

ICF Research Community of Practice

OUR UPCOMING NOVEMBER MEETING WILL BE:

Coaching, an ambiguous practice?

The different functions of coaching analyzed through the functionalist paradigm

with

Pauline Fatien, PhD

Date: Thursday, November 8, 2012 US Time
(second Thursday of the month)

Time: 3pm Eastern Standard US Time

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Topic:

This presentation is based on a paper *Understanding the ambiguities of coaching: the contributions of functionalism* co-authored by Jean Nizet, to be published in the French Journal *Gérer et Comprendre*, in December 2012.

Professional coaching is often regarded as an “ambiguous”, a “confused”, a “chaotic” practice. These characteristics are most of the time negatively perceived and result in discourses that try to distinguish coaching from other practices such as counseling, mentoring or training, etc, notably by clarifying the goals and postures of the different professionals. By defining the boundaries of what coaching should be, such attempts aim at reducing or eliminating ambiguities between helping practices. Our research offers a different perspective. It suggests that ambiguity is an inherent characteristic of coaching. To do so, we use the theoretical functionalist framework of Merton to show that coaching generally fulfills several functions; some functions are “manifest” (which means explicit and expected), others are “latent”(implicit), while others constitute “dysfunctions”. Through the analysis of a case study, we show that the coaching practice is made of a “tangle” of different functions; ambiguity should be embraced rather than reduced.

Speakers:

Speakers.

Pauline Fatien, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Management in Menlo College, California, USA. Dr Fatien has been researching on business coaching for the past ten years. After working in a coaching company, she wrote a Research Master Thesis in Sociology of Power (University Paris 7) on the influence of coaching on the representation of self. Then her dissertation in Management (from HEC School of Management, Paris, France) provided an understanding of the rise of executive coaching in firms today through the concept of coaching as a “ malleable space”. She initially earned a Master of Science in Management from HEC School of Management (Paris, France).

Three years ago, Pauline Fatien co-founded an Executive Graduate Coaching Program in University of Lyon management School. This program is member of the Graduate School Alliance of Executive Coaching (**GSAEC**) where Pauline chairs the Research Committee. Her latest publications on coaching include a book (Le coaching dans les organisations), a book chapter on ethical challenges in coaching, and a journal article on the critical dimensions of coaching. She is now coordinating an international research project about ethics in coaching.

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- > Phone Line Tips
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Future ICF Research CP calls:

13 Dec 3 pm US EDT
Scott Livingston
Perceptions of Executive Coaches on Wisdom in Organizational Leaders

10 Jan 3 pm US EDT
Could it be you???

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