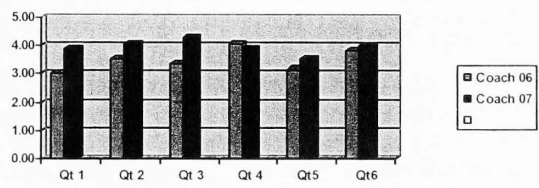
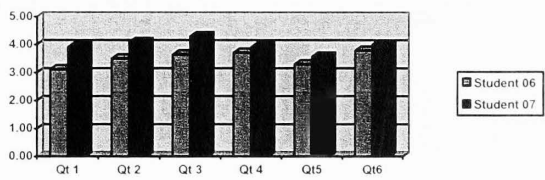


Figure 2: Comparison of 2006 and 2007 Student Responses



Further analysis of the data established a baseline correlation between the structure of the program and the perceived effectiveness of the program. The Pearson product moment correlation method was chosen for a relational (bivariate) analysis, since it allowed for the evaluation of the relationship between two quantitative, continuous variables such as the answers to the survey questions posed. Question 6 (Qt6—My coaching experience has been helpful in advancing my personal and professional leadership development/My experience of coaching is beneficial to me) was chosen as the proxy for the perceived effectiveness of the program, the

dependent variable, and the other questions were used as proxies for program features, the independent variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) for continuous (interval level) data ranges from -1 to + 1, with the absolute number being relevant. Table 1 below lists the interpretations for various correlation coefficients. When the Pearson correlation coefficient is squared, the result is the coefficient of determination (R-Square), which is the amount of variance accounted for in one variable by the other. The coefficient of determination indicates the proportion of "shared" variance between the variables, irrespective of causality.

Table 1: Interpretations for Various Correlation Coefficients

.8 to 1.0	very strong
.6 to .8	strong
.4 to .6	moderate
.2 to .4	weak
.0 to .2	very weak

Table 2 provides the Pearson correlation analysis of the coaches' responses. The significant correlation with Qt6 was with the Qt1 for the 2006 coaches, which showed only a moderate correlation, and with Qt3 and Qt5 for the 2007 coaches, which indicated a strong

correlation between coaching program effectiveness and student sharing of journal entries with their coach, and the coach monitoring of the student's Personal and Professional Leadership Development Plans.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Analysis of the Coaches Responses

	Coaches' Questions 2006, N=44 2007, N=23	Correlation With Q6		R-Square	
		2006	2007	2006	2007
Qt1	My student and I are meeting for 2-4 hours each month.	.40	.38	.16	.14
Qt2	My student informs me of a topic for discussion for each meeting.	.28	.21	.08	.05
Qt3	My student has shared some journal entries with me.	.39	.60	.15	.37
Qt4	We have discussed and are using our HBDI results in our coaching.	.30	-.09	.09	.01
Qt5	I am monitoring and holding my student accountable for his or her work on their Personal and Professional Development Plan goals.	.28	.64	.07	.41
Qt6	My experience of coaching is beneficial to me.	1	1	1	1

Table 3 shows the Pearson correlation analysis of the student's responses. The results from the analysis of the students' responses was similar to those of the coaches' responses, indicating a moderate correlation between

meeting (Qt1) and perceived effectiveness (Qt6), and a strong correlation between sharing journal entries (Qt3) and with being held accountable (Qt5) monitoring, with perceived effectiveness of the coaching program (Qt6).

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis of the Student Responses

	Students' Questions 2006, N=28 2007, N=32	Correlation With Q6		R-Square	
		2006	2007	2006	2007
Qt1	My Coach and I are meeting for 2-4 hours each month.	.53	.38	.28	.14
Qt2	I select and inform my coach of a specific topic for discussion for each meeting.	.06	.21	.003	.05
Qt3	I have shared some of my journal entries with my coach.	.10	.61	.01	.37
Qt4	We have discussed and are using our HBDI results in our coaching.	.27	-0.09	.07	.008
Qt5	My coach is holding me accountable for my work on my Personal and Professional Development Plan goals.	.42	.64	.17	.41
Qt6	My coaching experience has been helpful in advancing my personal and professional development.	1	1	1	1

As indicated previously, each student kept a journal throughout the program. Journal assignments included a monthly summary of learning and the results of the student's coaching session for that month. These summaries were reviewed by the authors each month with feedback being inserted for the student to consider. Placed alongside the Personal and Professional Leadership Development Plans generated by the student, these entries reflect a qualitative measure of the effectiveness of the coaching experience. At this point,

the journal entries appear to support the data results. Students and coaches appear to find the experience to be mutually rewarding and to be a valuable addition to their education. It seems that the regular meetings impacted the perceived overall effectiveness of the coaching relationship and that the sharing of journal entries, while being held accountable, impacted the perceived value of the relationships. In conclusion, overall impressions by both students and coaches were positive toward the benefits of the coaching relationship. Obviously there is

not sufficient data to draw major conclusions, but these results do appear to indicate some trends, which should be examined further by gathering additional information from more coaches and students.

