

Development of Coaches: III. Influence and Learning

William Bergquist, Ph.D.

This report is the third in a series that convey and interpret results from two versions of a questionnaire that was initially prepared by the Development of Coaches Research Collaborative in cooperation with the Collaborative Research Network of the Society for Psychotherapy Research. [Note: for those readers who are familiar with the first two reports, I recommend that you move immediately to the "focus of study" and results sections of this third report, given that the initial sections of this report provide background material regarding the two surveys that was already covered in the first two reports.]

Completed in 2009 by 153 coaches from throughout the world, the first survey was followed by a second version that was distributed in 2015 (with only minor editing changes) by the Library of Professional Coaching in cooperation with ITLCInsights. Fifty eight coaches provided responses to the second questionnaire -- yielding a total of 211 responses to the two surveys. The time interval between the two surveys was six years, enabling us to get a preliminary sense of possible changes in coaching attitudes over this period of time, as well as a sense of stability (low levels of difference in mean scores and variance) in the attitudes of professional coaches regarding their own development.

Unlike most coaching surveys, the two surveys conducted in 2009 and 2015 were directed toward those actually doing the coaching, rather than the users of coaching services. These surveys were completed by a widely ranging group of coaches - in terms of geography, schools of coaching, age and years of experience in providing coaching services. These two surveys are also distinctive in that they have been being conducted by organizations (the Library of Professional Coaching and ITLCInsights) that have no specific stake in the outcomes, and are being distributed to practitioners at many levels of practice and status. These surveys are truly "neutral" and "democratizing."

Methods

Both versions of the Development of Coaches questionnaire are based on one devised by the Collaborative Research Network of the Society for Psychotherapy Research in their international study of development among professional psychotherapists described by Orlinsky and Rønnestad in *How Psychotherapists Develop* (Orlinsky & Rønnestad, 2005). Both of the coaching studies include questions that parallel those used in the Society's Development of Psychotherapists Common Core Questionnaire. This enables us not only to study varied aspects of coaches' development, but also compare responses of coaches to these made by psychotherapists. Many questions have been posed over the past twenty years concerning the similarities and differences between professional coaching and psychotherapy. The data being gathered in these two surveys will provide some of the first answers regarding this comparison.

Modification of Development of Psychotherapists Survey

In adapting the questionnaire, members of the Development of Coaches Research Collaborative drew on their own experiences as coaches to ask questions that they hoped would seem meaningful and relevant to those responding to the questionnaire. Most of the questions could be answered quickly by checking alternatives that most closely reflected the respondent's own experience.

Instructions to the Respondents

In the case of both surveys, respondents were asked to answer all of the questions and were provided with the following framework:

The complete set of responses provides us with a fuller understanding of your own work and the context in which you work. You may find these questions offer a useful opportunity to reflect on your own coaching career. If any seem difficult to answer exactly, give your best estimate and continue. To ensure confidentiality, the questionnaire is completed anonymously. Information you provide will be used only for research purposes.

Designers of the original survey proposed that the respondents would benefit in two ways. These two benefits made this truly a collaborative effort between those who designed the questionnaire and those who completing it. Following is a statement offered to those considering completion of the second survey:

You can sign up to receive the report findings from this study when they become available. . . . These reports will also be made available at no charge to the general coaching public through the Library of Professional coaching. The reports will identify which modes of development have been found to be the most effective. . . .

[Furthermore, results from this survey may] increase the credibility of the coaching profession. As Francine Campone, one of the creators and initiators of the original survey has indicated, a culture of research and evidence needs to be created in the field of professional coaching. The more we learn from one another about professional coaching practices, the more collectively knowledgeable we will become. The more knowledgeable we become, the greater the opportunity for building evidence-based coaching strategies and tools. The better the strategies and tools the more effective we will be as coaching professionals. The more effective we become as a profession, the greater the demand will be for our services.

Focus of the Study

While there were 76 questions in each of the coaching surveys, we will concentrate in this third study on responses to only two of the questions (questions #29 and #35 in both surveys):

Question One: How much influence has each of the following had on your OVERALL development as a coach?

Experiences in coaching clients

Taking coaching specific courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses)

Collaborating with other coaches

Getting formal supervision, mentoring or consultation

Having informal case discussion with colleagues

Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice

Observing coaches in workshops, films or on tapes

Getting personal coaching

Giving formal supervision, mentor coaching, or consultation to other coaches

Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online)

Doing coaching related research

The institutional conditions in which you practice

Experiences in your personal life

Question Two. How much influence does each of the following have on your **CURRENT development as a coach?**

Experiences in coaching with clients

Taking courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses)

Getting formal supervision or consultation

Having informal case discussion with colleagues

Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice

Getting life coaching for yourself

Getting coaching on your coaching work

Coaching other coaches on professional or life issues

Giving supervision or consultation to other coaches

Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online)

