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Relational development model of executive coaching as a tool for organizational change

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A RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL OF EXECUTIVE COACHING AS A TOOL FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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Introduction

Executive coaching is one of the fastest growing fields in the business world. Although a relatively recent facet of management consulting, executive coaching has emerged as a valuable training process. In recent years, the area of executive coaching has grown faster than any other type of consulting. According to the International Coach Federation, in 2000 it was estimated that there were 10,000 practicing coaches, and that the number of coaches entering the field had doubled in size every year for three years prior to that (Levinsky, 2000).

Changing attitudes in the workplace is one explanation for the popularity of coaching. "The competitive approach, one of the behaviors executives used to get to the top, has now been replaced by the ability to function as a team. "There's a kind of disconnect when what you used to get encouraged for is suddenly not what the new environment demands" (Snyder, 1995, p. 29). Coaching can provide executives with techniques to augment existing abilities or provide tools to develop the new skills that are necessary in order to be successful in the contemporary business environment.

A coaching program can be implemented to enhance the performance of an experienced executive or to facilitate the advancement of a mid-level manager being groomed for an executive position. The coaching process can also be utilized to correct the behavior of poor performers. Regardless of the circumstances, the purpose of executive coaching is always to help executives achieve their goals. A good coach facilitates the creation of an environment where the executive is able to learn, be motivated and involved, and receive the support he or she requires to be successful.
Coaching is a useful and effective way to improve individual productivity, thus strengthening overall organizational effectiveness.

Another instance in which coaching is pertinent is as a way to integrate new skills into an organization in conjunction with a major cultural change. When cultural change takes place within an organization, it must do so on many levels. This includes preparing management for the impending change, providing the necessary information and training to implement the change, as well as offering support once the change process begins. Coaching can play a vital role in each of these stages as it provides supervisors with needed skills that will enable them to support their staff members throughout the change process.

Outline of Project

The process of executive coaching will be highlighted in this paper with particular emphasis on the application of executive coaching within a university setting. A literature review offers an in-depth exploration of executive coaching explains how the implementation of a coaching program, in conjunction with a major cultural change, provides the leaders within the organization an effective means to reinforce the underlying infrastructure to sustain and perpetuate a developing culture.

A coaching program being offered for the first time as part of Human Resource Services Professional Enhancement Program at The University of Montana Missoula (UMM) will then be presented as an example. The implementation of the UMM coaching program is intended to give mid-level and executive management with coaching skills to assist in the implementation of the Montana University System Achievement Project (MAP). MAP is a new performance development and compensation program that
represents a significant change in organizational culture. Under MAP it is required that supervisors and employees meet on a regular basis to discuss employee development. Providing managers with coaching skills is considered to be an effective way to enhance effective communication during these meetings.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effectiveness of a workshop, Coaching Skills for Supervisors developed by the author. The workshop goal was to make it a useful means of providing managers with coaching skills that can be easily incorporated into their ongoing meetings with employees. Along with the workshop, a qualitative analysis was conducted to determine its effectiveness. The analysis was based on two distinctly different forms of assessment. The first was a determination of workshop participants' achievement using the four behavioral outcomes of cooperation, comprehension, competence and commitment. The second form of assessment used a relational development theory to establish to what degree the development of the coaching relationships between workshop participants was achieved. And finally, the results of this study will be used to modify future coaching workshops offered through the Professional Enhancement Program at UMM of which this workshop was a part.

Literature Review

To understand how coaching can become a relevant and useful component of organizational change, it is important to understand how coaching functions in other circumstances. To this end, it is useful to discuss coaching in terms of theoretical background, defining coaching and the coach-client relationship. As with any process, the establishment of a firm theoretical foundation is necessary before it can be successfully translated into an applied situation, in this case, a university setting. From
successfully translated into an applied situation, in this case, a university setting. From there, it is necessary to establish a working definition of coaching before moving into the specifics of the development of the coaching program used in this project. And finally, a discussion of the coach-client relationship within the context of the coaching process is imperative as relationship escalation between coaching partners within the training program was a primary component used to evaluate the success of the proposed coaching program.

_A Theoretical Framework for Coaching_

The inclusion of coaching programs, as part of management development, is a natural progression as businesses evolve into organizations that place an increasing amount of emphasis on more participatory forms of interaction. As a higher value is assigned to interpersonal relationships within the business context, the approaches used in management development to develop leadership skills must also change. This need was recognized as early as the mid-1970’s when Burns (1975) argued that: “We must see power and leadership not as things but as relationships” and that “not all transactions among persons are mechanical, impersonal, ephemeral. It lies in seeing that the most powerful influences consist of deeply human relationships in which two or more persons engage with one another” (p. 11).

As the meaning of leadership has evolved into a two-way interaction as opposed to a top-down process as it was traditionally practiced. Current leadership research identifies the dualism that has emerged.

One of the strongest pulls in leadership research is that between the individual and the collective or system... However, both the individual and the system are constitutive elements of leadership. Both transmission and meaning are necessary elements of the communication process. Likewise, both cognitive outcomes and
conversational practices must be studied to understand the communicative management of leadership fully (Fairhurst, 2001, p. 425)

Northhouse (2001) expands on this theory and defines leadership as a process that occurs between a leader and his or her followers in which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. It is emphasized that leadership is not a linear, one-way event, but is instead interactive. Kouzes & Posner (2000) agree with this perspective and maintain that leadership is relationship and in order for the relationship to be productive, leaders must be credible. Credibility is established when leaders set clear expectations, display a strong belief that those expectations can be achieved, and then demonstrate by their own actions that they believe in those expectations.

CEOs of organizations know that developing leadership talent is crucial to be successful in the business world of today, and that the incorporation of an executive coaching program can significantly contribute to that success by providing leaders with such vital skills as giving and receiving feedback, varying leadership style to reflect departmental needs, and demonstrating that it is acceptable to ask for help (Freas, 2000). Plas (1996) credits the new emphasis on a humanistic approach in business to the fact that individuals at all levels of organizations have suffered under traditional corporate structures and values. According to Plas, "the primary reason that management programs fail is because the individual has been left out of the equation" (Plas, 1996, p. 4).

Hackman & Johnson (1996) recommend two components of leadership training that can contribute to a leader's success, feedback and personal growth. The first component of using feedback as a leadership tool allows leaders to capitalize on their strengths and improve on their weaknesses. The personal growth component emphasizes a leader's ability to understand his or her own personal abilities and limitations, and therefore
increase the likelihood that they will be able to motivate and lead others. It is important that leaders be cognizant of how they deal with organizational issues keeping in mind that they are defining overall organizational culture. Schein (1985) calls attention to the fact that people notice which issues leaders do and do not pay attention to, and the concerns that do not get addressed can reveal larger problems that the leaders may not be aware of or may not want exposed.

Lippitt (1999) suggests, “Organizations that want to develop best practice leadership must do more than provide its leaders with knowledge and information. They must outfit leaders with the essential skills, qualities and techniques that enable the leaders to deal with ambiguous situations” (p. 21). Although it is recognized that executive coaching was born out of the leadership training movement, it maintains uniqueness because it allows leaders to develop on their own terms while simultaneously contributing to the overall good of the organization. This approach is effective because by encouraging leaders toward congruence and creativity, the productivity of the organization improves. (Pinchot & Pinchot, 2000)

While it is important to reconcile the needs of the individual and with the best interests of the organization, it is also useful to recognize that many times there are effective leadership development strategies previously in place. And it is not always necessary that coaching replace processes that obviously benefit the organization, but rather simply incorporate coaching into the leadership development strategies that already exist. (Thach & Heinselman, 1999)

When executives are given the opportunity to develop a broader understanding of what leadership is, they are able to evolve into more effective leaders. And to lead
successfully in the corporate world of today, leaders often are required to develop different skills than what may have worked in the past.

**Executive Coaching Defined**

Executive coaches serve a wide variety of roles, from improving or enhancing current skills to preparing an executive for a future job. As a result, coaches become involved with diverse issues that range from building trust in work relationships to achieving more balance in one's personal and professional life to gaining improved communication skills.

"Executive coaching is often seen as a blending of management consulting and psychotherapeutic skills. It is similar to management consulting in the content or issues addressed in the coaching process" (Judge & Cowell, 1997, p. 75).

The underlying foundation of executive coaching is about bringing out the best in the people. The word coach first emerged in the English language in the 1500s and refers to a particular kind of carriage. Therefore, the original meaning of the word means to convey a valued person from where he or she is to where he or she wants to be (Witherspoon & White 1996). Webster's dictionary (1986) defines the term coach as either a private tutor or one who instructs a performer or team of performers (typically in sports) on fundamentals and team strategy. Executive coaching evolved from that fundamental basis into a developmental interaction between a coach and an executive for improving job performance. Executive coaching is considered a useful and effective method of increasing personal and organizational learning and is often used to assist practicing executives in addressing crucial managerial weaknesses and can empower them to higher levels of health and functioning. (Judge & Cowell, 1997)
Executive coaching is an intensive, short-term process that can be used to assist executives in addressing behavioral issues that may be impeding their own job effectiveness. Coaching involves assisting executives with identifying their own management style and how they communicate with other people. Coaching often simply builds on the strengths that an executive already possesses to be more successful in the future. (Koonce, 1994, Williams, 2001)

In a series of one-on-one interactions between a coach and an executive, coaches serve as trainers, facilitators, motivators, moderators, devil's advocates, sounding boards, and confidantes. The interactions between coach and client take place through face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations, and the exchange of e-mail. In a typical coaching situation, they might meet six to eight times for an hour per session over a period of weeks or months. With the coach's help, the executive develops an action plan and with the coach's ongoing support implements it.

Used as a management development tool, executive coaching combines personal career development with organizational strategy and goals, because what benefits the individual also benefits the organization. Coaching provides assistance in developing managerial expertise, personal learning and improving leadership skills as well as providing executives with new tools that support them in becoming effective as they face the challenges in the fast-paced business world of today. In business school, future managers are introduced to the science of management, like statistics, financial controls, and operations management is straightforward, but many intricacies of interpersonal interaction are not explored. Coaching is often used to bridge the chasm between what managers are being asked to do and what they have been trained to do (Morris, 2000).
Another way to look at it is that coaching takes up where business school left off. Thach, (1998) notes that executive coaching is "one of the fastest ways for executives to shore up skill gaps in some particular area, be it delegation or drawing up a business plan, is through one-on-one coaching with a professional coach who specializes in that area" (p. 54).