Lessons Learned From This Executive Coaching Program

Two years of experience with this executive coaching program has resulted in insights into how to improve the process. First, no student should be coached by his or her boss as this puts that manager into a dual relationship, which could inhibit the dialogue around learning issues. Second, by adding an initial day-long workshop for both the students and the coaches, there seemed to be an increased likelihood that the relationship began positively. Third, volunteer coaches must be trained regarding particular models and expectations as the models used and expectations sought might be different from other coaching situations they have experienced. The training must be organized with specific training dates established early on as each class enters the program. The major prospect, which is to help students grow in their personal and professional leadership growth, must be stated at the start of the program.

An unexpected learning was that the coaches like to occasionally have the opportunity to attend class with their coachees. They seemed to especially appreciate the opportunity to come and observe how their coachees were performing during class presentations and breakout sessions. Therefore, coaches should be invited as their schedule will permit. Finally, a critical lesson learned is that one or two faculty members who have full teaching loads cannot supervise effectively 123 coaching relationships. Therefore, faculty need to establish a Coaching Advisory Board to help address this issue as well as other program issues that may arise.

CONCLUSION

Coaching is a rapidly growing method for personal and professional leadership development within the business world. (Underhill & Koriath, 2005). Because of this acceptance, coaching should be used as an additional educational tool for leadership development within business schools. While this study supported the findings of others regarding the difficulty of precisely measuring the impact of coaching, (Sparrow, 2006), initial attempts to do so in this EMBA program have been positive as indicated in the survey data and in conversations with students and coaches. The authors have arrived at three

major conclusions based upon their experience with this endeavor.

Executive Coaching as an Educational Method

For coaching to be effective as an educational tool within business education, both the student and the coach need clearly defined expectations of what coaching is and how it will be used. Without these, students tend to lose interest in the process and coaches are left floundering with what to do. Since requiring both students and coaches to attend an initial training session on the coaching model and expectations, this element of the program has improved significantly.

Second, the student must be held responsible for guiding the coaching session. The goals for personal and professional leadership development are singularly the student's and not the coach's. In order for the experience to have maximum impact, the student has to prepare for each session, defining his or her goals, and then following up by recording the learning from that session. The use of a personal journal has proven to address this issue as the student is given specific topic assignments for discussion with his or her coach. For example, early on in the program the student must develop a Personal Mission Statement. This journal assignment is then used as the basis for an early coaching session. The linking of these journal assignments to the coaching sessions gives structure and guidance to the student's use of his or her coach. As part of this process the student must notify the coach at least 24 hours in advance of the session of his or her goals for that encounter.

Third, the use of the Herrmann Brain Dominance Indicator [HBDI], forces both the coach and the student to consider any of their discussions from a whole brain perspective. This model requires them to consider any topic from multiple perspectives; why the topic is important, what are the facts involved, how can these be used to create a plan of action for personal and professional leadership development, who are the resources, and who is responsible for that growth. Again, these assessments would force students to explore issues more critically than might happen if they only use their preferred thinking style.

Executive Coaching as a Tool for Personal and Professional Leadership Development

For the students to develop themselves personally and professionally as leaders, they must establish clear and specific goals for doing so. To achieve this, the journal

and coaching once again play a key role. At four distinct points in the program, students are required to generate Personal and Professional Leadership Development Plans. Each plan builds on the discoveries from the previous ones, culminating in a Capstone Personal and Professional Leadership Development Plan to take them beyond their degrees. In each of these plans, the students must develop SMART goals [Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-Bound].

Second, these Personal and Professional Leadership Development Plans then become an integral part of the coaching experience. The coaches are required to sign off on each plan before it is submitted to the faculty for grading. Requiring such a step results in a series of discussions between the coach and the student about personal and professional leadership development. Such discussions lead to a sharper sense of goals and the steps required to achieve them. Therefore, the coach helps the student explore his or her goals in greater depth.

Third, this coaching experience builds a degree of accountability. Periodically, the coach must hold a discussion around the Personal and Professional Leadership Development Plan as to what is happening or not happening and why. Thus, the coaches hold the students responsible for their development as they work through the program. The students learn to advance the skills required for self-development with the hope that these will carry over into lifetime learning.

Executive Coaching Within Business School Education

A final conclusion speaks to the use of coaching within business school education as it is a rapidly growing dimension of leadership within the world of business. Therefore, it is important for students to receive exposure to the knowledge and skills required to become an effective coaching manager and/or leader. The core competencies of coaching are developed in two ways. First, within the curriculum there are modules dealing with the skills and knowledge required to coach others, both remedially as well as developmentally. Second, the students are exposed to coaching experientially by being coached. Through their coaching experience, students encounter all of the anxieties and confusion involved in making behavioral changes, as well as learning the determination it takes for personal and professional growth. From cognitive dissonance through the coaches' challenges and feedback, to the achievement of developmental goals, students experience precisely the full range of emotions and critical thinking required to

coach others. Again, the best way to learn is by being immersed in the experience.

Final Word

Initial evidence supports the use of executive coaching within a business school education. The EMBA students have emerged with a richer academic experience that has better prepared them to become managerial leaders. The coaches have refreshed and sharpened their own knowledge, skills and abilities. Clearly, this pilot program was a positive experience for all parties and should continue.

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