



Ho Law
The Psychology
of Coaching,
Mentoring and
Learning
Second Edition



WILEY Blackwell

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SECOND EDITION

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About the Author

Dr Ho Law is an international consultant and practitioner psychologist, Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered occupational psychologist, Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS), Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute (Chartered Manager), Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, and BPS Registered Coaching Psychologist, Chartered Scientist, Chartered Psychologist, and Registered Applied Psychology Practice Supervisor. Ho has had over 25 years of experience in psychology and management consultancy. He has delivered numerous workshops and conference seminars, and carried out consultancy work in the UK and abroad (both in the East and in the West). Ho values diversity in people, respects their cultures, and believes in equal opportunities for all. He was one of the first equality advisers to the Assistant Permanent Undersecretary of State in the Home Office; he was also the Deputy Chair of the BPS Standing Committee for Promotion of Equal Opportunities. Ho is passionate about helping people to develop their talents and achieve their full potential through coaching and mentoring. Ho is a founding member and the former Chair of the BPS Special Group in Coaching Psychology; he is also founding director and treasurer of the International Society for Coaching Psychology. He has published over 40 papers and received numerous outstanding achievement awards, such as the Local Promoters for Cultural Diversity Project in 2003; the Positive Image (Business Category) in 2004; and Management Essentials Participating Company in 2005. He was also winner of the first Student Led Teaching Award (2013) – Best Supervisor. He is the Head of Profession in Coaching Psychology, the founding director of Empsy® Ltd and the president of Empsy® Network for coaching (www.empsy.com). At the University of East London School of Psychology, Ho is a Senior Lecturer, Co-Programme Leader in the MSc Coaching Psychology programme, Admissions Tutor, and Leader Tutor in the distance-learning programme (<http://www.uel.ac.uk/programmes/psychology/postgraduate/coachingpsychology-dl.htm>). Ho is currently supervising two part-time students' PhDs at the University of East London, and the students are working in the United Arab Emirates.

Foreword to the First Edition

Stephen Palmer

The psychology of coaching, mentoring and learning is an exciting and rapidly expanding area. However, psychology's contribution to particular fields is often overlooked; and the field of coaching and mentoring is no exception. For example, many coaching courses teach students how to coach by using a basic model or structure on how to hold a conversation with a client. One example is the GROW model, the name of which is a useful acronym standing for Growth, Reality, Options and Will (or wrap-up). In addition, courses usually include a range of listening and communication skills. Yet the whole programme is often taught within a psychological vacuum, as little or no psychological theory or research is covered that underpins coaching practice. We could conclude that most coaching practice is belief-based. Brent Rushall at San Diego State University describes belief-based coaching as

a common and traditional form of coaching. Its guides for practices are usually a mix of personal experiences, some limited education about sport sciences, selected incomplete knowledge of current coaching practices, and self-belief in that how coaching is conducted is right. Changes in coaching practices occur through self-selection of activities. The accumulated knowledge of belief-based coaching is subjective, biased, unstructured, and mostly lacking in accountability. Belief-based coaching also includes pseudo-scientific coaching. Pseudo-scientists attempt to give the impression of scientific knowledge but invariably their knowledge is incomplete resulting in false/erroneous postulations. Belief-based coaching is normally the foundation of most coaching development schemes. Organizations are closed (isolated) systems resisting intrusions of contrary evidence that might alter the constancy of the beliefs and social structure. Logical (knowledge) entropy increases with time in these structures. (Rushall, 2003: 1)

This excellent description of belief-based coaching highlights how often practitioners do not necessarily underpin their practice with psychological theory and academic research. Is there an alternative? Fortunately there is. In academic institutions and within coaching-related professional bodies there is a gradual trend towards evidence-based practice. Rushall (2003) describes evidence-based coaching as

a restricted and relatively rare form of coaching. Its guides for practices are principles derived from replicated reputable studies reported by authoritative sources in a public manner. Often there is consideration of objective studies that do and do not support principles. Evidence-based coaches have fewer guides for practices, but what are included are highly predictive for accomplishing particular training effects. The accumulated knowledge of evidence-based coaching is objectively verified and structured. However, evidence-based coaching principles are developed in a fragmented scientific world. It could be somewhat difficult to gather all the relevant knowledge into an educational scheme. Organizations are open systems structured to constantly accept new knowledge and concepts. Logical (knowledge) entropy decreases markedly as order is established. (Rushall, 2003: 1)