The Benefits of Executive Coaching

Executive coaching is designed to give managers new skills to solve problems, increase strategic thinking, and improve communication skills. Working with a coach can help a manager create a politically savvy, positive self-image and develop ongoing career goals. "Like its sports metaphor, there are systems of accountability incorporated into the process to move you forward or deepen your insights" (Levinsky, 2000, p. 118).

Because executive coaching is an individualized but collaborative process that has time limits and focused goals, it allows managers to target in on specific areas. The process is client driven and helps executives solve their own problems, which in turn enhances their productivity. Working with a coach often helps managers identify problem areas if which they had not been aware. Coaching can focus the leader's attention on important issues that, if go unnoticed, might inadvertently destabilize the organization. Coaching becomes "a privilege, a business tool for people who want to stay on the edge" (Bolch, 2001, p. 60).

Coaching can keep key people within an organization motivated and involved, and working with a coach can provide assistance for managers to develop an agenda that focuses on their particular needs. Examples of possible coaching areas include providing the manager with a confidant, teaching them a specific new skill (ie: building trust in
relationships, dealing with change, improving listening skills, or public speaking), giving them insight into how to perform better in their present job, or providing preparation for a future leadership role. Each manager’s needs are clarified in an initial exploratory meeting and an appropriate coach chosen based on that conversation. (Witherspoon & White, 1996)

Coaches are frequently called in to improve the way a valuable senior executive manages people. Sometimes the problem is that the executive is not well organized and has not established clear goals, or it could be that the executive is very controlling and not listening, or yelling at his or her workers. Two other important issues that coaching can explore are time management and an examination of the executive's public posture by looking at what message he or she is sending.

Executives often feel that there is no one with whom it’s safe to talk about issues and concerns without undermining their authority. In this instance, working with a coach can provide useful feedback and perspective. Many executives turn to coaches for career moves, planning or simply rejuvenation and to evaluate strengths and weaknesses. Coaching also offers a unique opportunity for leaders to develop skills in interpreting and effectively using climate survey results and providing feedback to the employees. Anna, Chesley, and Davis, (2001) recommend that “A coaching program would be an outstanding investment if leaders could be coached to not only appreciate the impact of a successful climate survey program but also to develop the necessary knowledge and skills required for implementation and feedback” (p. 63).

Another manner in which coaching is valuable is in the development of emotional intelligence skills. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to recognize which feelings
are appropriate in which situations and the skills to communicate those feelings effectively. In general, people who have high EQ’s are more likely to succeed in positions that require being able to respond in a sensitive manner to others. Another deficit in contemporary management is that many managers don’t know how to lead a productive discussion, which involves knowing how to ask useful, relevant questions and how to listen to what people are really saying. In a business environment in which employees are the most valuable assets, it is imperative that managers possess both effective communication skills and valuable emotional intelligence skills. In the past these skills have been considered insignificant, but corporations are beginning to understand their real value. (Greco, 2001)

According to a survey of coaches conducted by Judge & Cowell, (1997) the skills explored with clients (ranked in order) include:

- Modifying interaction style
- Building trust in relationships
- Dealing with change
- Improving listening skills
- Improving public speaking
- Balancing work and personal life
- Clarifying and pursuing goals
- Strengthening delegation skills
- Improving technical skills
- Handling stress
- Improving writing skills
- Maintaining a long-term focus
The focus of coaching is on behavior modification as opposed to personality modification. Coaching is action-oriented and the executive receives coaching while performing his or her usual job. The goal of coaching is to quickly identify and explore behaviors that a person needs to change, and then develop a plan that will enable them to move forward and continue to be productive in the organization (Koonce, 1994).

**Limitations of Executive Coaching**

"Coaching is not a catch all for every conceivable performance issue or workplace problem" (Koonce, 1994, p. 42). Coaching will not help issues such as drug abuse, alcoholism, stress, depression, or anxiety in the workplace. Coaching is not an appropriate solution for an employee with deep-seated emotional problems. Problems along those lines should be addressed in professional counseling or other kinds of therapy.

People who are extremely resistant to change or have difficulty accepting feedback are also not likely to improve through coaching. When entering into a coaching relationship, the client must be willing to change behaviors that are counterproductive or that limit effectiveness. Coaching will improve specific areas of job performance, but not change a client's personality or values. (Judge & Cowell, 1997)

Greco (2001) calls attention to the fact that it is possible that coaching can become more therapeutic than action oriented and that is not beneficial in the long run for the client or the organization. The principal focus of coaching is to help organizations create results, not just deal with the personal agenda of a client. "The bottom line is that some behavioral change has to be created, and that peers and managers and subordinates can see that real, substantial change" (Greco, 2001, p. 30).
The assessment aspect of coaching also has a downside. Snyder (1995) recognizes that it is not always useful to conduct 360-degree assessments and to interview everyone from a client's past and present. Although a number of companies have used this approach and surfaced all these issues, they subsequently find that there is no support system in place to do address them.

Thach & Heinselman, (1999) also identify several ways in which an organization can contribute to an unsuccessful experience including: not integrating executive coaching with the rest of the company's leadership development strategy; not getting the buy-in of that executives that are expected to participate in coaching; not being clear on the type of coaching is needed; and not checking a coach's references matching the wrong coach with a leader.

The Use of Executive Coaches

There are a variety of related theories on who uses coaches. "Usually, executives who seek coaching help can already put a finger on there own problems. Leaders often can't afford to take the time to go off for a week of marathon training. They still have to come back and address real-time issues or problems or challenges" (Greco, 2001, p. 30).

"Although coaching is most commonly reserved for senior executives, employees on the lower rungs of the corporate ladder are increasingly reaping its benefits. We've seen a rise in demand for coaching at lower levels"(Bolch, 2001, p. 62).

According to the 1998 International Coaching Federation Survey of Coaching Clients, almost all clients seeking coaching are professionals, with 82% having college degrees and an annual average income of $63,000. Most sought the counsel of a coach for help with time management (80.5%), career guidance (74.3%) or business advice (73.8%).
The top five benefits for most clients were: a higher level of self-awareness (67.6%), smarter goal setting (62.4%), a more balanced life (60.5%), reduced stress levels (57.1%) and more self-confidence (52.4%), (Levinsky, 2000).

There also seems to be some continuity in the demographics of who utilizes coaching services. Half of the participants were vice presidents or higher (including CFOs), 57% were between 40 and 49 years old, and a third earned $200,000 or more (Williams, 2001). The typical recipient of executive coaching is a senior to mid-level manager. Slightly more than half are CEOs or report directly to CEOs (Judge & Cowell, 1997). Most people who hire coaches are professionals with an average age of 41 and who have college or advanced degrees (Computerworld, 2000).

The typical individual who seeks out a coach is already in a position of leadership or being groomed for one. Executives often utilize coaching because they lack traditional management skills, such as time management or the ability to delegate effectively, because they come from technical backgrounds that don't require those skills, or because they've been focused on climbing the corporate ladder and need to learn or fine-tune their interpersonal communication skills. (Greco, 2001)

A survey conducted by Judge & Cowell (1997) found that executives who participate in coaching could be categorized into three groups. The first group is the executive with adequate skills who shows promise but has one or two areas that are preventing advancement, usually communication issues. In some cases the executives were promoted from a technical position into management, and are having difficulty adjusting to the interpersonal skills required of their new positions.
The second group includes potential executives who want to improve their leadership skills. There may be no specific deficiencies that need attention, but these executives may need help in planning and implementing a course of action that will help them achieve desired goals. For example how to most effectively lead team work groups.

The third group of executives is made up of people in professional practices, such as medicine or architecture, and entrepreneurs who are starting or expanding a business. These people use coaching to develop long-range strategies or work on personal development. For this group, coaches offer a neutral and nonjudgmental atmosphere in which to discuss the future of their business and identify any needed skills. "Executive coaching is a good strategy for fast-paced or start-up companies that don't have more traditional leadership development programs in place" (Thach & Heinselman, 1999, p. 36).

As the business world continues to change and the importance of the human element in management becomes increasingly important, coaching will provide organizations with the ability to attract and retain superior employees. Through awareness of how individuals affect organizational outcomes, coaching can emphasis the relationship between employee satisfaction and organizational performance by providing leaders and groups in organizations with information about their behavior and its consequences, which will result in overall organizational improvement. "The ultimate result is that the individual is happier and more balanced, which translates into a positive impact on the bottom line. When an organization becomes a healthier system, productivity goes up." (Snyder, 1995, p. 31)
The Coach-Client Relationship

As with any process there are certain expectations from the individuals involved for it to be successful. Bolch (2001) identified four factors that are necessary for the executive coaching relationship to develop. The primary component in an effective coaching relationship is that the client is motivated to change and open to new ideas. The second necessary element is that there is organizational support because coaching is most valuable when the executive’s superior takes an active interest in the process. And ultimately, the coaching relationship benefits the company through a motivated, empowered executive who copes better with the challenges present in every business. A third important aspect is that the coach and client together set a system into place to track the progress being made. Methods for determining when goals have been met serve as important benchmarks that change is indeed taking place. And the final factor is that both the client and the coach are committed to the process.

Eggers & Clark (2000), also identified four indications that determine a successful coaching relationship: minimizing of client’s incongruence; mutual positive regard between coach and client; coach’s understanding of client’s internal frame of reference; and coach as example.

The first indicator is built on the premise that people are basically good, healthy and rational. A basic value within this framework is that when people need to make a change or are unhappy, they are not sick, they are simply incongruent.

Incongruence is defined as the discrepancy between the participant's self-image and his or her everyday experience. If the incongruence is eliminated, the problem is solved. This leads the coach to take as a given that the client is not broken and does not need fixing. Thus, the client (not the coach) has the answers to problems, though he or she just has not found them yet. It's the coach's role, not to provide
the answers, but rather the questions and a supportive, judgment-free environment that motivates clients to explore their options and find the answers within themselves (p. 68).

Eggers & Clark maintain that executive coaching simply speeds up a process of change that would most likely occur anyway if an individual had enough time. Through the coaching process, a client is forced to take the time to identify and address the issues that they need to focus on in order to minimize incongruence. When relevant issues go unrecognized, people "simply continue to act defensively, trying to bend reality to fit their established self-image, which takes less time than expanding one's self-image to match the demands of a changed environment" (p. 68).