The workplace conditions in which you practice

Experiences in your personal life outside coaching

With regard to questions featured in our previous articles, respondents were asked to use a five point scale indicating level of agreement with each item. Respondents to the two questions featured in this third article were asked to rate the nature and extent of influence regarding each

of the items under each question. They were instructed to use a six point scale --ranging from a positive three to a negative three:

+3 = *Very Positive [Influence]*

+2 = *Moderately Positive*

+1 = *Somewhat Positive*

0 = *None [No Influence]*

-1 = *Somewhat Negative*

-2 = *Moderately Negative*

-3 = *Very Negative*

On the one hand, this different response scale can lead to some confusion when comparing results from these two questions to those of the questions we have featured in our two previous articles. The scores on these two questions will inevitably be lower than those on the other questions (given a range of -3 to +3 rather than 0 to 5). On the other hand, the use of an alternative response scale can help to break up response sets, by requiring the respondent to adjust to a different manner of rating a survey item.

In future reports we will provide results from the other questions, as well as offer more detailed analyses about relationships between responses to the three questions on which we focus in this article and the other questions -- including the potential differences in responses between various demographic groups and correlations between responses to various questions. In addition, we will engage advanced statistical tools (multiple regression and factor analysis) as we seek to provide a more comprehensive and systemic portrait of the respondents' sense of their own development as coaches.

Results

As we did in the first two reports we will offer only basic descriptive statistics (mean and variance) for all of the statements associated with each of these questions. The mean scores will give us an initial impression regarding the extent to which respondents rated themselves low or

high on each item, while the variance scores will give us an initial impression of the extent to which respondents tend to agree with one another in their rating of each item.

Question One: How much influence has each of the following had on your OVERALL development as a coach?

We begin by providing a summary of the responses to this initial question concerning what coaches indicate were the influences (positive and negative) on their overall development as a coach.

First, a table for the first study with mean scores and variance for each item:

Table One

Study One: How much influence has each of the following had on your OVERALL development as a coach?

	Mean	Variance
<i>Experiences in coaching clients</i>	2.74	0.36
<i>Taking coaching specific courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses)</i>	2.21	1.01
<i>Collaborating with other coaches</i>	2.09	0.91
<i>Getting formal supervision, mentoring or consultation</i>	2.06	1.20
<i>Having informal case discussion with colleagues</i>	1.84	1.12
<i>Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice</i>	2.00	0.63
<i>Observing coaches in workshops, films or on tapes</i>	1.50	1.26
<i>Getting personal coaching</i>	2.14	1.03
<i>Giving formal supervision, mentor coaching, or consultation to other</i>	1.75	1.37

<i>coaches</i>		
<i>Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online)</i>	1.64	1.74
<i>Doing coaching related research</i>	1.14	1.49
<i>The institutional conditions in which you practice</i>	1.11	1.39
<i>Experiences in your personal life</i>	2.15	0.86

Second, we present the means and variance scores for the same question as it was posed in the second survey -- six years later.

Table Two

Study Two: How much influence has each of the following had on your OVERALL development as a coach?

	Mean	Variance
<i>Experiences in coaching clients</i>	2.76	0.19
<i>Taking coaching specific courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses)</i>	2.34	0.52
<i>Collaborating with other coaches</i>	1.84	0.98
<i>Getting formal supervision, mentoring or consultation</i>	1.60	1.02
<i>Having informal case discussion with colleagues</i>	1.68	0.86
<i>Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice</i>	1.91	0.81
<i>Observing coaches in workshops, films or on tapes</i>	1.36	1.04

<i>Getting personal coaching</i>	1.91	1.06
<i>Giving formal supervision, mentor coaching, or consultation to other coaches</i>	1.71	1.48
<i>Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online)</i>	1.68	1.89
<i>Doing coaching related research</i>	1.23	1.36
<i>The institutional conditions in which you practice</i>	1.02	1.00
<i>Experiences in your personal life</i>	1.98	0.80

As we noted in our analysis of results from the questions that were the focus of our first two articles, several approaches can be taken as we attempt to make sense of these means and variances. One approach, with regard to the means, is to take these mean (average) scores at "face-value." If a respondent indicates that she rates a specific item as very positive (rating of +3), then we should accept this assessment by the respondent and not attempt to manipulate this assessment in some manner. Therefore, as we discuss the results from both of these questions, we will first consider the mean scores as accurate representations of the respondents' self-perceptions regarding influence.

We also can make a legitimate claim that the mean scores should be interpreted in a comparative manner. It is not simply a matter of reporting on the mean scores recorded for these questions. There are several ways in which we must be cautious in accepting the mean scores for these two questions. Specifically, as we noted in the first two articles, there are so-called "response set" factors that can legitimately be considered when seeking to make sense of the scores recorded for these questions--though the use of a different scale for these two questions goes a long way to break up the response sets.