Applying evidence-based practice is the challenge facing the profession of coaching and mentoring, as we need more research to inform our practice. However, in recent years, with the launch of relevant coaching, coaching psychology and mentoring academic and practitioner journals, researchers and psychologists are in a better position to publish their research findings. These journals include the *International Coaching Psychology Review*, *The Coaching Psychologist*, and the *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*. What has been noticeable is the gradual increase in the number of published papers showing the effectiveness of using solution-focused and cognitive behavioural coaching approaches with non-clinical populations. There are plenty of published research papers highlighting how effective these approaches are with clinical populations; but the real challenge has been to prove that they are effective with non-clinical populations.

But, of course, it could all be down to the coaching relationship, and not to the approach to coaching. This has been the argument we have heard so often in the field of psychotherapy. Grbcic and Palmer (2006) decided in a research study to dispense with the coach (or therapist) and just test the cognitive-behavioural methodology on managers by using a manualized, self-coaching approach to stress management and prevention at work. Did it work? If it was largely down to the practitioner-client relationship, then it should not have worked! In this randomized controlled trial, statistically significant results were obtained indicating intervention effectiveness regardless of the frequency of work stressors and lack of organizational support remaining unchanged. The control group remained the same, unlike the self-coaching group, which showed measurable improvement. Hence, in a short period of time, of about six years, researchers are already making substantial progress and building up data that can make a positive impact upon evidence-based practice.

It should not come as much of a surprise to learn that recent surveys have found that the most popular approaches being practised by UK-based coaching psychologists are the facilitation, solution-focused and cognitive-behavioural approaches (Whybrow and Palmer, 2006). This is relevant as the meteoric rise in popularity of coaching psychology in the UK has led to more research being undertaken by post-graduate students on university courses or doctorate programmes. This exciting development parallels the creation of the Coaching Psychology Forum in 2002 and the subsequent launch of the British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology in 2004. Dr Ho Law was one of the key figures in the setting up of both groups.

Unlike this book, the early literature on the psychology of coaching and on coaching psychology focused on the psychology of sports coaching (e.g. Griffith, 1926; Lawther, 1951; Gaylord, 1967; Tutko and Richards, 1971; Wilt and Bosen, 1971; Llewellyn and Blucker, 1982). This book adds to evidence-based practice by attempting to unify psychological theories that underpin coaching, mentoring and learning. The core element of the book is based on three years of research and development in the psychology of coaching, mentoring and learning. The research and practice provided a foundation to develop a universal integrated framework that should be applicable across cultures. This book is a welcome addition to the literature and will inform the fields of mentoring, evidence-based coaching and coaching psychology.

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Preface to the Second Edition

The engagement in coaching, mentoring and learning is part of life itself. Like life, it continuously evolves and changes. Since the publication of the first edition of this book, a lot has happened in the coaching psychology world. For instance, from 1 July 2009, professionals who are practising psychology in the UK are required by law to register with the Health Professions Council (now Health and Care Professions Council) as practitioner psychologists. While at present coaching and mentoring remain unregulated, the debate on their standards and practices continues. The first edition of this book reported the development of the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP), which was formed in 2004; in 2012 the BPS set up a Register of Coaching Psychologists, in acknowledgement and recognition of those practitioner psychologists who have specialist expertise in coaching psychology.

I was saddened to learn the tragic news that Michael White, my teacher in narrative therapy, died from a heart attack on 4 April 2008 in San Diego, aged 59. We last met only a few months before, at the Narrative Conference in Norway, where we discussed with enthusiasm (as always) how we could transport narrative practice into reinvigorating other people's lives, hopes and dreams. I hope the second edition of this book serves to honour Michael's contributions to people's lived stories, including mine.