A second indicator of a successful coaching relationship is that it takes place in an environment in which people experience and receive unconditionally positive regard. In the everyday world that regard is conditional, based upon individuals actions and other people's perceptions of them. In a successful coaching relationship, acceptance is unconditional. It is never withheld or withdrawn. Neither the coach nor the client needs to earn, it is a given. This creates an environment in which people are truly heard and not judged. With this groundwork, trust is easily and quickly built between the client and coach. This quickly leads to a foundation for successful exploration, ownership, action and positive change.

The third indication that a coaching relationship is successful is that the coach understands the client's internal frame of reference and is able to convey this understanding to the client. In order to be most effective, a coach attempts to see the world as the client sees it. This allows the coach to act as a mirror, enabling the client to see themselves and the issues more clearly.
The fourth indicator of a successful coaching experience is that the coach exemplifies the same skills that they are presenting to the client. For example, effective coaches are honest, empathic, demonstrate good communication skills, embrace change, and manage time well. Successful coaches also remember that the client controls the session, and they as the coach are there as a facilitator, not as an expert.

The Coaching Process

According to Thach and Heinselman (1999) there are three main types of executive coaching. The three types identified are feedback coaching, in-depth coaching, and content coaching. Each style is implemented differently and addresses particular areas and/or skills that are useful for potential growth in leadership development.

One factor that differentiates the different types of coaching is the level of assessment involved. A determining factor of the effectiveness of an assessment process is that the manager should leave the assessment session with a clear understanding of his or her strengths and weaknesses and an action plan for resolving the identified issues. A second factor that delineates the differences between the coaching types is the depth of relationship between the coach and executive. With feedback and in-depth development coaching, the focus is primarily on the personal development of the executive and often requires a one-on-one relationship with the coach. With content coaching, where leaders are given an opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in specific content areas, the coach-executive relationship need not be as developed.

Feedback coaching

During feedback coaching, the coach-executive relationship typically lasts for one to six months. The process involves the coach giving feedback to the executive and helping
him or her develop an action plan to address specific needs. The needs are generally
determined through the use of a 360-assessment instrument. The 360-assessment is a
feedback tool that provides each employee the opportunity to receive performance
feedback from his or her supervisor and four to eight peers, reporting staff members, co-
workers and customers. Each individual also responds in a self-assessment to most 360-
degree feedback tools. 360-degree feedback allows each individual to understand how
others view his or her effectiveness as an employee, co-worker, or staff member

**In-depth coaching**

In-depth coaching requires a close, intimate relationship between the executive and
the coach. The assessment phase is generally extensive and usually involves the coach
conducting face-to-face interviews with all of the executive's staff, peers, manager, and,
in some cases, customers, suppliers, and family members. Multiple assessment
instruments such as 360 Competency Assessment, Myers-Briggs, and Firo-B are often
used. It is also common for the coach to observe, or "shadow," the executive at work in
meetings, making presentations.

**Content coaching**

The focus of content coaching, and the emphasis of coaching in this paper, is on
specific issues that are identified as impeding a manager from doing his job well. This
type of coaching provides leaders with knowledge and skills in specific content areas and
the coach is generally an expert in those particular areas. The first coaching session is
often an assessment of the executive's skill and knowledge level after which an action
plan is documented with a timeline and activities to achieve the desired improvement. In
content coaching the manager can read books or articles and debrief with the coach,
conducting role plays, or be videotaped. The timeframe involved depends on the current skill level of the manager and the skill level needed.

As has been demonstrated, there is a wide spectrum of ways in which coaching can be employed within organizations. In this paper, I focus primarily on content coaching in terms of identifying areas in which an employee needs improvement, while also incorporating specific aspects of feedback coaching such as relevant assessment instruments as well as establishing an action plan and monitoring the progress made on the action plan using follow-up conversations.

Executive Coaching and Organizational Culture

Now that a basic understanding of coaching has been established, the next step is to integrate coaching as a general concept into the use of coaching as a tool for organizational change. Content coaching has been discussed in terms of understanding and improving organizational climate.

One underutilized, yet potentially beneficial, area for content coaching is in understanding and improving organizational climate. This untapped potential is often due to the unwillingness or inability of the manager to provide feedback of the survey data to his or her employees and engage in a substantive dialogue about the organizational climate. This unwillingness might be attributed to lack of skill, fear of negative feedback or a lack of time. However, the climate or "health" of an organization is too important to ignore. (Anna, Chesley, & Davis, 2001, p. 62)

According to Anna et al (2001), research indicates that how employees perceive an organizational climate can have a significant effect on important organizational outcomes. They cite recent studies indicating that conscientious management practices strongly impact employees' job satisfaction, customer satisfaction and loyalty, organizational productivity, organizational citizenship behavior, and profitability and growth. It is logical to conclude that it is up to the leaders of organizations to develop the
skills necessary to gain organizational insight to the organization and coaching is a practical way to develop the needed skills.

The organizational structure and culture must support the changes the executive is trying to make. In particular, it should be clear that the executive's incentives and the organization's goals are aligned with the desired change in behavior. Too often, executives' virtues turn into vices as they assume greater levels of responsibility in a corporation. The traditional way for supervisors to handle this problem is to discard an ineffective executive when this occurs, implicitly assuming that people cannot change and grow.

However, progressive organizations are taking a more developmental approach to instill a greater range of flexibility into their executives' leadership strategies. Toward this end, executive coaching is proving to be a useful means of cultivating the needed versatility and improving executives' effectiveness. Although Judge & Cowell (1997), caution that there is always the danger that incorporating an outside perspective can also integrating suggestions based on an inadequate understanding of the business or the political climate.

As the pace of commerce continues to increase, change has become an invariable factor that must be integrated into the everyday business world. In order for change to become an asset for the organization, it is necessary for the leaders to be able to recognize which facets of the organization need to evolve and be able to assimilate those aspects into the way they conduct business as well as be able to convey to staff members the usefulness of the impending change.
Lloyd (2000) endorses coaching as a necessary component for organizational change because it redefines the way leadership and power is perceived.

Coaching is the methodology for shifting a culture of 'power over' people to one in which 'power within' people is unleashed. It provides the vehicle for organizational learning to take place and for the honest interests of all stakeholders to be actively pursued by individuals throughout the enterprise. By applying coaching methods, we facilitate the coming of age of a new organizational model, one in which responsibility, leadership, and learning, have exciting new meanings, and in which power is always released in order to enable, never to constrain. (Lloyd, 2000, p. 150)

It is imperative that leaders responsible for implementing new ideas and programs must be able to step back from the immediate situation and direct attention to developing understanding of the ideas and their applications. In order to be able to help others get past old habits and rote application of techniques or procedures it is necessary that they are able to do so themselves. Participating in a coaching relationship can assist them in identifying their own resistance to the impending change and allow them to develop the skills necessary to address them. As leaders adapt personally to change on all levels, they are more likely to ensure that others develop a sufficient understanding and adequate tools that will allow the ideas to take hold not simply because they are mandated, but because they have their own value. Leaders must also continually direct attention to issues and activities that require further development and effort because if they don’t, the new vision or program will not be thoroughly adopted.” (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996)

Olesen (1996) points out that an important contribution that coaching can make for leaders is to help them become comfortable with change so they can lead their organization through it. He goes on to say that it is imperative that leaders develop clarity about who they are, what they represent, and how they are seen by the people
they're working with and emphasizes that they must understand the effect they're having on others before they can do something with that information.

In order for a cultural change to be effective, people at all levels of the organization need to behave in ways that support the strategic direction and goals; and that the guidance for the behavior change must come from the leaders within the organization. Introducing a coaching program with the advent of a major cultural change provides the leaders with ongoing support to help them achieve the proposed objectives throughout the process (Hawkins & Pettrey, 2000).

As has been discussed, the benefits of incorporating a coaching program into an organizational change process are clear. Based on this information, it was decided that a coaching program would be implemented in conjunction with the integration of MAP at UMM.

**Implementing an Executive Coaching Program at UMM**

The introduction of the Montana University System Achievement Project (MAP) to the Montana University system represents a significant cultural change for the organization as a whole. MAP is a performance based compensation program designed to emphasize employee development. This developmental perspective supports both the growth of the employee and the future needs of the Montana University System. In the past, it was expected that supervisors conduct annual performance reviews with all employees, but the Human Resource Department found that in many departments the reviews were either not occurring or not being carried out in a manner beneficial to the employee due to ineffectual communication skills on the part of the supervisor. The
primary focus of MAP is to ensure that ongoing performance-based communication between supervisors and employees takes place (HRS, 2002).

Judge & Cowell (1997) propose that coaching be integrated with other systems so that the coaching process is supported by other HR systems such as career planning, succession planning, and performance planning. They also suggest that top management modeling is one of the best ways people learn. Key leaders in any organization are expected to define or redefine the culture. If the leaders are not demonstrating the proposed changes in culture, it will not be considered a serious change.

Overall, the MAP program has been well received, but as with any major change, it takes time and effort to adapt to doing things differently. “It's human nature to resist change. Even when you've convinced someone it's important, work pressures and heavy schedules can put any development plan on the back burner” (Olesen, 1996, p. 27). With this in mind, the MAP guide specifically delineates the expectation that a coaching program will be implemented.

In order for the Performance Development Program to meet the needs of employees, supervisors, and the Montana University System, it is essential that there be two-way dialogue actively entered into by both the supervisor and the employee on an ongoing basis. It is expected that supervisors will be expected to play an active role in coaching and encouraging employees toward successful outcomes. (HRS, 2002, p. 8)

Based on this theory, an executive coaching program was introduced as part of the Spring 2002 Human Resource Services (HRS) staff development program. Departmental training for MAP was completed by December 31, 2001. It is a goal of UMM through implementation of a coaching program to develop a campus-wide infrastructure that ensures the present and future success of the substantial organizational changes that have and will take place as MAP becomes fully integrated into the university system.
The Spring 2002 workshop functioned as a pilot program and in my position of the staff development coordinator, I worked closely with all workshop participants to refine the content in order to most effectively meet existing and future university system needs. The Spring 2002 workshop was offered in three consecutive sessions. There was a six-week break between sessions one and two to allow workshop participants to practice the skills introduced in session one.

