Editor’s overview: tutoring and coaching

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This issue of *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* includes research from scholars representing North Carolina and Ohio in the United States and Canada, South Africa and Taiwan. These international contributors mainly explore the ideas of collaborative tutoring and coaching as well as the influences of these developmental interaction behaviors on learning and academic performance.

Although there is no agreed-upon conceptual definitions that clearly differentiate coaching, tutoring, and mentoring, the literature supports that these developmental human interactions are different in various aspects. Coaches and tutors are usually individuals or groups that possess advanced experience and knowledge in a certain field. The focus of these relationships is centered around problems, tasks, or performance improvement, whereas mentoring relationships are people-centered. Coaching and tutoring relationships usually end when those problems or issues are solved; thus, these relationships occur relatively for a short-term period, whereas mentoring relationships can last even for life-long (Irby, 2012; D’Abate, Eddy, & Tannenbaum, 2003).

Watt and Wasburn-Moses, in their article, *The Use of a Collaborative Math Tutoring Model to Improve Content Knowledge among Special Education Teacher Candidates*, qualitatively explored changes in 19 special education teacher candidate’s attitudes towards teaching and learning after they participated in experiential learning. Their study also identified the impact of authentic learning experiences, enhanced by sufficient host teacher support and modeling, on the math content knowledge of the preservice teacher. The authors found participation in the collaborative field experience in mathematics enhanced the teacher candidate’s knowledge of math content. Additionally, their findings implied the importance of host teacher in influencing teacher candidates sense of self-efficacy.

In the article *Reclaiming Tutorials as Learning Spaces in the Sciences*, Louw investigated the practice of tutorials as learning spaces at a large research-intensive university in South Africa. Using a mixed-method investigation at the faculty level, the author examined (1) how tutorials are structured, (2) what kinds of training and support exist for tutors and (3) the indicators faculty use to assess the success of tutorials. The findings of the study support the need for careful planning of how tutorials will be used as learning spaces. Additionally, the authors emphasized the need for tutor preparation and
training. Finally, based on the findings, Louw explicates the benefits of tutorials regarded as an integral element of the learning process, suggesting lecturer’s involvement in the tutorial planning process as crucial.

In the next article, The Influence of Academic Coaching on Persistence in Online Graduate Students, Lehan, Hussey and Shriner acknowledged the rapid increase of online higher education students and their higher failure and dropout rates compared to brick-and-mortar institutions. The authors explored online student use of academic learning centers and their impact on student retention and found students visiting the learning center increased their odds of persistence.

Gray and Myers in their article, Two Types of Coaching Styles: Graduate and Undergraduate Students Collaborate in a University Reading Clinic, used a phenomenological approach to case study research to gain deeper understanding of how graduate students interacted with pre-service teachers in a university reading clinic. The authors found two coaching styles emerged among graduate students; instructive and collaborative. They recognized instructive coaching style to be associated with less coaching experience, noting collaborative approaches get strengthened through experience.

In The role of questioning in writing tutorials: a critical approach to student-centered learning in peer tutorials in higher education, Munje, Nanima and Clarence identified the role questioning plays in peer tutoring. They explored questions asked during those interactions. Munje, Nanima and Clarence’s findings supported the need for peer tutors to incorporate questioning to enhance conversations regarding the student’s writing through a student-centered approach.

In the final article of this edition, Enhancing Teaching Competence through Bidirectional Mentoring and Structured On-the-job Training Model, Chen created a theoretical basis for bidirectional mentoring. The author highlighted the functions of enhancing career development, psychosocial support and role modeling in bidirectional mentoring as key aspects of a structured on-the-job training framework.

Publishing in mentoring and tutoring

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Books to be reviewed must be about mentoring and tutoring. Visit this journal’s website, http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/13611267.html, for more information about M&T, as well as special rates and discounts.

References


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