As for the three authors of the first edition, our lives have changed too. Since the publication of the first edition, we have gone our separate ways. Sara Ireland left her job in the healthcare sector and furthered her professional development. Zulfi Hussain continues to develop his other business engagements. Both Sara and Zulfi resigned from their positions as directors at Morph Group Limited in 2008. The company remained dormant for a few years and eventually was dissolved on 3 April 2012. In 2009 I became Senior Lecturer at the University of East London (UEL), helping to lead its coaching psychology programme. I have been dividing my time between my academic engagements and business consultancy ever since.

In this edition I have continuously advocated a vigorous scientific approach towards coaching and mentoring processes, their theories and practices. This demands an evidence-based evaluation, taking into account the output and outcome as well as the stakeholders' experience of the coaching intervention. The concept of a 'journey' is

used as a metaphor for coaching and mentoring. For many of us, it is a journey of discovery and rediscovery, one full of surprises. Most of all, the journey has been punctuated with magical moments in coaching and mentoring engagements, as in life. I continue to take pleasure in sharing some of these surprises and experiences in writing this book, which started another journey of its own.

The ‘writing journey’ was punctuated by the loss of my father, who passed away in Hong Kong on 9 May in 2012. I had to travel to and fro between the UK and Hong Kong and I was particularly touched by all the support I received during this period. My colleagues at UEL from both the BSc and the MSc programme teams stepped in at short notice to do the necessary student supervision, marking, and double-marking of the assignments, within a very tight schedule; their support has made me feel part of the team and of the community in which I feel blessed. There is a Chinese proverb saying that it is easy to add icing on the cake, but it is difficult to give support to someone in destitution. It is the times of hardship that test true collegiality, fellow-feeling and friendship. I thank my colleagues for making such great teams.

My father went through a proper traditional Chinese funeral. The ritual and its procedures were quite novel to me (as I have been out of touch with my own culture for so long). They offered me and other members of my family, especially my mother, a scaffolding for grieving. My father, aged 96, had witnessed a lot of changes during the wars and cultural revolution in China before he moved to Hong Kong. On reflection, though, he enjoyed a long and happy life, especially in his later years, seeing all six of his children grow up and achieve their aspirations – and starting to see the same in the grandchildren. He left no unfinished business. So, in his case, the funeral was truly a celebration of the completion of his life, even though sometimes there is still a kind of strange, lingering sense of loss...

My father’s middle and first names are Kai Sin; they mean ‘showing’ and ‘kindness’. These words resonate with the spirit of coaching and mentoring. I shall hold onto this spirit, keep it dearly in my heart and attempt to manifest unconditional kindness in everything I do.

In all my engagements I have continued to be active in teaching, learning, research and development – all in coaching psychology. The preparation of this second edition reflects my ongoing commitment to the development of coaching psychology as a discipline. And I keep my conviction that coaching psychology is a scientific discipline, yet there is a magic to its art.

Following the same structure as the first edition, this edition contains the essence of that book. While both Sara and Zufi contributed to the development of the initial universal integrated framework (UIF), I have further refined the framework through ongoing research and development. Thus I have taken care to update all the chapters and to ensure that they remain current, coherent, and consistent as a whole. The key additions are:

- the results of the Global Coaching Survey commissioned by the International Coach Federation (ICF) and the latest discussion on the Coming of Age: Coaching Psychology (Chapter 2);
- updated literature on learning theories, including social learning theories and narrative practices (Chapter 3);

- recent business case studies and the agile coaching approach in developing a learning organization (Chapter 5);
- an updated UIF model, including systems approach and alternative representations of the model across cultures (Chapter 6);
- new case studies in coaching and mentoring (Chapter 9);
- an up-to-date discussion on coaching and mentoring, their standards and their supervision (Chapter 11).

The online tool that was developed in the first edition is now further refined to measure an individual's cultural and social competence (CSC) as a self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ). This is now available at <http://www.uelpsihology.org/csc/> and readers can contact me to gain access to using the tool.

So, whatever your interest in the process of coaching or mentoring, I hope this book takes another step forward in widening your access to its practice through the psychology of learning. For aspiring individuals everywhere who have experienced the benefits of coaching or mentoring directly, I hope that you might feel just a little closer to understanding some of the theories behind how this process works. And for those still looking in from the outside, I hope the approach presented in this book encourages you to get involved.