The workshop objectives were: to convey to the participants an understanding of what coaching is; allow time to practice coaching skills and strategies during the workshop; and offer the opportunity to participate in a coaching relationship with another workshop participant throughout the course of the semester. It was expected that participants attend all three sessions, as the content of each session will build on the content from the previous session.

**Executive Coaching As Relational Development**

A significant component of the incorporation of MAP into UMM university culture was an emphasis on improved communication between supervisors and staff. Improved communication was expected based primarily on two factors. The first factor was a new communicative structure that offered specific parameters in which to discuss the achievement of job expectations as well as future expectations. The idea behind this new structure was to encourage more constructive conversations between supervisors and staff. Mandatory training was provided by HRS. A second factor was that it was a union mandated MAP expectation that meetings between supervisors and staff members take place several times each year as opposed to the traditional, and often ineffectual, once a year evaluation.
At a fundamental level, coaching can be described most simply as metacommunication, or communication about communication. Wilmot (1995) notes that metacommunication provides information about the relationship between individuals participating in an interpersonal relationship, and that the content is always interpreted and expressed within the relationship parameters metacommunicatively. This perspective extends to the communication between the individuals in a coaching relationship as well as to the discussion about communicating with others that takes place during a coaching session. Coaching is inherently focused on communication about improving communication beyond the parameters of the coaching relationship. At the same time it is essential that the communication taking place within the coaching relationship is constructive and effectual. One way to look at coaching as metacommunication is to depict coaching as a permutation of dyadic communication, and as such, it can be analyzed from a relational development perspective. Despite the abundance of literature on relational development, it appears that thus far no one has explored coaching through a relational development lens.

Wilmot (1987) defines the pure form of dyadic communication as the communication that occurs between two participants in a face-to-face situation where both are attending the other’s communication cues, but also acknowledges that any communication transaction can also be considered a form of dyadic communication. Wilmot goes on to say that all dyadic relationships are built, modified, and redefined through individual communication episodes. In other words, relationships are constructed entirely through the communication that occurs between the individuals involved. Trenholm (1986) concurs with this premise, and claims that dyadic interactions become interpersonal as
certain changes occur within a relationship. Therefore, interpersonal communication is the end product of a developmental process of evolution and change.

Wood (2002) describes interpersonal communication as “a selective, systematic, unique, and ongoing process of interaction between people who reflect and build personal knowledge of one another and create shared meanings” (p. 28). Duck (1983) identifies three components that are involved in the establishment of an interpersonal relationship. The first is the need for the individuals involved to gather information about one another. The second is a need to alter behavior in order to validate the other’s perceptions of them. And the third is a need for the creation of a pattern of communication that reflects their relationship to each other.

In a discussion of the function of goals within interpersonal communication, Berger (1993) explains that a conversation involving an established goal involves cognitive assessments of the situation and the mental linking of relevant actions to determine a path or paths to the goal. In order to do this, an individual must assess where they stand relative to a desired goal and if there is a discrepancy, they must execute a course of action to reduce that discrepancy. The next step is to ascertain if the discrepancy has been reduced. If it has, then the goal has been reached. If it hasn’t, then further actions must be taken to reduce the remaining discrepancy.

Cappella (1985) calls attention to the use of topic management in conversation as a communication strategy. Balancing topic-shifting and topic-continuity is essential in interpersonal relationships because important topics introduced into a conversation are statements about the person introducing the topic. And when such implicit statements are
ignored or dismissed through topic-shifting, disconfirmations of the speaker’s view of self is at risk.

Bochner et al (1991) propose studying interpersonal communication from a metaphorical point of view in terms of contextualized interaction. From this perspective, it is acceptable to assume that while each individual influence the other, it is unacceptable to conclude that one individual’s behavior causes the behavior of the other. This contextual orientation strongly implies that the interactions between individuals participating in an interpersonal relationship include additional persons related or connected to the individuals because they are included in the communication that constructs the interpersonal relationship.

Andreyeva and Gozman (1981) suggest that the behavioral and affective/cognitive aspects of interpersonal relationships are almost always inextricably intertwined. And as such, advocate studying interpersonal relationships from the viewpoint of the activity principle, which regards the activity of the person as being the prime focus of psychological concerns and views this activity as being socially determined.

In an effort to deconstruct the development of the coaching relationship in terms of developmental theory, it is useful to explore if there is a correlation between the five phase coaching process and the five coming together stages in Knapp’s (1978) Relationship Escalation Model. The five stages in Knapp’s model are: initiating, experimenting, intensifying, integrating, and bonding.

**Methods**

A qualitative analysis of the development of coaching relationships established and maintained during the Essential Coaching Skills for Supervisors workshop was analyzed
from a relational development perspective. Data were gathered through participant observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The time frame studied was a two-month period beginning with session one of the three-part coaching workshop thorough session two. Two sessions of the coaching workshop took place on March 6, and April 24, 2002. Session three was scheduled for May 29, 2002 but did not take place as is discussed later in this paper.

Workshop participants were partnered randomly into coaching teams at the end of session one and expected to meet weekly during the six weeks between sessions one and two to practice the coaching skills presented in session one. It was suggested that the weekly meetings last for one hour; allowing each person 30 minutes in the role of coach and 30 minutes in the role of client. The coaching process was divided into five specific phases: set criteria; assessment; identify focus/set goals; and develop an action plan, and ongoing coach/client meetings. The coaching teams were expected to address one phase each week for the first four weeks, and for the last two weeks the coaches were instructed to monitor the client’s progress in terms of the action plan developed during the meeting of week four.

Participants

The coaching workshop was targeted to classified staff members that currently have supervisory responsibilities or are considering career advancement into a position that involves supervisory responsibilities. The workshop was initially offered through the Human Resource Services Professional Enhancement Program brochure. A brochure is created each semester for the workshops offered that semester and delivered to the personal mailbox of each faculty, administrative, and staff member. The workshop was
also announced in the weekly campus newsletter, The News Forum and a flyer for the workshop was sent to each department.

Thirty-two people registered for the workshop. Each of those people received a reminder call one day prior to the workshop. Twenty-eight people from eighteen different departments attended session one. Thirteen of the session one participants dropped out in the week following the first session due to being unable to commit to participating in the weekly coaching sessions and were not interested in attending session two. Nine of the remaining fifteen participants were unable to participate in the weekly coaching sessions, but expressed interest in attending session two. Only six of the session one participants were able to participate in the weekly coaching sessions and expressed interest in attending session two. Nine people attended session two, including the six participants who had participated in the weekly coaching sessions.

**Data Collection**

The first method of collecting data used was interviews. A total of ten telephone interviews were conducted (see appendix for interview schedule) including all six of the participants who were able to participate in the weekly coaching sessions and expressed interest in attending session two, and four of those who were unable to participate in the weekly coaching sessions but interested in attending session two. Emails received from those that attended session one and then dropped out during the first week also provided useful data, although formal interviews were not conducted with those participants.

A second method of collecting data used was participant observation. Both sessions one and two of the coaching workshop were interactive with participants doing exercises and then sharing their experiences with the group. As the workshop facilitator, I was able
to glean from participants’ responses to their experiences and the experiences of others, useful data relevant to my research. I was able to observe non-verbal responses as I presented the information, which sometimes indicated understanding (head nodding) or that more clarification was needed (discussion among participants or confusion on faces), and immediately change or explain differently what I was presenting. I was also able to have informal conversations before, during and after workshop sessions during which various levels of participant disclosure was involved.

A third method of data collection used was through the completion of the standard evaluation questionnaires administered at all staff development workshops. Participant names are not included on the questionnaires; so all information gathered from the questionnaires was anonymous.

Research Questions

*RQ1. Are the expectations of the weekly meetings a realistic expectation of workshop participants?

*RQ2: Is the content of the Essential Coaching Skills workshop useful in developing practical coaching skills in a university setting?

*RQ3. Does a successful coaching relationship develop in the course of six-weeks when the suggested criteria are adhered to?

The Coaching Workshop Format

Session One

Session one of the coaching workshop was intended to provide participants with an overview of what coaching is, including the benefits and uses of coaching and to give them the tools to begin building a coaching relationship. The unique characteristics of
adult learners were taken into account in the design of the workshop content. Smeltzer and Arnold (1982) recommend emphasizing experiential activities rather than transmittal and absorption activities when training adult learners. With this in mind, the principal emphasis during the first session was on the development of effective communication skills so that the participants had a foundation from which to build their coaching relationships. It was expected that the most significant progress would take place within the coaching partnerships, where the skills presented in the workshop would be applied, and participants would develop an understanding through experience of how a coaching relationship develops.

Wilmot (1995) discusses six critical attributes that must be met in order for a relationship to be established: trust, respect, and ease in communication; general comfort, security in other’s presences; and openness. Communication is the key to the successful development of these attributes, and with that in mind, there were two interactive activities incorporated into the first session, an empathic listening skills exercise and an active listening skills exercise.

Empathic listening was presented first. Empathic listening is inherently present in active listening, but for the purposes of this workshop it was useful to break them into two separate activities. Empathic listening is comprised of four characteristics (Hedlund & Freedman, 1981):

1. The desire to be other-directed, rather than to project one’s own feelings and ideas onto the other
2. The desire to be non-defensive, and to focus on the other person instead of protecting oneself.
3. The desire to imagine the roles, perspectives, or experiences of the other, rather than assuming that they are the same as one’s own.
4. The desire to understand the other person rather than to achieve with agreement from or change in that person.

Workshop participants were given an explanation of empathic listening and a worksheet with ten suggestions on how to incorporate verbal and non-verbal communication listening skills and asked to engage in an empathic listening skills exercise. The participants were divided into groups of three with a person from each group adopting the role of speaker, listener, or observer alternately. When the exercise was complete, participants came back together as one group and discussed their experiences.

Next, active listening was presented. The following four components are important in active listening (Hedlund & Freedman, 1981):

1. Note the attitudes and feelings included in the message.
2. Repeat back to the person what you heard them say, paraphrase without changing the meaning.
3. Do not send a message of your own such as evaluating, giving opinions, offering logic, analyzing, questioning etc.
4. Avoid questions unless you really need information. Often questions are an indirect way of making statements.

The participants were divided into the same groups of three with each person again adopting the role of speaker, listener, or observer alternately. When the exercise was complete, participants came back together as one group and discussed their experiences.