There is a strong judgmental factor ("social desirability") to be assigned to the five questions we considered in the first two reports. This is less likely the case with these two questions--though it probably socially desirable to indicate that we read books, collaborate with colleagues, and go to some conferences. These actions make us look good as a coach. We appear to be thoughtful

and responsible in rating these items as positive influences. In a long questionnaire, such as this one, response fatigue is also likely to settle in by the time the respondent faces these questions. Respondents are often likely to simply click on one end of the response spectrum (usually the positive end). This acquiescence response set can be particularly prevalent when the survey requires no more than clicking of the mouse on a specific response bullet. However, as noted above, the acquiescence set is broken up (to some extent) when the rating scale is shifted in the middle of the questionnaire. Those who designed this survey instrument are to be commended for introducing this variation.

Though response set concerns are somewhat diminished for these two questions, a comparative analysis is justified. We will look at means in terms of not just their absolute value, but also their value in comparison with the mean scores on other items listed within a specific question. We will approach the mean scores for these two questions from both the absolute and comparative perspectives.

There is not as much of a problem in making sense of the variance scores with regard to these two questions (or questions addressed in the first two reports). As we indicated in the previous reports, this may be the most interesting descriptive statistic when considering the meaning of scores in a questionnaire such as this one--which was completed by a diverse set of respondents. The variance scores tell you about the extent to which respondents tend to agree with one another. A low variance scores indicates that there is a high level of agreement, whereas a high variance score indicates low levels of agreement (and potential controversy). Some caution does have to be engaged when interpreting variance scores, for an item that pulls for social desirability or acquiescence tends to "squish" everyone toward one end of the scale: there is not a higher (or lower) point on the scale when respondents are making their choice. In the case of these two questions, it may be difficult for respondents to rate many of the items as negative (especially rating them as "very negative")--though we will see some remarkably low mean scores for several items (with many negative ratings being offered by respondents to these items).

Given these preliminary considerations, alternative approaches, and cautionary notes, we present the mean scores and variances for both of the questions in a hierarchical manner--from high to low. We turn first to the question about influences on the overall development of

coaches, beginning with the mean scores for the first survey, listing the means from highest to lowest:

Question One: How much influence has each of the following had on your OVERALL development as a coach?

Experiences in coaching clients (mean=2.74)

Taking coaching specific courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses) (mean=2.21)

Experiences in your personal life (mean=2.15)

Getting personal coaching (mean=2.14)

Collaborating with other coaches (mean=2.09)

Getting formal supervision, mentoring or consultation (mean=2.06)

Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice (mean=2.00)

Having informal case discussion with colleagues (mean=1.84)

Giving formal supervision, mentor coaching, or consultation to other coaches (mean=1.75)

Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online)(mean=1.64)

Observing coaches in workshops, films or on tapes (mean=1.50)

Doing coaching related research (mean=1.14)

The institutional conditions in which you practice (mean=1.11)

We now list the means in order of magnitude for the first question from the second survey:

Question One: How much influence has each of the following had on your OVERALL development as a coach?

Experiences in coaching clients (mean=2.76)

Taking coaching specific courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses) (mean=2.34)

Experiences in your personal life (mean=1.98)

Getting personal coaching (mean=1.91)

Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice (mean=1.91)

Collaborating with other coaches (mean=1.84)

Giving formal supervision, mentor coaching, or consultation to other coaches (mean=1.71)

Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online) (mean=1.68)

Having informal case discussion with colleagues (mean=1.68)
Getting formal supervision, mentoring or consultation (mean=1.60)
Observing coaches in workshops, films or on tapes (mean=1.36)
Doing coaching related research (mean=1.23)
The institutional conditions in which you practice (mean=1.02)

The variance scores for the items on question one will provide us with some idea about the level of agreement among the respondents to both surveys. We begin with the variance scores for the first survey from highest (least agreement) to lowest (most agreement):

Question One: How much influence has each of the following had on your OVERALL development as a coach?

Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online) (variance=1.74)
Doing coaching related research (variance=1.49)
The institutional conditions in which you practice (variance=1.39)
Giving formal supervision, mentor coaching, or consultation to other coaches (variance=1.37)
Observing coaches in workshops, films or on tapes (variance=1.26)
Getting formal supervision, mentoring or consultation (variance=1.20)
Having informal case discussion with colleagues (variance=1.12)
Getting personal coaching (variance=1.03)
Taking coaching specific courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses) (variance=1.01)
Collaborating with other coaches (variance=0.91)
Experiences in your personal life (variance=0.86)
Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice (variance=0.63)
Experiences in coaching clients (variance=0.36)

The second set of variance scores comes from Study Two responses to our first question. They are once again listed from highest variance to lowest:

Question One: How much influence has each of the following had on your OVERALL development as a coach?

Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online) (variance=1.89)
Giving formal supervision, mentor coaching, or consultation to other coaches (variance=1.48)
Doing coaching related research (variance=1.36)
Getting personal coaching (variance=1.06)
Observing coaches in workshops, films or on tapes (variance=1.04)

Getting formal supervision, mentoring or consultation (variance=1.02)

The institutional conditions in which you practice (variance=1.00)

Collaborating with other coaches (variance=0.98)

Having informal case discussion with colleagues (variance=0.86)

Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice (variance=0.81)

Experiences in your personal life (variance=0.80)

Taking coaching specific courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses) (variance=0.52) Experiences in coaching clients (variance=0.19)

Question Two: How much influence does each of the following have on your CURRENT development as a coach?

We turn now to reporting on the means and variance scores for responses to the second question. The means and variance scores for the Survey One respondents are provided in Table Three.

Table Three
Study One: Question Two. How much influence does each of the following have on your CURRENT development as a coach?

	Mean	Variance
<i>Experiences in coaching with clients</i>	2.54	0.70
<i>Taking courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses)</i>	1.99	0.95
<i>Getting formal supervision or consultation</i>	1.84	1.40
<i>Having informal case discussion with colleagues</i>	1.81	0.94
<i>Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice</i>	1.92	0.80
<i>Getting life coaching for yourself</i>	1.59	1.38

<i>Getting coaching on your coaching work</i>	1.67	1.34
<i>Coaching other coaches on professional or life issues</i>	1.69	1.18
<i>Giving supervision or consultation to other coaches</i>	1.60	1.51
<i>Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online)</i>	1.61	1.69
<i>The workplace conditions in which you practice</i>	0.93	2.34
<i>Experiences in your personal life outside coaching</i>	1.83	1.61

Our fourth table contains the means and variance scores for Question Two respondents to our second survey.

Table Four

Study Two: Question Two. How much influence does each of the following have on your CURRENT development as a coach?

	Mean	Variance
<i>Experiences in coaching with clients</i>	2.66	0.34
<i>Taking courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses)</i>	2.07	0.89
<i>Getting formal supervision or consultation</i>	1.56	1.82
<i>Having informal case discussion with colleagues</i>	1.76	0.78
<i>Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice</i>	1.81	1.14

<i>Getting life coaching for yourself</i>	1.53	1.58
<i>Getting coaching on your coaching work</i>	1.35	1.98
<i>Coaching other coaches on professional or life issues</i>	1.63	2.28
<i>Giving supervision or consultation to other coaches</i>	1.40	2.24
<i>Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online)</i>	1.46	2.69
<i>The workplace conditions in which you practice</i>	0.82	2.88
<i>Experiences in your personal life outside coaching</i>	1.65	1.64

The same set of considerations will be taken into account when attempting to make sense of mean scores and variance scores for this second question. The absolute value associated with each of the mean scores must be considered and we will do so when discussing results from this second question. Though the response set concerns are less with this question than the questions addressed in the first two reports, it is still important for us to compare the mean and variance scores. There is still the potential of response set distortions in data derived from responses to this second question. Given these response set concerns, we offer the following ranking of mean scores (from high to low) for this second question from our Survey One respondents:

Question Two. How much influence does each of the following have on your CURRENT development as a coach?

Experiences in coaching with clients (mean=2.54)

Taking courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses) (mean=1.99)

Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice (mean=1.92)

Getting formal supervision or consultation (mean=1.84)

Experiences in your personal life outside coaching (mean=1.83)

Having informal case discussion with colleagues (mean=1.81)

Coaching other coaches on professional or life issues (mean=1.69)

Getting coaching on your coaching work (mean=1.67)

Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online) (mean=1.61)

Giving supervision or consultation to other coaches (mean=1.60)

Getting life coaching for yourself (mean=1.59)

The workplace conditions in which you practice (mean=0.93)

We turn now to the mean scores (listed from high to low) for the Second Survey:

Question Two. How much influence does each of the following have on your CURRENT development as a coach?

Experiences in coaching with clients (mean=2.66)

Taking courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses) (mean=2.07)

Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice (mean=1.81)

Having informal case discussion with colleagues (mean=1.76)

Experiences in your personal life outside coaching (mean=1.65)

Coaching other coaches on professional or life issues (mean=1.63)

Getting formal supervision or consultation (mean=1.56)

Getting life coaching for yourself (mean=1.53)

Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online) (mean=1.46)

Giving supervision or consultation to other coaches (mean=1.40)

Getting coaching on your coaching work (mean=1.35)

The workplace conditions in which you practice (mean=0.82)

The next set of scores we provide are variance scores for this second question. We begin with the variance scores for the first survey listed from high (least agreement) to low (most agreement):

Question Two. How much influence does each of the following have on your CURRENT development as a coach?