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot.

(Ecclesiastes 3: 1–2)

Now it's time to learn and to get involved in coaching and mentoring...

Acknowledgements

As happened in the first edition, there are, inevitably, many names to acknowledge, including those of family members and friends, who have been taken for granted while this book was being written; and there are also many unintentional omissions. So, without mentioning every possible individual, I shall list some of those who have continued to inspire me as well as some of the contributors – the unsung heroes and organizations within the context of my journey of preparing this edition.

Thanks go to:

- Dr Carla Gibbes, Senior Lecturer at the University of East London, for her kindness and support;
- Liz Hall, for communicating the concept of narrative coaching to wider professional communities via *Coaching at Work*;
- Trevor Hall, OBE, CBE, who has continued to inspire me in championing equality and diversity in my cross-cultural journey, in my career, and in life;
- Professor Stephen Palmer, for his continuous support and for updating the Foreword;
- Kaemorine Prendergast, for her kindness and righteousness in championing equality;
- Aquilina Reginald, my former coaching student, for helping me to introduce coaching to nursing and for contributing to the case study on leadership coaching in the healthcare sector in Malta;
- Dr Donald Ridley, principal lecturer at the University of East London, for his support and guidance;
- Christine Stocker-Gibson, for contributing to the case study on Community Coaching Café;
- Michael White, Dulwich Centre, who inspired and trained me in narrative approaches from down under: his spirit will continue to manifest itself in my narrative coaching.

Organizations that have provided me with support and information for this edition are:

- the Association for Coaching;
- the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Special Group in Coaching Psychology;
- the Chartered Management Institute (CMI);
- the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC);
- the International Coach Federation (ICF) – which gave me permission to publish the results of its Global Coaching Study (ICF and PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2012)
- the International Society for Coaching Psychology.

Most of all, I would like to thank all those whom I came across in my coaching or mentoring journey, in many spaces and places, starting with the place where I live: people in Peterborough and the neighbouring areas within Cambridgeshire. It was here that a number of coaching and mentoring programmes took place – for communities, for individuals, for private and public organizations. It was here that some of the case studies have been consolidated. It was here that the universal integrated framework was developed, through our lived experience.

And from the place where I work, in particular, I would like to thank all my colleagues in the School of Psychology, University of East London, where the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics took place. The place truly embodies the spirit of the games, which is to inspire individuals to achieve their highest potential; for this is the spirit of coaching and mentoring too!

There are many more of you out there who have contributed to my understanding. To you, perhaps the unacknowledged, I offer my thanks.

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Any constructive comments and suggestions for future editions of this book are welcome. Please write to:

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1

Introduction

This book is about the psychology of coaching, mentoring and learning. There are many books about learning and mentoring; there are even more about coaching. However, there are very few books that bring together these important, diverse and growing fields, making them intersect. The title of the book reflects the value I place on diversity in the emerging discipline of coaching and how the latter can be enriched by being continuously expanded so as to include mentoring, while it remains grounded in the solid foundation of the psychology of learning.

Aims

The aim of this chapter is to help readers gain a rapid understanding of the nature of the book and find easily the information it offers. It provides a rationale for the book, together with a résumé of its overall structure and a brief description of each chapter. It also suggests how readers working at different levels can use the book to make it meet their interests, experience and professional competence.

Whom Is It For?

The purpose of this book is to show how individuals and organizations can apply the theories and principles of psychology in coaching, mentoring and learning. To this end, the book is written for the following groups:

- coaches, mentors and trainers who would like to learn the general theories and principles of psychology that underpin coaching, mentoring and learning;
- psychologists who want to apply their experience to the coaching, mentoring and training of individuals and organizations;

- senior executives and managers responsible for the use of training budgets, who would like to realize their potential benefit and understand how to design and evaluate effective training programmes for their organizations;
- students of psychology who would like to consider their future career in coaching, mentoring and training.

I am aware that the emerging field of coaching and mentoring, coupled with the popularity of psychology in the UK, will attract a very wide readership. Thus my intended readership is not limited to the categories described above. Readers may well include teachers, instructors and anyone involved in coaching, mentoring, training or supervision.