After the listening exercises were complete, the five step coaching process that the participants were expected to follow during their weekly meetings was introduced. Knowles (1987) identified that adult learners enter into a learning experience with a task-centered orientation to learning. In order to accommodate this characteristic of adult
learning, a version of the coaching process was designed to facilitate the incorporation of specific tasks to be accomplished into the weekly coaching meetings.

At the end of session one, workshop participants were paired up randomly and instructed to meet for one hour weekly coaching sessions with their partner. The coaching process presented, including specific objectives and worksheets for each session, was included in the participants' workshop packets.

Session Two

Because session three was optional, it was important that with the completion of session two that workshop participants were able to effectively utilize the coaching skills that had been presented in the workshop thus far. Redding (1984) asserts that an organization has the right to expect that as a result of being trained that all trainees will demonstrate the three behavioral outcomes of cooperation, comprehension, and competence.

Cooperation refers to the trainee's willingness to cooperate with others in the organization at a level sufficient to make coordinated task achievement possible. Comprehension refers to the fact that the trainee must understand the rationale of the training and the reasons for doing what he or she is expected to learn. And competence refers to the fact that the trainee must be equipped with the techniques and resources to function in his or her organizational role and an acceptable standard of expertise. Redding claims that in order to attain these goals that a trainer must establish specific behavioral objectives and learning strategies calculated to facilitate the accomplishment of those objectives.
Knowles (1987) recommends that it is useful to involve adult learners in evaluating the accomplishment of their learning objectives. Conducting the participant interviews between sessions one and two allowed me to ascertain which information presented in session one the participants found valuable in their weekly coaching meeting, as well as what additional information was needed. I used both direct questions during the interviews (e.g. What would you have liked to see included/excluded in sessions I, II and III?), as well as less direct questions designed to elicit more candid responses (e.g. Do you feel that your coaching experience helped you? Why or why not?). The responses to the less direct questions are discussed in Analysis of Results section of this paper.

Nine of the ten participants interviewed considered the listening activities offered in session one beneficial and wanted additional interactive activities to be included in session two. The one participant who did not like the listening activities claimed that they took up too much of the workshop time and would have preferred instead that that time be used to present more information.

Four of the participants interviewed expressed interest in observing coaching role-plays as part of session two. Five participants requested that specific areas be addressed including: everyday ways to practice coaching; pre-determined goals or topics to work on; techniques for establishing clear boundaries; and additional basic communication skills. An underlying theme in all participants' responses was to be able to more immediately apply the coaching skills presented during the workshop in their departments. And finally, all participants interviewed expressed interest in hearing about everyone else's weekly coaching experiences.
When designing the materials for session two, I took into account an additional characteristic of adult learning proposed by Knowles (1987) that “adults become ready to learn when they experience in their life situation a need to know or be able to do in order to perform more effectively and satisfyingly” (p. 171). Based on the feedback gathered from the interviews, the objectives of session two were: to offer demonstrations of coaching role-plays; to provide workshop participants with techniques that create more structure within coaching sessions; to introduce additional communication skills including conflict resolution and handling difficult employees; and to broaden workshop participants’ coaching skills to include coaching groups and teams.

The first part of session two was devoted to a discussion of participants’ weekly coaching session experiences. Then for the remainder of the session, selections in the workshop packet were interspersed with short clips from a CareerTrack video titled *Practical Coaching Skills for Managers*. The video clips were used to present coaching role-plays demonstrating the use of coaching skills in a variety of situations including mentoring, counseling, and conflict resolution that were discussed in the workshop packet. Participants were asked to make notes while watching the video clips and then to respond in a group discussion to specific elements of each video clip that corresponded with the issue being demonstrated. Participants were also given a handout titled *101 Things to Work on With Your Coach* (Coach University, 1997) to accommodate the requests for pre-determined goals or topics to work on in coaching sessions.

**Session Three**

Due to the fact that only two people registered to attend session three, the last session of the coaching workshop was cancelled. However, session three would have offered
relevant and useful information and as such what would have been presented to be
offered here. The primary focus of session three would have been to more directly
incorporate the fundamental elements of MAP into the coaching process. This would
have been accomplished by integrating the goal setting and performance planning stage
of MAP (HRS, 2001) as presented in the departmental MAP training sessions into a
coaching scenario. The five steps are:

1. Reviewing mission statements;
2. Job Success Factors;
3. Setting goals the SMART way
4. Action Plans
5. Performance Plans

Session three would have focused on how supervisors can use coaching to assist
employees in establishing personal Job Success Factors (defined as: expertise; interaction
with others; continuous improvement/customer focus; resourcefulness and results; and
leadership); and in setting SMART Goals (defined as specific, measurable, attainable,
realistic, and time-bound), which will then lead into the establishment of action plans and
performance plans.

Analysis of Results

The results of this study were analyzed using open coding. When open coding is used,
the coding categories are not predetermined. The inherent inductive perspective offered
by the use of open coding allows for a more diverse range of analytic possibilities
without being limited to how or whether ideas and categories will ultimately be used.
Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1975) suggest that coding is not a matter of simply
discovering what is in the data, but more creatively linking specific events and observations to more general analytic categories and issue. In this case, the analysis of this study will be used to improve future coaching workshops and by using open coding, allowance is made for the possibility of incorporating as yet unanticipated directions in which the workshops might take. The themes that emerged from the open coding process were required to meet at least one of the three criteria proposed by Owen (1984), reoccurrence, repetition, or forcefulness.

Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) propose that analysis is both inductive and deductive. The gathering of data during the initial workshop provides information that provides an inductive analysis of the usefulness of the workshop from which a deductive framework of what might be more useful for future workshops can be constructed.

The results are discussed in two sections. In the first section, desired behavioral outcomes as a result of participating in the coaching workshop will be identified along with a discussion of the outcomes achieved. In the second section, the results will be discussed in light of Knapp’s (1978) Relationship Escalation Model.

**Desired Behavioral Outcomes**

Because the primary purpose of conducting this study was to evaluate the success of the first workshop, it is important to determine the most effectual strategies used. One way in which to do this is through revisiting Redding’s (1984) idea that an organization has the right to expect that as a result of being trained, trainees will demonstrate the three behavioral outcomes of cooperation, comprehension, and competence. In this case, I would also add a fourth behavioral outcome, commitment.
Cooperation

Cooperation refers to the trainee’s willingness to cooperate with others in the organization at a level sufficient to make coordinated task achievement possible. Cooperation is a pervasive element in coaching and in the case of this study and it was essential that participants were able to cooperate during the weekly meetings in order to allow a coaching relationship to develop.

A significant component in terms of coaching in regard to cooperation is the level of trust that is developed between a coach and a client. In an actual coaching situation, the coach selected to work with a particular executive would be selected based on various compatibility factors, including the coach’s experience in dealing with the issues that the executive needed to work on. In the case of the workshop, these factors were not taken into account when the coaching partners were paired up, and because of that, there were some challenges that can be attributed to the superficiality of the coaching partnerships as one participant called attention to in an interview:

I think that there was a small degree of, I don’t know, awkward might be a little strong, but, you know, kind of getting adjusted to, you know, a relationship that kind of, you know, sometimes coaching or mentoring relationships just happen as a matter of course in a natural way, you know of course when you have to set it up in order to make a simulation work, there is a little bit of disjointedness, it just doesn’t really flow, it’s kind of like having someone, I guess, how they used to arrange marriages, where you kind of basically understand that you already have, you know, a goal and outcome in mind, but you don’t really have a relationship, so it takes a little time to kind of get a comfort level going.

The artificial nature of the coaching partnerships appeared to have affected some participants more than others. One of the questions on the interview schedule asked participants to rate their willingness to disclose in the coaching sessions on a scale from
one to ten, one being a low degree of disclosure and ten being a high degree of disclosure.

Three of the six participants interviewed that participated in the weekly coaching sessions gave a response of ten for this question and one of those three gave the following reason: “If you have respect for the person or people that you are working with, I have no problem with full disclosure, so I would say it was 10. I have nothing to hide.” The lowest response to this question was a four and the reason given was that “it was an artificial setup and I was being asked to give personal information to a total stranger.”

Based on the results of the data gathered, it appears that at least some degree of cooperation was achieved in all coaching partnerships, and taking into account the three participants that gave a ten response on the trust scale demonstrated that a high level of trust was developed among those that met weekly. However, those that participated in the coaching partnerships represented a minority of workshop participants, so overall the cooperation outcome was not achieved.

**Comprehension**

Comprehension refers to the fact that the trainee must understand the rationale of the training and the reasons for doing what he or she is expected to learn. In terms of the coaching workshop, I found that the level of comprehension that I had expected was not present after session one, primarily because most of the workshop participants were lacking supplementary skills which were not offered in session one, but which were needed to conduct effective coaching sessions. Some of the supplementary skills that were lacking included emotional intelligence skills, setting boundaries, keeping conversations focused and generating ideas.
The fact that the workshop participants had such a variety of backgrounds also proved challenging because there was an equally wide range of both communication experience and workshop expectations. As an example, one participant indicated that they wanted to see more emphasis on the collaboration aspect of coaching:

A lot of the textual material that you handed out was almost as if this is what a coach is going to do in terms of helping you improve your performance as opposed to a mutually agreed upon action plan that we can put together for the benefit of the organization.

Another participant had conflicting needs and wanted specific tools and techniques to use with her staff members:

I wanted very specific ways to encourage and develop my staff, to increase the level of comfort in order to be able to encourage them to take greater risks. I did not want to learn to be a mentor.

As is demonstrated in the above quotes, a final factor that contributed to low comprehension was the range of how workshop participants defined coaching. Although all participants came to the workshop with the expectation of learning how to coach as a way in which to support their staff members, some people defined that as learning the skill of coaching without a particular focus, which was the perspective that I was coming from. Other people defined staff support as learning specific skills (e.g. conflict management) to use with their employees.

Based on the feedback received, I broadened my definition of coaching for session two to include specific circumstances in which coaching skills could be used and included role-plays and handouts to assist the participants in mentoring, counseling, and conflict management as elements of coaching.