The workplace conditions in which you practice (variance=2.34)

Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online) (variance=1.69)

Experiences in your personal life outside coaching (variance=1.61)

Giving supervision or consultation to other coaches (variance=1.51)

Getting formal supervision or consultation (variance=1.40)

Getting life coaching for yourself (variance=1.38)

Getting coaching on your coaching work (variance=1.34)

Coaching other coaches on professional or life issues (variance=1.18)
Taking courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses) (variance=0.95)
Having informal case discussion with colleagues (variance=0.94)
Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice (variance=0.80)
Experiences in coaching with clients (variance=0.70)

We have similarly listed the variance scores for Question Two items in the Second Survey from high scores (least agreement) to low scores (most agreement):

Question Two. How much influence does each of the following have on your CURRENT development as a coach?

The workplace conditions in which you practice (variance=2.88)
Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online) (variance=2.69)
Coaching other coaches on professional or life issues (variance=2.28)
Giving supervision or consultation to other coaches (variance=2.24)
Getting coaching on your coaching work (variance=1.98)
Getting formal supervision or consultation (variance=1.82)
Experiences in your personal life outside coaching (variance=1.64)
Getting life coaching for yourself (variance=1.58)
Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice (variance=1.14)
Taking courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses) (variance=0.89)
Having informal case discussion with colleagues (variance=0.78)
Experiences in coaching with clients (variance=0.34)

Comparisons Between Two Studies

One of the strengths (or at least potential strengths) of this two phase study is that we can compare results from these two different samples, taken several years apart. Are the findings "robust" with regard to consistency over time, as well as the sampling of different populations (at least minimal overlap in populations sampled). Following are comparisons between the two studies regarding both questions. We begin with the First Question and offer means and variances (as well as rankings) for both studies.

Table Seven: Study One and Two

**Question One: How much influence has each of the following had on your
OVERALL development as a coach?**

	Study One Mean	Study One Mean (Ranking)	Study One Variance	Study One Variance (Ranking)	Study Two Mean	Study Two Mean (Ranking)	Study Two Variance	Study Two Variance (Ranking)
<i>Experiences in coaching clients</i>	2.74	1	0.36	13	2.76	1	0.19	13
<i>Taking coaching specific courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses)</i>	2.21	2	1.01	9	2.34	2	0.52	12
<i>Collaborating with other coaches</i>	2.09	5	0.91	10	1.84	6	0.98	8
<i>Getting formal supervision, mentoring or consultation</i>	2.06	6	1.20	6	1.60	10	1.02	6
<i>Having informal case discussion with colleagues</i>	1.84	8	1.12	7	1.68	9	0.86	9
<i>Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice</i>	2.00	7	0.63	12	1.91	5	0.81	10
<i>Observing coaches in workshops, films or on tapes</i>	1.50	11	1.26	5	1.36	11	1.04	5
<i>Getting personal coaching</i>	2.14	4	1.03	8	1.91	4	1.06	4
<i>Giving formal supervision, mentor coaching, or consultation to other coaches</i>	1.75	9	1.37	4	1.71	7	1.48	2
<i>Teaching coaching courses</i>	1.64	10	1.74	1	1.68	8	1.89	1

<i>or seminars (face to face or online)</i>								
<i>Doing coaching related research</i>	1.14	12	1.49	2	1.23	12	1.36	3
<i>The institutional conditions in which you practice</i>	1.11	13	1.39	3	1.02	13	1.00	7
<i>Experiences in your personal life</i>	2.15	3	0.86	11	1.98	3	0.80	11

We now present a table containing mean, variance and rankings for responses to the second question.

Table Eight: Study One and Two

Question Two: How much influence does each of the following have on your CURRENT development as a coach?

	Study One Mean	Study One Mean (Ranking)	Study One Variance	Study One Variance (Ranking)	Study Two Mean	Student Two Mean (Ranking)	Study Two Variance	Study Two Variance (Ranking)
<i>Experiences in coaching with clients</i>	2.54	1	0.70	12	2.66	1	0.34	12
<i>Taking courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses)</i>	1.99	2	0.95	9	2.07	2	0.89	10
<i>Getting formal supervision or consultation</i>	1.84	4	1.40	5	1.56	7	1.82	6
<i>Having informal case discussion with colleagues</i>	1.81	6	0.94	10	1.76	4	0.78	11
<i>Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching</i>	1.92	3	0.80	11	1.81	3	1.14	9

<i>practice</i>								
<i>Getting life coaching for yourself</i>	1.59	11	1.38	6	1.53	8	1.58	8
<i>Getting coaching on your coaching work</i>	1.67	8	1.34	7	1.35	11	1.98	5
<i>Coaching other coaches on professional or life issues</i>	1.69	7	1.18	8	1.63	6	2.28	3
<i>Giving supervision or consultation to other coaches</i>	1.60	10	1.51	4	1.40	10	2.24	4
<i>Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online)</i>	1.61	9	1.69	2	1.46	9	2.69	2
<i>The workplace conditions in which you practice</i>	0.93	12	2.34	1	0.82	12	2.88	1
<i>Experiences in your personal life outside coaching</i>	1.83	5	1.61	3	1.65	5	1.64	7

Discussion

In seeking to make sense of results obtained from our initial analysis of responses to these two Development of Coaching questions, we turn first to a comparison between the two surveys that were conducted, then turn to themes that emerge from the two Influence questions that are the focus of this third article.