With the rapid development of coaching and mentoring as an industry, much confusion exists between the psychology of coaching and mentoring and the psychology of counselling and psychotherapy. In comparison to the development of psychotherapy as a discipline, we have found in our disciplines a lot more sharing of practices, which has been promoted by various coaching and mentoring organizations (see Chapter 2).

How This Book Differs from Others

There are many books on coaching and mentoring in the market. However, this book differs from others in the following aspects:

- As far as I am aware, in its first edition, this has been the first book in the UK to attempt to bring together the psychological theory that underpins coaching, mentoring and learning. It embodies a number of developments in coaching and mentoring, as well as in coaching psychology. It traces the development of the Special Group in Coaching Psychology within the British Psychological Society, which addresses coaching psychology as a discipline.
- It reflects the latest thinking, research and development in coaching psychology through high-level theories, principles and practical applications. This second edition ensures that the research and development are up to date.
- It applies psychology to *both* coaching/mentoring *and* learning, thereby blurring the boundaries between these disciplines and yet addressing the differences between them.
- It contains cross-cultural elements that make the theories universal and applicable across different cultures.
- It applies, to coaching and mentoring, the general psychology of learning rather than psychotherapy (Chapter 3).
- It demonstrates the know-how and exercises with step-by-step instructions, as well as with case studies from diverse organizational and community contexts (Chapters 7–9).
- It includes a chapter on evaluation that demonstrates the effectiveness of applying the psychology of learning to coaching, mentoring and learning (Chapter 10).

Working terminology

Before you get going, this section offers some pragmatic working definitions to those of you who have no knowledge of coaching, mentoring and learning. These definitions will be further refined in Chapter 4. Broadly speaking, the book talks about processes and activities that support learning. In this context, ‘learning’ can be defined as a cognitive process of acquiring skill and knowledge. ‘Coaching’ is often described as a process of offering support to an individual; this process is performance-focused and goal-centred and it results in action. A ‘mentor’ – a term used in mentoring – is a critical friend who oversees the development of another. All these processes are learner-centred and learner-driven. A theme running throughout this book is the cross-cultural application of coaching and mentoring. ‘Culture’ is broadly defined as the predominant attitudes and behaviour that characterize the functioning of a group, community or organization; we typically apply it to a whole range of contexts: countries, ethnic categories, professions, workplaces. The term ‘cross-cultural’ refers to the interaction between people or entities from two or more cultures. Theories, concepts and techniques will be tested cross-culturally, so that we can see if they are transferable to other contexts and hence valid beyond the original application setting.

Towards the integration of terms

The material provided in this book represents the fertile ground of interaction between coaching, mentoring and psychology (in particular, learning). This triangular relationship can be represented in a simple Venn diagram (see Figure 1.1).

However, as the research and coaching or mentoring journey unfolded, one would discover that there are actually increasing overlaps between the three disciplines. Thus one could see the three circles of influence in Figure 1.1 gravitating towards each other (see Figure 1.2). The next question then becomes clear: How much overlap is there between the three disciplines in practice?

The three are in fact interwoven. Chapter 2 shows that coaching and mentoring are coming of age. It considers market forces, the development of the coaching/mentoring

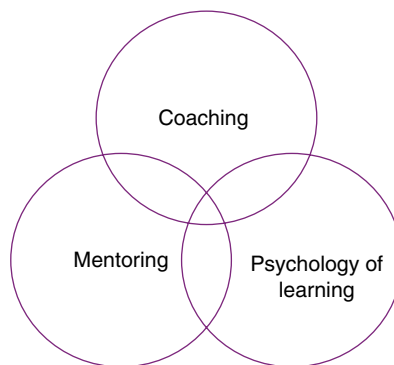


Figure 1.1 The ground of fertile overlap between coaching, mentoring and the psychology of learning

