

Outstanding Schools Europe Conference

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- Building an emotionally intelligent school workforce based on trust, communication, and positive relationships, that is able to lead better and deliver improved results.
- Championing a personalised, adaptive, and holistic approach to teacher education and talent development to successfully harness and enable professional growth of all staff, advance whole-school improvement, and improve long-term retention.
- Discussing how nurturing autonomy, self-reflection, and accountability, through distributed leadership and coaching and mentoring can improve staff performance and wellbeing.

MacGilchrist, Mayers & Read (1997), Collins & Morten-Hanson (2001), Dimmock (2010) and Harris (2014), for example, argue in differing ways that knowing the context locates the leader's thinking and that in turn, is what helps them make wise decisions. Day et al, (2009) argued that leading the school context required four specific leadership practices: setting direction; developing people; redesigning the organisation; and managing the instructional teaching and learning program. And, in a more recent study, Shatzer, et al. (2014) supported this idea stating that the most important thing for all school leaders to do, was exert contextually relevant leadership on increasing the impact that teaching for effective student learning could make.

The Importance of Institutional and Relational Trust

Trust is, is based on defining ideas by Tschannen-Moran (2004) who argued that it is built from five elements, all contributing to each other: honesty; benevolence; openness; competence and reliability.

Building on earlier ideas by Dibben, Eley-Morris and Lean (2000), Hardingham (2004) viewed trust within coaching programmes, focused on individual relational trust, as being a determining factor for success. However, her work appears not to take account of institutional trust which Wahlstrom & Seashore Louis (2008) note is often dependent on the leadership hierarchy in the school, in particular to the Headteacher/Principal. However, they found that when a shared culture of leadership exists and staff are working within a professional community of shared practice, the effect of the level of trust in the Headteacher/Principal as an accelerator is less important and levels of staff agency (their ability to make and follow through on their own decisions) matter more. Later work by Seashore Louis et. al (2010) in a study of school effectiveness and school improvement found that institutional trust was much more significant when it was absent because it had the effect of limiting teacher learning, hindering teacher effectiveness and distressing the professional learning community, even when relational trust existed between pockets of staff.

Both institutional and relational trust need to work together. In earlier work, for example, Clutterbuck and Megginson, (2005) found that trusting relationships within a coaching situation, underpin a person's ability to be able to reflect deeply. It is important, not because it prevents coaches from asking powerful questions, but inhibits the answering of those questions. Effective questioning depends to a large degree on the platform of trust that is being developed by the coach, as the client perceives it. Developing relational trust, that sits within an institutional framework of trust is further supported by Hardingham (2004) and, Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005), who contend that coaching works when it is a supportive process that enables the client to reflect and be open. Without trust, there is little reflection. Without reflection the client cannot find a renewed sense of direction and without direction it is not possible to determine practical actions or make clearer more confident decisions. For Clutterbuck (2012), trust is directly correlated with the client's practical and emotional need to feel a sense of psychological and emotional safety before they are truly able to say what they are thinking. Speaking as Headteacher, my own experiences have shown me that developing a culture of trust starts - somewhat alarmingly - with me! Brown and Brown go even further arguing that, 'trust is a complex state' which can 'only flow from the leadership within the organisation, not a commodity subject to transactional rules,' (2013:61). Whilst this point has resonance with my own position, it fails to acknowledge the trust that exists between employees which when strong enough provides a platform for the building of rapport which is necessary in coaching sessions.

Landsberg goes so far as to say about trust that 'effective coaching only really happens when the coachee trusts the coach', (1996:99). His view has not changed in the last 20 years, writing in his most recent publication that a trusting relationship between the client and the coach is the underpinning of all effective coaching activity, (Landsberg 2015). This all serves to point out that the presence of trust is not only vital for coaching success, but also is a key purpose and function of the person in the coaching role, (Cunningham 2011). When clients have a sense of real trust in the coach and the institution, coupled to their perception of confidentiality, there is potential for thinking and discussing real issues and real experiences without self-limiting fear.

Trust is seen as being important in some early studies in peer coaching, which highlighted the importance of the quality of relationships and the need for the presence of trusting working conditions for coaching to work well. Although these studies tended to focus on describing coaching methods and outcomes of school programmes, they provide us with an historical journey that continually reminds us of the importance of trust within and around coaching, (Showers 1985, Strother 1989, Ackland 1991, Roberts 1991, Phillips & Glickman 1991). Gottesman (2000) built on these studies, discovering that peer coaching was a powerful mechanism to promote *structured* reflection, which enhanced levels of personal and professional learning with adults and contributed to the development of stronger levels of trust relationally and organisationally. Clutterbuck (2012) further developed the ideas of trust and structured reflection, claiming that because there is less operational pressure from a peer than from a line manager-subordinate situation, the starting point of trust can be stronger and consequently reflections can be deeper. Clutterbuck (2010), however, rightly points out that

trust can lead to deeper reflections, but that it does not always do so since the power and relevance of the questions asked and the skills of the coach are paramount in helping to move the client's learning forward. Trust is necessary, but not enough in its own right for coaching success.

Model of Mental Balance Emerald Jane Turner

PERMA – Positive Emotion, Engagement, Positive Relationships, Meaning,
Accomplishments/ Achievements