Comparison Between Two Surveys

As we found when reporting on results in our first two articles, there is often a high level of concurrence in the means scores for the two studies. Not only are the mean scores quite similar, the rank order of means for all three studies are similar. Even the variance scores are similar with regard to both amount of variance in responses to a specific item and the rank order of the variance scores for each item.

The only difference of any note in results from the two studies concerns the ranking of mean scores for one of the question one items (the influence of formal supervision): the mean score for this item ranked sixth among items on the first survey, but tenth among survey two items. For question two, the only major differences in the ranking of mean scores concerned (once again) supervision and receiving coaching. For the supervision item, the mean score ranking among items on the first survey was four, while on the second survey it was seven. For the receiving of coaching services, the difference in mean score rankings shows up for both the life coaching item and the item concerned with getting coaching on one's own coaching work. The life coaching item ranked eleventh among the first survey items, but eighth among items on the second survey. The ranking differences of mean scores were just the reverse for the coaching on one's own coaching item: this item ranked eighth on the first survey and eleventh on the second survey.

These difference in rankings of mean scores are not very dramatic, but they are the biggest of any with regard to question one and question two items on the two surveys. The main point to be made is that mean score results from the two surveys are quite quite consistent, suggesting that findings are robust over time: the patterns of influence (as represented by mean scores) do not seem to differ much over this six year period.

What about variance scores? Once again, the differences between the two surveys are not very great. The only two rankings on Question One that were of any significant differences concerned personal coaching and the institutional conditions in which a coach works. Receiving personal coaching was ranked eighth with regard to variance among items in the first survey, while it was ranked fourth among items on the second survey. The institutional conditions item (of which we will have much more to say later in this report) was ranked third in variance among items on the first survey, but seventh among variance items on the second survey.

When we turn to the second question, the only two items that yield any significant differences in ranking concern the coaching of other coaches and the influence of one's personal life experiences. Coaching other coaches ranks eighth on the first survey, and third on the second survey. One's personal life outside coaching ranks third on the first survey and seventh on the second survey. As in the case of the mean score rankings, it seems that variance is robust: the

amount of agreement on any one item remains essentially the same (at least in terms of rankings) over the six year period of time.

As I noted in the previous two reports. I look forward to exploring differences in these variance rankings with regard to several of the demographic variables that might contribute to differences in results from the two studies. Are coaches with extensive experience more likely or less likely to be influenced by personal life experiences than those with less experience. Do these differences in coaching background also account for differences in the influence of one's coaching of other coaches. Are certain kinds of coaching (e.g. personal coaching) more or less likely to be influential among men and women or among those who are young and those who are old? What about the impact of culture? Perhaps most importantly, what demographics (if any) account for differences in the ratings of the item in question two about the influence of working conditions on coaches?

Coaching Specialization

It is quite understandable that some of the items rated low and yielded high variance scores on both question one and question two. These are items that focus on more specialized domains in the field of professional coaching -- such as coaching research and the teaching of coaching. Some coaches are involved in these activities and others are not. It is also possible, however, that these items are rated low not because coaches do not engage in these activities, but because these activities don't have much influence in the overall or current development of these coaches. Our demographic analyses, once again, might provide some clarification.

It is also worth noting that there is yet another set of items regarding coaching specialization that produced relatively low mean scores and relatively high variance scores. These were items concerned with the supervision of coaching. The giving of formal supervision was rated low on both questions and produced high variance scores. Are the differences in these ratings a result of some respondents not doing much supervision or are they a result of some respondents not considering their own provision of supervision to be very influential (or even very positive) for them? Many respondents were also not very positive (responding to question two) about receiving supervision. They might think that supervision is of some positive influence in their overall development as a coach, but not in their current development.

These findings are certainly challenging, given the emphasis on supervision among some leaders in the coaching profession. One recent issue of the *Future of Coaching* (housed in this Library of Professional Coaching) was devoted to controversies surrounding the provision of supervision to coaches. Results that I have just reported suggest that differences of opinion regarding coaching supervision are real and manifest in the reactions of working professional coaches to questions regarding the positive or negative influence that giving or getting supervision has on the overall and current development of coaches.