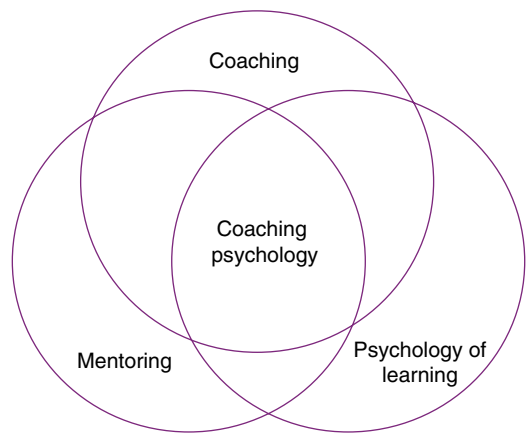


Figure 1.2 Increasing the area of overlap between coaching, mentoring and the psychology of learning

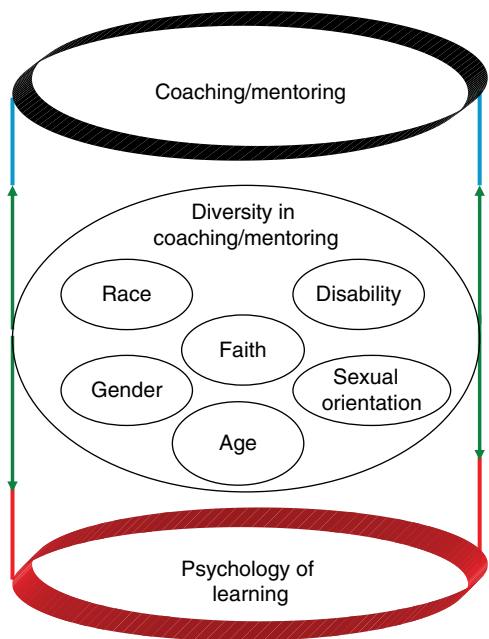


Figure 1.3 Working with a 3D model of coaching, mentoring and psychology of learning

industry and the global market place, and their roles in shaping practice. In order to bring the model of coaching/mentoring and psychology of learning to life, the orientation of this book can be rearranged as a three-dimensional (3D) working model (see Figure 1.3).

In this model, coaching and mentoring are viewed as an interchangeable continuum. Sometimes they may even be regarded as the same thing, depending on the context. For simplicity, the terms coaching, coach and coachee are used to

mean coaching/mentoring, coaches/mentors and coachees/mentees respectively (unless their specific meaning is stated explicitly). Whatever the context, due regard should be given to the diversity of all participants in this process. This understanding extends to their appreciation of sensitivities and of the respect that each one should have for the others' values, beliefs, faith, gender, sexual orientation, social barriers, disability, and racial and cultural backgrounds. To understand the universality and diversity of coachees within a diverse setting, it is important that coaches learn more about the principles and techniques grounded in the psychology of learning and applicable across cultures.

Content in a Nutshell

Coaching and mentoring are different disciplines. Organizations and groups have been set up specializing in coaching and/or mentoring. These include the Association for Coaching, the British Psychological Society's Special Group in Coaching Psychology, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, and the International Coaching Federation (see Chapter 2). Coaches and mentors come from diverse backgrounds. While you may not need a degree in psychology in order to be a coach and a mentor, for coaching and mentoring to be effective, you need to understand the psychological principles on which the practice is based. Without this understanding, coaches and mentors risk not achieving their intended outcome.

Drawing on the comprehensive literature in the psychology of learning, this book focuses on linking theory to practical application. The core principles of positive psychology and learning are described in Chapter 3. The same chapter provides a literature review as well as highlighting the philosophy of positive psychology and the learning theories that are useful in coaching and mentoring practice within the tradition of epistemology. (When we refer to epistemology, we mean to question the nature of what we know: fundamentally, epistemology asks what knowledge is and how we distinguish it from our internal thoughts and beliefs.) Chapter 4 addresses key definitions of coaching, mentoring and learning, which are grounded in the psychology of learning from the previous chapter. Once we revised the psychology of learning and established our own key definitions within the intersecting domains of coaching, mentoring and learning, we set out here on a journey of enquiry, and we proceed logically to guide the reader through the chapters that follow. Chapter 5 describes how coaching and mentoring can be used as a vehicle to help organizations become learning organizations. From the consolidation of theory into coaching and mentoring practice in diverse settings, a universal integrated framework (UIF) is developed; and its revised version, the integrative learning system (ILS), is described in Chapter 6. The major classes of techniques and tools are described in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 supplements them with relevant practical exercises; I hope readers will find them useful. Chapter 9 provides a number of case studies in terms of the UIF and a reflective learning process to demonstrate that these theories and exercises work in the real world, in various organizations as well as in diverse communities. One of the major criticisms of the emerging coaching industry is that most theories and practices lack rigorous, evidence-based evaluation. Chapter 10 meets this challenge by providing an impact

evaluation of the UIF linked to a case study. Finally, Chapter 11 describes perceived future directions and work by incorporating the following key themes:

- matching between coaching/mentoring pairs;
- coordinator role;
- emotional intelligence cross-cultural competency;
- evidence-based research and impact assessment;
- supervision;
- training;
- coaching/mentoring standards, codes of conduct and ethics.

Book Research Approach

Writing this book has been like riding two horses. I would like to ensure that it is easy to read and accessible to a diverse readership without compromising its academic rigour. Thus, wherever possible, the writing style is straightforward. Academic references are only noted at specific points in the text. They reflect the wide range of literature reviewed from online sources and the information obtained by attending international workshops and conferences – in the UK, Europe, Australia and Hong Kong. While the literature review casts the research net very widely, it also focuses on the deliverables that this book represents – that is, on useful guidance for learners and practitioners in the field of coaching psychology, coaching, mentoring and training. Although the UIF developed here is grounded both in established psychological theories of learning and in evidence-based evaluation for its effectiveness and efficacy, it has been continually refined and revised for this new edition.

Why Coaching, Mentoring and Learning?

As globalization leads to more intense competition, organizations need to continue to recruit, develop and deploy the best people in order to stay ahead and survive. We have seen rapid and unprecedented change in our organizations and communities across the globe. This has taken place in the fast-growing communications industry as well as in public organizations. Repeated reconfigurations in search of service improvements have meant that leaders are required to work at the furthest bounds of their capability. Corporate leaders have begun to realize that traditional training methods may not be able to cope with the pace of change. Hence organizations have turned to coaching and mentoring to help develop their people, to deepen their talent pool and to enhance their organizational learning capability. Mentoring and coaching go beyond industry. Individuals from vulnerable communities need to be channelled to effective routes, towards learning in trusted partnerships; isolated groups need a mechanism for breaking down barriers and reaching out to mainstream communities; and any people who want to learn more about themselves, or increase their knowledge in targeted areas and in the wider environment, can benefit.

How to read this book

Owing to the philosophy that underpins this book, the following terms are used interchangeably throughout this book:

- you and readers;
- coaches and mentors;
- coachees and mentees;
- learners, trainers and supervisors.

Each chapter is intended to be independent in terms of its topic and content. You may pick and choose which chapters are relevant to you. Nevertheless, throughout this book you will find that the chapters are interwoven, and some are clustered more closely around a topic than others at a certain juncture in the coaching journey. It is recommended that the chapters be read consecutively in pairs. For example, if you are a learner or a student who would like to know more about coaching and mentoring and about how they link to the psychology of learning, you should read Chapters 2 and 3. If you are a busy chief executive or a training manager who wants to find out about the relevance of coaching and mentoring to organizations, you may like to read Chapter 5. For experienced coaches and mentors wishing to refer directly to the techniques and exercises, Chapters 7 and 8 can be read together. Chapter 8 provides a things-to-do list for coaching; in addition, the exercises are organized in a systematic way, so that readers can refer back to the principles described in Chapter 7. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced coach or mentor, you will find these two chapters useful, as they provide pointers for you to begin your continuous professional development or to fine-tune what you already know. Readers who are interested in concrete examples, case studies and the evidence-based evaluation of coaching and mentoring programmes can go directly to Chapters 9 and 10. Throughout the book, each chapter highlights, through cross-referencing, concepts and ideas that are interwoven. In this way I hope that our ‘conversation’ will provide a sense of continuity as the story unfolds and will encourage a dramatic re-engagement with many of your experiences that may fill some of the gaps in this book. To help readers apply the theories to reflective practice, each chapter is written to a standard format. It begins with an introduction designed to outline its content and ends with a chapter summary and reflection, which summarizes the key concepts and reflects on practical implications.