*Competence*
Competence refers to the fact that the trainee must be equipped with the techniques and resources to function in his or her organizational role and an acceptable standard of expertise. I thought that by providing the workshop participants with an overview of what coaching is, two exercises to practice effective listening techniques, and detailed step-by-step instructions of how to conduct the weekly sessions, that they would be willing to jump in and give it a try, but some of the participants were intimidated and overwhelmed by the process as this quote from one of the interviews exemplifies:

"I felt like he would be more help to me than I would to him. I feel that I don’t have enough background to ask the right questions in the right manner. It’s like I need to witness it more often before I can go about it myself. So I felt like I wasn’t prepared enough to proceed with this."

Other participants felt that they did not possess the skills to perform the role of coach:

"I think that we just didn’t have enough skill to be in an actual coaching role. There wasn’t enough structure to the meetings to monitor the time, how to stay on task, that kind of thing… We didn’t have the guidance to stay on track; I think is what was missing for us."

When designing any training, it is important to consider an important question raised by Redding (1984), “If the trainer dares aim at innovative outcomes, what are the ethical implications of putting trainees into situations fraught with hazards to their careers?” (p. 8). The primary reason that it was expected that workshop participants meet for weekly coaching sessions was that as with learning any new skill, there are going be mistakes and it will take some time to become proficient. It was recognized that it would be better for the participants to make those mistakes outside of their department to avoid losing credibility with their staff.

I assumed that participants would want to begin to practice the skills presented as soon as possible, but as it turned out, as was commonly expressed during the interviews, that
they would have liked to have more time as a group before being sent out on their own. The following quote illustrates that reaction: “I wondered if we should have met a couple more times as a group, to just get more definitive of, you know, what we wanted to do, or what we should do.”

The fact that many of the workshop participants did not feel comfortable acting in the coaching role is most likely directly related to the low number of participants who met for the weekly coaching sessions. Because they did not feel competent to perform the expected task, there were not as likely to commit to practicing the coaching skills as is discussed in more depth in the next section.

**Commitment**

Several themes emerged from the reasons given for why workshop participants were interested in learning to coach: to motivate staff; to improve communication with staff; to assist staff in being successful; and to become better supervisors. Because there was a wide range of departments represented, participants came to the workshop with unique ways in which they planned to use coaching skills. One participant had recently hired a new administrative assistant and saw learning to coach as an effective way to learn how to delegate and initiate feedback. Another participant worked primarily with student employees. Regardless of why each participant was there, they were each able to use the coaching skills in a way that was most useful to them, because as one participant said during an interview:

There is always a value in thinking out loud with someone else to kind of use them as a sounding board. It’s kind of like, you know, fly some ideas, put some things in the air and see if they sprout wings or become like a lead balloon.
None of the participants were able to complete all six weekly coaching sessions. The majority of the participants did not meet at all. The reasons given appear to support a conflict for all participants between interest and time. The initial response to the coaching workshop was higher than any other workshop offered this semester, which indicates that there is a significant interest in learning coaching skills. However, the attrition rate indicates that while people are interested in learning coaching skills, that they do not have the time to develop those skills over and above their normal workload. As examples, here are some of the reasons given for not being able to meet:

- Traveling for work took them out of town on a regular basis.
- No time due to being in a Master’s program in addition to 40-hour workweek.
- We met once or twice, and then got too busy
- Not paired up with anyone.

The first workshop expectation presented was to commit to the process. Based on the responses received, workshop participants wanted to attend a two-hour session and be able to return to their office and begin coaching. Despite the fact that it was explained in the workshop description that participants would be expected to use the time between sessions one and two to practice skills presented, no one seemed to take that expectation seriously. In addition to the correlation between low competence and low commitment, there are several other possible explanations for the low level of commitment demonstrated by workshop participants. The first is that the workshops offered through the Professional Enhancement Program are traditionally workshops that participants can take a few hours out of their day, learn some new skills, and begin to apply what was learned right away upon returning to their office. A second issue is that there was a
degree of self-motivation involved to learn and practice coaching that has not been an
expectation of past workshops. And finally, participants were expected to develop a one-
on-one relationship with people from other departments not directly related to their job.

All of these factors are indicative of the old organizational culture. The coaching
workshop was presented with the intention of beginning to integrate the new cultural
values of enhanced communication as well as personal responsibility and ownership in a
useful, relevant way. It was anticipated that there would be resistance, but the degree to
which there was a lack of commitment from workshop participants was surprising.

**Extending Relational Development Theory**

By comparing the five coming together stages in Knapp's (1978) Relationship
Escalation Model to the five phase executive coaching process from the coaching
workshop through the use of the extended case method as proposed by Burawoy (1998),
it is possible to determine if an actual coaching relationship does in fact develop between
workshop participants in the six weeks between sessions one and two.

The extended case method applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to
extract the general from the unique, to move from the ‘micro’ to the ‘macro’ and
to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on
preexisting theory (Burawoy, 1998, p. 5).

The ‘micro’ in this case is the individual participants experience of the coaching
workshop and the ‘macro’ is the utilization of their experience to develop future coaching
workshops. There are four specific aspects of the extended case method that are relevant
to this study: extending the observer to the participant, extending observations over space
and time and extending out from process to force and extending theory.

**Extending the observer to the participant.** According to Burawoy (1998), the
extended case method embraces participation as intervention and I would agree with him
in terms of this project. My dual roles as workshop facilitator and researcher provided me with the opportunity to not only observe and analyze the success of the coaching workshop, but to also have an integral role in the presentation of future workshops because of my position as staff development coordinator. Another advantage to being a participant observer on this project is that I was able to gather data indirectly through informal conversations. The fact that I was a graduate student and this was the first time that I had offered the coaching workshop seemed to make me approachable and everyone that I talked to was candid about offering feedback, and they might not have been so forthcoming to someone with more experience.

**Extending observations over space and time.** My involvement with the participants in this study took place over a period of two months and I was able to interact with them in a variety of ways including: acting as the facilitator of the workshop, one-on-one conversations, email correspondence, anonymous questionnaire responses and telephone conversations. The various ways in which interaction occurred allowed me to observe and record similarities and differences offered by participants in regard to the same issues. Lindlof (1995) has identified this as triangulation. Triangulation involves a comparative assessment of more than one form of evidence about the topic of inquiry and can be used to develop a concept, construct, or proposition. According to Lindlof, greater validity can be attributed to data that is gathered through the use of diverse data gathering techniques and that even when triangulation produces divergent outcomes, that explanations become more credible, not less so.

**Extending out from process to force.** Burawoy (1998) proposes that the extended case method uses an integrative or vertical approach in which the sources of small
differences are traced to external forces. In other words, the purpose of the comparison is to connect the results of a study to an existing theory, for the purposes of both extending the parameters of the theory and to construct a framework from which to analyze the research data. In this case, Knapp's Relationship Escalation Model will be compared to the five phase coaching process not only to determine if a coaching relationship does develop based on an established model of relational development, but also to consider if the current model can be extended to include coaching relationships.

**Extending theory.** One of the distinctive factors of this project was the opportunity to not only extend theory, but to do so in a academic setting from both theoretical and applied perspectives. As explained by Burawoy, (1998):

> Theory is essential to each dimension of the extended case method. It guides interventions, it constitutes situated knowledge into social processes, and it locates those social processes in their wider context of determination. Moreover, theory is not something stored up in the academy but itself becomes an intervention into the world it seeks to comprehend. (p. 21)

By Extending Knapp's Relationship Escalation Model in terms of the development of the coaching partnerships as part of the coaching workshop, it offers both an innovative way in which to apply relational theory, as well as a useful model from which to determine the effectiveness of the coaching relationships.

**Coaching and Relationship Escalation**

Seibold (1995) defines applied communication research as “qualitative empirical work that employs communication theory and research methods as a means to applied ends and/or as a means to test a theory in applied settings” (p. 25). This project accomplishes both. In this section of the paper, coaching will be discussed in terms of relational development by first comparing the five phases of Knapp's Relationship Escalation
Model with the five step coaching process used in the coaching workshop and then by
evaluating the degree to which the five stages were met by workshop participants.

Initiating/ Set criteria

Knapp defines the initiating stage is the beginning of a relationship where the
conversation starts. In this stage, participants are concerned with making favorable
impressions on each other. This stage corresponds the first step of the coaching process,
set criteria. In the set criteria phase the goals are: discussion of clients purpose in
participating in the coaching relationship; discussion of the areas of improved
performance desired by the client; scheduling future meetings; setting the ground rules
for the coach/client relationship; and choosing which assessment tools will be used.

The interaction that takes place in both interpersonal relationships and coaching
relationships at this stage share the same objective of initiating the beginning of a new
relationship. The primary difference is that in Knapp's model, this stage takes place
relatively quickly, often in fifteen seconds or less. In the interpersonal arena, this stage
serves is a kind of quick summing up of the potential of building a relationship with each
other. This can be enacted in a variety of ways and the decision to pursue the relationship
is based on a multitude of factors personally significant to each person.

In contrast, this stage in the coaching model is intended to last for the duration of the
first meeting (30 minutes) and incorporates specific tools to be used to gather information
such as the client profile questionnaire and the primary focus worksheet (see appendix for
worksheets). Consequently, the decision to pursue a coaching relationship is objectively
based on the desire and ability of the coach and client to work together and the decision
to pursue an interpersonal relationship is more subjectively based on individual preferences.

**Experimenting/ Assessment**

According to Knapp (1978), the experimenting stage involves gathering information through the asking and answering of questions. In this stage, individuals ask questions of each other in order to gain information about the other to decide if they wish to continue the relationship. This stage corresponds the second step of the coaching process, assessment.

Objectives for the second meeting include: discussion of results from assessment tools correlating assessment results with client's goals and identification of areas where improvement is needed.

The interaction that takes place in both interpersonal relationships and coaching relationships at this stage is quite similar although their purposes are different. In both types of relationships, questions are asked and answered in an attempt to learn more about the other person. However, a difference is that it is one-way in a coaching scenario with the coach only asking questions of the client, and it is two-way in an interpersonal situation with both people asking questions of each other. The objectives also differ at this stage. In a coaching relationship, the goal is to gather information toward identifying issues that the client can work on. In an interpersonal relationship, the goal is to establish if commonality exists between the two them, as Knapp (1978) explains "Obviously, the degree to which a person assists another in finding this integrating topic shows the degree of interest in continuing the interaction and the willingness to pursue a relationship" (p. 18). Despite the different objectives between the two models at this stage, experimenting
and assessing appear to be comparable in terms of using questions to establish if the relationship is to continue, and to find a common basis from which the relationship will develop.