The Working Environment

Some of the most startling findings generated by results from these two surveys come from the two questions on which we focus in this report. These findings concern the often negative responses and wide divergence in responses to items in both questions regarding the workplace conditions in which coaches work. While many of the survey respondents are quite positive about their work environment, other respondents to both questions are not very positive in their rating of the influence which workplace conditions have on their ongoing and current development as coaches. In some cases, the respondents actually rate the influence as quite negative.

The results are a bit difficult to interpret, since we don't know if the respondents are focusing on their own personal workplace or on the workplace in which their client's work. In other words, is their own coaching agency or organization inclined to be toxic? If they are in private practice as a professional coach, is this working environment unpleasant and counter to their development as a coach? Conversely, are they focusing on the challenging environment in which their clients work. Do they find the place toxic in which their clients tend to operate? Is that one of the reasons why they were called in to do some coaching? We don't know which is the case, but this certainly is an important distinction to be made between one's home environment and the environment of one's clients.

Regardless of the distinction to be drawn, there is an important implication to be drawn from these survey results: some coaches are facing major challenges regarding their own care and feeding. If the source of their discontent is the environment in which their clients operate, then what is the lingering impact on the coaches? Are they "infected" by the environment of their clients? Do they need to take care of themselves, while taking care of their clients? Why are

some coaches quite positive about the environment in which their clients work, while others are quite negative? Will our demographic analyses yield any insights?

What if the toxicity is to be found in their own coaching home? How do some of the coaches who responded to our survey avoid burnout if they face challenges in their own professional practice setting? We may be getting some beginning idea about why professional coaches often work in isolation and operate as we noted in our second essay, as "autonomous professionals." It might have something to do with the environment in which they are working. This could be their "home" environment (the office or organization in which they work) or in the working environment of their clients. We can't tell from this set of data.

As I noted at the end of the second report, it would seem that a dialogue regarding the results reported in this third report is warranted -- especially given the recent emphasis on mentoring and supervision in the field of professional coaching. Who does the mentoring and supervision? Do we need to address the issue of workplace environments and the potential impact of negative environments on the ongoing development of coaches -- and the potential for disillusionment and withdrawal into professional isolation?

The Influence of Direct Experience

Professional coaching has often been described as an "in the moment" and "here-and-now" experience. Some of this emphasis on direct, immediate experience can no doubt be attributed to the origins of many coaching schools and perspectives in the environment of personal growth training and workshops (originating in the 1960s) and in the environment of organization development consultation with its emphasis on feedback, disclosure and experientially-based team building. Whatever the origins of this emphasis, we see it alive and flourishing among the coaches who responded to these two surveys.

The first item in both questions--concerning the "experiences in coaching clients"--ranking highest and was least likely to be controversial (high variance). Everyone seems to agree that the direct experience of working with coaching clients trumps every other source of influence. Training, the reading of books and observation of other coaches at work can't compare with the influence of actually doing the coaching and learning from this practice of coaching. The spirit

of John Dewey and Kurt Lewin lives with their advocacy of action research and the learning that occurs when actively engaging the world (learning-by-doing).

We also see this emphasis represented in the high rating of an item in question one concerned with the influence of experiences in one's personal life--though it is interesting to note that this item rates lower when respondents are considering the influence of personal life experiences in their current coaching practices. We might hypothesize that these experiences have had a greater impact in the earlier years of one's life as a coach than in one's current practices. Would we find a similar emphasis on direct experience among those working in other human service professions? Does the influence of personal life experiences tend to diminish over time among those working as clinical psychologists--are they more likely to keep their personal lives isolated from their professional life? We will be able to provide a partial answer to this question when comparing results from these surveys with those reported by David Orlinksy and his colleagues in their study of clinical psychologists.

The Influence of Indirect Experiences

Results from both surveys suggest that its not all about the influence of direct work with clients or one's own personal life, there are many ways in which coaches are influenced by less immediate sources. For example, quite high mean scores and rankings are to be found in both questions with regard to "taking coaching specific courses, seminars or workshops." This item yielded very little disagreement among the respondents to the second question (current development), but somewhat higher disagreement among respondents to the first question (overall development). Our demographic analyses might produce some insight regarding the disagreements in assessing the influence of training on overall development.

Reading also was influential in terms of current development, whereas getting coached and collaborating with other coaches was considered influential in the overall development of coaches. Are these latter influences more likely to be strong in the early career of a professional coach. The demographic analysis might provide us with some insights.

Hard and Soft Learning

Let's try to put the last two sets of findings together--knowing full well that anything we might conclude now will be subject to further clarification and revision as we begin to sort things out

with demographics and as we conduct further research regarding the development of coaches. It would seem that there is a certain kind of influence (and I would reframe influence as learning) that is "soft" in character. I don't mean "soft" in terms of being easy; rather, I mean "soft" in terms of being subtle and often elusive. The direct experiences with clients are "soft" in this regard, as are the ways in which we learn from our personal experiences and somehow translate these lessons learned into our coaching practice. These are the "here-and-now" experiences that slip in and out of our life and work--experiences that we glimpse, but often don't fully appreciate or understand until much later when we reflect on them and identify repeated patterns embedded in these experiences (what are often called "second-order" learning).