**Intensifying/Identify focus and set goals**

In Knapp’s (1978) intensifying stage, the amount of personal disclosure increases, and although disclosures may be related to any topic area, those dealing with the development of the relationship are crucial. Active participation and greater awareness of the process typify this stage and statements are made about the level of commitment each has to the relationship. This stage corresponds with the third step of the coaching process, identify focus and set goals.

Objectives for the third meeting include: the coach and client together deciding which issues will be focused on and then beginning to discuss goals based on those issues. In this phase it is important that the client maintain ownership for deciding which goals to pursue. There are three areas that should be taken into consideration when discussing goals: 1) the bottom line, defined as meeting the responsibilities delineated in the client’s role description; 2) work process issues, defined as how the work is accomplished from the beginning to the end of procedures, projects, and processes in order to achieve the bottom-line goals; and 3) human relations issues, defined as interpersonal communication skills needed to achieve work-process and bottom-line goals.

It is of particular interest to note that Knapp (1978) observes that an aspect of the initiating phase is that “Increasingly, ones’ partner will act as a helper in the daily process of understanding what you’re all about [by saying things like] ‘In other words, you mean you’re...’ or ‘But yesterday, you said you were...’” (p. 20). What he is calling attention to
is the use of active listening, which is the same technique underlying the foundation of coaching.

The interaction that takes place in both interpersonal relationships and coaching relationships at this stage shares the same objective of clarifying needs or goals and takes place in very similar ways. In the interpersonal model, this is achieved by personal disclosure and direct expressions of commitment. In the coaching model, this is accomplished through the discussion of bottom line goals, work-process issues, and human relations issues and followed by the setting of goals based on those three areas.

**Integrating/ Develop an action plan**

In the integrating stage, Knapp (1978) proposes that in this phase, empathic processes seem to peak so that explanation and prediction of behavior are much easier. The relationship begins to become more intimate. They begin to do things together and, importantly, others come to see them as a pair. A shared relational identity starts to form in this stage. This stage corresponds with the fourth step of the coaching process, develop an action plan. Objectives for the fourth meeting include: discussion of client’s side of any pattern identified; anticipation of resistance; definition of specific goals; setting timelines for completions of goals; establishment of client’s accountability to coach for completion of goals.

The interaction that takes place in interpersonal relationships and coaching relationships begins to more significantly diverge at this stage. While still important in both models to explain and predict behavior, the objectives become opposite. It is always the goal in a coaching relationship for the coach to facilitate the ultimate autonomy of the
client, while it is typically the goal in an interpersonal relationship, particularly one of a romantic nature, to become less autonomous and more of a couple.

**Bonding/ Ongoing meetings between coach and client**

Knapp's final stage is the bonding stage. During the bonding stage, a formal, sometimes legal, announcement of the relationship is made. Examples include a marriage, "best friend" ritual, or business partnership agreement. Knapp (1978) describes the bonding stage as:

> The relationship hardens, makes it more difficult to break out of, and probably changes the rhetoric that takes place sans contract. The contract becomes, either explicitly or implicitly, a frequent topic of conversation. Communication strategies can now be based on interpretation and execution of the commitments contained in the contract. (p. 22)

This stage corresponds the fifth step of the coaching process, ongoing meetings between coach and client. Objectives for the fifth and sixth meetings include: discussion of the client's progress toward achievement of goals and continuing development of coach/client relationship.

Despite the divergence that occurs between interpersonal relationships and coaching relationships in the previous phase, in this stage they distinctly become confluent again. Although the contradictory goals of interdependence and autonomy still differentiate the two models, how they convey this becomes similar again in this final phase. In both interpersonal relationships and coaching relationships, the focus moves to how the relationship is defined, and ongoing discussion about that definition. In the case of interpersonal relationships, it is defined in terms of personal commitment to the other person. And for coaching relationships, it is defined as commitment to and achievement of previously decided upon goals.
The Coaching Partnerships

As has been demonstrated, using the five stages of Knapp's Relationship Escalation Model to describe and discuss the five step coaching process is a pertinent extension of theory and serves as a useful basis from which to extend this study. With that established, I will now use Knapp's Relationship Escalation Model discuss the degree to which successful coaching relationships were established within the coaching partnerships from the coaching workshop.

Based on the information received from the interviews, everyone was able to meet for the first time and complete the expectations of the first step of the coaching process. Consequently, all coaching partnerships were able to accomplish the first relational development stage of initiating. All coaching partners also reached the experimenting stage of development, but at this point each partnership took a unique direction.

One pair of workshop participants met for three and a half hours for the assessment step of the coaching process. During that session, one person acted as coach the entire time. Based on the interviews, apparently it was more of a “coffee discussion” than a coaching session, meaning that it was the kind of conversation that two friends would have, but not very useful from a coaching perspective. After that session, the two partners decided not to meet anymore in a coaching scenario because they could not justify taking time away from their work-related responsibilities for conversations that were not work-related.

The second and third pairs of workshop participants were able to meet for the first four sessions, which allowed them to complete the assessment, identify focus/set goals, and develop an action plan steps of the coaching process. When analyzed from a
relational development perspective, this means that they were able to achieve the experimenting, intensifying and integrating phases. After the fourth meeting, a member of the second pair had to go out of town for work and so they were unable to meet after that point. And the third pair attributed not having additional meetings to time constraints.

Based on these results, successful coaching relationships did indeed began to be developed in terms of the stages of relational development based on Knapp's Relationship Escalation Model. Although none of the workshop participants were able to reach the final stage of bonding, that seems to be due to logistical considerations and time constraints as opposed to any particular flaw in the proposed coaching process, although it would be useful to study workshop participants through the bonding phase of development to be certain of that.

**Recommendations For UMM**

The information gathered from this study indicates a strong interest from classified staff at The University of Montana in learning executive coaching skills. Based on these findings, it would be useful to offer Essential Coaching Skills for Supervisor workshops in the future through the Human Resource Service Professional Enhancement program. It was also established through this study that some changes in the content of the workshop as presented in the Spring 2002 semester need to be incorporated in future presentations of the workshop in order for it to be more successful in training supervisors to be effective coaches. This section will discuss ways in which constructive adaptations can be made to the existing workshop content toward the achievement of this goal.
Zaltman and Duncan (1977) suggest that in many cases, the same factors are involved in both hindering and facilitating change and identify four categories in which this may occur: peer and authority relations; personal attitudes; the characteristics of practice; and physical and temporal arrangements. This is a useful format in which to situate the workshop content in order to evaluate which aspects were useful and what can be changed to enhance future workshop presentations.

**Peer and authority relations**

As identified earlier in this paper, supervisors need to learn effective coaching skills to be able to successfully support the increased communication expected to take place between supervisors and staff members. Although the interest in learning coaching skills was high compared to the interest in other staff development workshops, when taking into account the number of supervisors at the UMM campus, the supervisors interested in developing coaching skills is extremely low.

In an attempt to ensure that more supervisors learn coaching skills I have two suggestions. First, provide more of an incentive that serves to encourage supervisors' interest in taking the required time to learn coaching skills. To this end, I suggest that the coaching workshop be offered as part of the UMM continuing education program and that participants receive continuing education credit for completion of the program. This approach would validate the importance of supervisors taking time away from their regular workload to attend coaching training.

A second suggestion is that attendance of the coaching workshop be mandatory for all supervisors within a particular time frame, for example two years. This approach would indicate that the leaders of the organization consider coaching skills as imperative to the
success of the organizational goal of improved communication between supervisors and staff members.

**Personal attitudes**

The personal attitudes of the workshop participants can be correlated to two behavior outcomes discussed earlier, cooperation and commitment. As was demonstrated earlier, at least some degree of cooperation was achieved in all coaching partnerships that were able to meet weekly, but that the majority of participants did not achieve cooperation. This can be addressed to some degree by the suggestions made in other areas of this section below, but there is still an element of commitment that is required from the individuals themselves.

In order to facilitate a committed interest in learning coaching skills, supervisors must be convinced that they are useful skills to develop. One way in which to achieve this is to provide specific examples to supervisors of how coaching skills can be utilized within various situations. Perhaps a monthly or quarterly coaching newsletter can be developed and delivered to all supervisors on campus. The newsletter could provide useful tips and suggestions on everyday coaching as well as ways in which coaching is being successfully employed around campus.

**The characteristics of practice**

The characteristics of practice can be correlated to the two remaining behavioral outcomes, comprehension and competence. Based on the fact that nine of the ten participants interviewed considered the listening activities offered in session one beneficial and wanted additional interactive activities to be included in session two, I
would suggest incorporating additional activities into future workshops. The following quote nicely summarizes the opinions of the majority of interviewees:

I think that, for me, it's good to have a lot of different exercises, and I think that the exercises that you did were very valuable. And you know, that's my way, I am a tactile learner, you know, I've got to hands on experience it and I guess that that is something that I would like to see more of.

In an effort to provide a more structured format where participants can develop a level of competence from which they feel comfortable practicing the coaching skills, I suggest that the order in which the workshop content is presented be restructured. Instead of presenting the information as a progression of general to specific with the coaching process presented in session one and then specific issues addressed in session two. Instead, use specific examples to help explain how coaching skills can be incorporated into a range of common supervisory circumstances. This would involve defining coaching from a broader perspective that includes mentoring, counseling and conflict resolution.

It would also be useful to incorporate the lacking supplementary skills as discussed previously into the workshop format. One way in which to do this is to consider those skills as prerequisites to attending the coaching workshop. Perhaps those skills and the coaching workshop can be offered in alternate semesters. I would also like to see coaching workshop graduates assisting in future coaching workshops.

**Physical and temporal arrangements**

As was demonstrated earlier, the expectation of the workshop participants to meet weekly did not work. Because the fact remains that it is necessary to practice coaching skills in order to become an effective coach, I propose an alternative configuration of the workshop format. I suggest that the coaching workshop be offered as an eight-week
course during which participants meet as a group for three hours each week. Despite the fact that this appears to contradict participants' reluctance to make the time to commit weekly, this format has been successfully attended by supervisors in the Management Development Series offered every semester. A common response from workshop participants was that the specific amount of time expected was not presented up front, and this format would address that issue.