By contrast, I would identify the learning as "hard" that occurs through indirect experiences via books, teaching sessions and supervision. It is "hard" in the sense that the source of this learning is often definitive, well-structured and presented in an "objective" manner (as evidence-based "reality"). While personal experiences in our own life and our work with clients tends to be "subjective" and not easily captured in words, the lessons we are "taught" from coaching books, instructors and supervisors are typically conveyed via words.

There is an intermediate form of influence and learning -- somewhere between soft and hard. This occurs in our interactions with colleagues. The "reality" being created in this interaction is produced by the two of us together (what some contemporary psychotherapists describe as "intersubjectivity"). It is hard in the sense of occurring "out there" in the world, rather than within our head and heart. It is soft in that this moment of "reality" is often fleeting and not easily replicated. We can prepare a transcript of the conversation that occurs, but somehow this doesn't capture the real essence of what has occurred in this moment of shared collegial insight and "truth."

Placing all of this together, I would suggest that findings from the Development of Coaches Survey point to "soft" learning as being of greatest importance (influence) for many coaches, whereas "hard" learning is less important. This ordering of priorities seems to align with findings from the first two reports indicating that coaches tend to be most comfortable with the "soft" processes of coaching (building rapport with clients, being good listeners, etc.) and least comfortable with the "hard" processes (tactical and strategic thinking).

I noted in the previous reports that Daniel Kahneman's "Fast" thinking seems to align with the "soft" coaching processes, while his "Slow" thinking aligns with the "hard" processes. A Nobel Prize-winning behavioral economist, Kahneman (2011) suggests that "fast" thinking tends to be highly intuitive. It operates in the procedural domain of our brain and therefore is often unconscious or habitual. By contrast, "slow" thinking tends to operate in the expository domain of our brain and therefore is usually quite conscious, deliberate and laborious.

I would now add the dimension of influence and learning, suggesting that "soft" learning is interwoven with "soft" coaching processes and "fast" thinking. As coaches, we are most likely to learn about the "soft" processes of learning from our interaction with clients--rather than from books, training or supervision. These "hard" sources of learning are more closely associated with "hard" coaching processes and "Slow" thinking. We are not as comfortable with these more challenging aspects of our work as coaches, though we might find in our demographic analyses of our survey results that "hard" coaching, "hard" learning and "slow" thinking are prevalent during our early years of coaching, whereas "soft" coaching, "soft" learning and "fast" thinking more commonly operate when we gain further experience as coaches. Much as we have to use our expository brain when first learning any skilled actions (such as driving a car or playing tennis), we rely more on our procedural brain when these actions have been performed repeatedly.

On the one hand, this shift to the procedural brain is good news, because we can be thinking about the bigger picture (such as the actions of other drivers on the highway, or the strategy being used by our tennis opponent). On the other hand, this shift can lead to deeply-engrained habits that are hard to break and are not easily modified as conditions in our world change. As coaches, we might too often rely on our habitual patterns of interaction with clients, rather than thinking more slowly, engaging the "hard" process of strategizing as a coach, and retreating to the books, attending a relevant coaching seminar, or even seeking out supervision.

The Bridge: Collaborative Coaching Inquiry

What about the intermediate influence that occurs through out interaction with colleagues? Is it valuable to blend the "hard" and "soft" learning that occurs when we turn to peers for dialogue and shared insight? We concluded our first article by addressing a theme that Francine

Campone noted in her request for participation in the first Survey: the field of coaching should build a culture of research and evidence. I added a further recommendation to this proposal in the second report: "this culture should move coaching beyond isolation and autonomy. It should move the field to a culture of collaboration, in which thoughtful dialogue occurs as a blending of soft and hard learning. This collaborative dialogue should be founded in Kahneman's slow thinking. It should be accompanied by evidence-based information, reflective practice and a desire to advance the inter-discipline of professional coaching through critical inquiry." Results from this third report seem to reinforce both themes.

The role to be played by collaborative dialogue might be particularly important if we take into account the rather disturbing finding in this third report regarding the environment in which professional coaches work. In a work environment that might be challenging for us as coaches, we must engage in collaborative dialogue regarding how to live in this environment (if it is where our clients work) and how to improve this environment (if it is our own home base). In a profession that values direct experience and the rich learning to be gained from active engagement in the practice of coaching, it is particularly important that we find ways to collectively reflect on what we have learned and how to apply what we have learned to our own ongoing personal and professional development. Hopefully, this set of articles, reporting on results from the Development of Coaches surveys, is contributing in a small way to building such a culture and opening the doors to further collaborative dialogue.

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