The first 90 minutes of each weekly session would be used to present a new component of coaching and the opportunity to practice related experiential exercises in small groups. And then the second 90 minutes would be used for coaching teams to practice weekly coaching sessions based on the five step coaching process. An additional change that I would suggest is that the coaching teams consist of three people instead of two. This is the format that was used for the small group exercises and allows for one team member to observe and offer feedback to the person coaching. This was ideally how I would like to have set up the weekly coaching sessions for the initial workshop, but I anticipated that the addition of a third member would only further complicate scheduling time to meet weekly, so in the interest of simplifying, I only had them work in pairs.

It is hoped that by incorporating the above recommendations, that the current format of the coaching workshop can be enhanced with the goal of future workshop participants successfully demonstrating all four behavioral outcomes of cooperation, comprehension, competence, and commitment.
Recommendations For Coaching In An Academic Environment

As has been discussed, the benefits of incorporating a coaching program into an organizational change process are clear. There are, however, inherent challenges when the organization at issue is a university due to the unique characteristics of the academic environment. There are three distinct elements that exist in university culture that delineates the manner in which a coaching program is presented. Perhaps the most significant obstacle in introducing a coaching program into a university system is that it is comprised of two distinctly different categories of employees, faculty and staff, and that each represents a sub-culture in and of itself. Secondly, the supervisors that will be targeted in a general coaching program in a university setting are typically mid-level supervisors as opposed to upper-level supervisors. And a third issue is the actual scheduling of the coaching training, taking into account that the supervisors are expected to learn and develop coaching skills in conjunction with their daily workload and in addition to their regular responsibilities.

Different Categories of Employees

In order to offer the most useful coaching program in a university setting, it is imperative to take into account the diversity of staff and faculty supervisors, due to the fact that there are both supervisors who hold rank of faculty and others who are staff. And in addition to the vastly different job related responsibilities that members of each category comprise, where and when coaching is relevant is also dependent on a number of additional factors including department size, department responsibilities and departmental needs. It becomes quickly evident that one version of a coaching program cannot provide adequate tools for the diversity of needs for all departments on campus.
which deductively infers that it is necessary to offer several versions of coaching programs to meet the specific needs for the diverse departments.

In order to develop an effectual campus-wide coaching program, it becomes necessary to understand the needs of supervisors across campus. One manner in which to determine the coaching needs of supervisors across campus is through the use of focus groups. Focus groups are used to elicit information about a specific issue by bringing a small group of people together to engage in a guided discussion of the issue at hand. A typical focus group consists of 12 to 15 individuals. According to Babbie (1999), the group dynamics that occur in focus groups often reveal perspectives on a topic that might not emerge from interviews with individuals.

In the case of using focus groups to develop a campus-wide coaching program, it would be useful to first group similar departments together and to then draw the focus group members from those departmental groups. It is advantageous to group the departments together because it provides an opportunity to individuals from various departments to provide ideas and suggestions to one another. The information gleaned from the focus groups can then be used to develop different versions of the coaching program to be presented. Inter-departmental coaching support networks could also be created based on the departmental groups to offer on-going support to one another as they develop and refine their coaching skills.

**Mid-level Supervisors**

A second issue that is present when introducing a coaching program into a university setting is that the supervisors that will be targeted are typically mid-level supervisors as opposed to upper-level supervisors. Therefore, when developing a coaching program, it
would be useful to focus on issues that typify what a mid-level manager in an academic setting might encounter; for example how to deal with student employees or how to deflect a conflict with an administrative assistant.

It would also be helpful to contact Human Resource departments on other campuses to find out if they offer coaching programs, or are considering offering a coaching program. It would valuable to both universities to share both coaching program development ideas as well as what was and was not effective once it was implemented.

Another way in which the university system could support mid-level supervisors as they learn coaching skills is for upper-level supervisors to serve as mentors for them. The upper-level supervisors could meet with the mid-level supervisors for an hour a month and together they could discuss current coaching issues that the manager is working through. The effectiveness of this of course is directly related to the coaching experience of the supervisors, therefore it becomes essential that the supervisors that serve as mentors be carefully chosen.

**Scheduling Coaching Training**

A third issue that needs to be dealt with when developing a coaching program to be implemented into a university setting is the fact upper-level are expected to learn and develop coaching skills in conjunction with their daily workload and in addition to their regular responsibilities. When the coaching workshops will be presented is a significant factor in determining the success of the coaching program because it is vital that the supervisors be able to attend as much of the training as possible. It is important to ensure that the supervisors feel supported in increasing their skill base with the incorporation of coaching skills as opposed to overwhelmed by having to learn something new.
One way in which to convey support is to make every attempt to schedule the coaching training at the most convenient time for as many supervisors as possible. In order to do this, training can be offered in various formats. For example, condensed weekend workshops might work better for some supervisors than the eight-week format suggested in the previous section. Another possibility is to meet evenings instead of during the workday.

A second way in which to engender support for the supervisors as they learn to coach is to make the coaching training as relevant as possible to their daily responsibilities. If the supervisors are able to easily transfer the skills to their departments, then they will more readily commit to learning the coaching process. And ideally, the implementation of coaching skills will result in more efficient and effectual management and if that correlation is clear to the supervisors, then they will be more willing to participate in the coaching training.

Incorporating the above suggestions that take into account the unique characteristics of introducing a coaching program into a university system is that it is comprised of two distinctly different categories of employees, the fact that the supervisors targeted are typically mid-level supervisors, and being willing to accommodate the scheduling of the coaching training to support rather than overwhelm supervisors, will significantly increase the probability that a coaching program will be effectual.

**Summary**

As a second year graduate student, I was enthusiastic about the opportunity to incorporate the theories that I had learned in class into a workshop that would assist in the
ongoing cultural changes within the university setting as a result of the introduction of MAP. As predicted by Seibold (1995):

Applied communication research in the 21st century will be conditioned by larger societal changes and will reflect applied researchers' efforts to document and understand changes that are intellectually challenging, practically important, and in which they themselves are immersed as societal members. (p. 31)

I offer this study as a relevant and useful way in which it is possible to use applied communication research to not only extend an existing relational communication theory, but to also utilize the results of the study in an applied setting.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effectiveness of the Essential Coaching Skills for Supervisors workshop presented through the Professional Enhancement Program at The University of Montana Missoula with the goal of offering the most effective coaching training in future semesters. The first method used to evaluate the effectiveness of the coaching workshop was made by determining to what degree the participants in the coaching workshop demonstrated the four behavioral outcomes of cooperation, comprehension, competence and commitment. A second method evaluated whether or not successful coaching relationships were established between coaching workshop participants using a relational development model. Based on the results of the study, it was determined that there is need for, and interest in, future coaching workshops being offered. And finally, recommendations were made to enhance the effectiveness of future workshops at UMM as well as recommendations to augment the efficacy of implementing a coaching program into academic environments in general.
Bibliography


Human Resource Services (HRS) at the University of Montana (2001). MAP – session I: Understanding the link between the department’s mission and an employee’s role.


Appendix A: Interview Schedule

1. Why are you interested in learning to coach?

2. Were you able to practice coaching weekly? If yes, did you meet all six weeks? If no, what would have made that possible?

3. Do you plan on attending session II?

4. Did you know your coach before this workshop?

5. What was your initial impression of your coach?

6. Do you feel that your coach asked useful and relevant questions? Can you give me an example?

7. Do you feel that the direction that your coach took was useful? If yes, why? If no, what would you have wanted your coach to do differently?

8. On a scale from 1-10, how much were you willing to disclose to your coach? (one being a low degree of disclosure and ten being a high degree of disclosure)

9. Do you feel that action plan was your idea or your coach's idea? Did you agree with the action plan? If yes, what did you like about it? If no, what didn't you like about it?

10. Do you plan to continue to participate in this coaching relationship? Why or why not?

11. Do you feel that your coaching experience helped you? Why or why not?

12. What do you like about your coach? What do you not like about your coach?

13. Do you feel that your coach understood what you were saying/wanted? If yes, can you give me an example? If no, what could they have done differently?

14. Do you feel that your coach demonstrated the skills that he/she was helping you with? Can you give me an example?

15. What would you have liked to see included/excluded in sessions I, II and III?
Appendix B: Executive Summary

Objective
The purpose of this study was to analyze the effectiveness of the Essential Coaching Skills for Supervisors workshop presented through the Professional Enhancement Program at The University of Montana Missoula with the goal of offering the most effective coaching training in future semesters.

Behavioral Outcomes
- **Cooperation** defined as the trainee’s willingness to cooperate with others in the organization at a level sufficient to make coordinated task achievement possible was partially achieved.
- **Comprehension** defined as the trainee understanding the rationale of the training and the reasons for doing what he or she is expected to learn was not achieved.
- **Competence** defined as the trainee being equipped with the techniques and resources to function in his or her organizational role and an acceptable standard of expertise was not achieved.
- **Commitment** defined as trainees taking personal responsibility and ownership for the process was not achieved.

Relational Development
- The **Initiating/Set criteria** phase identified as the beginning of a relationship where the conversation starts was achieved.
- The **Assessment/Experimenting** phase characterized by the gathering of information through the asking and answering of questions was achieved.
- The **Identify focus/Intensifying** phase characterized by an increase in the amount of personal disclosure was achieved.
- The **Integrating/Develop action plan** phase characterized by a peak in empathic processes resulting in easier explanation and prediction of behavior was achieved.
- The **Bonding/Ongoing coach-client meeting** phase characterized by a formal, announcement or understanding of the relationship was not achieved.

Recommendations For UMM
- Offer the coaching workshop as part of the UMM continuing education program.
- Participants receive continuing education credit for completion of the program.
- Make the coaching workshop mandatory for all supervisors.
- Create a monthly or quarterly coaching newsletter for supervisors on campus.
- Restructure the order in which the workshop content is presented.
- Incorporate lacking supplementary skills into workshop format.
- Offer the coaching workshop as an eight-week course.
- Change the coaching teams from two to three people.

Recommendations For Academic Environments
- Solicit coaching criteria needs from campus departments using focus groups
- Develop several versions of coaching programs based on departmental need
- Develop inter-departmental coaching support networks
- Explore coaching programs offered on other campuses
- Upper-level supervisors serve as mentors for mid-level supervisors
- Offer training in various formats to accommodate different schedules
- Make the coaching training relevant to supervisors daily responsibilities