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This study investigates the value of military coaching and examines the possible existence of a gap between current practices in training and civilian "best practice." The research also assesses the effectiveness of coaching as a catalyst for individual success in the contemporary operating environment. The analysis indicates that coaching is contextualized, highlights the process of transformation as a direct product of coaching, and suggests that coaching and mentoring are often misinterpreted and misconstrued. The academic findings are the existence of a confused coaching lexicon, the irrefutable value of a coaching mindset in military organizations, and leadership as an enabler for effective coaching.

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Value of military recruit coaching models

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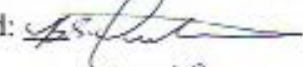
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Executive Summary

Title: The value of a coaching mindset: A comparative study of American and British coaching models in recruit training

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Thesis: This exploratory study investigates the value of military coaching and examines the possible existence of a gap between current practices in recruit training and civilian “best practice.” The research also assesses the effectiveness of coaching as a catalyst for individual success in the contemporary operating environment. Research questions: (1) How does academia currently approach the concept of coaching? (2) What coaching models are currently being employed at Marine Corps Recruiting Depot Parris Island and the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines? (3) Are the coaching models still fit for purpose, making Marines capable of operating on the 21st century battlefield?

Discussion: The research supports earlier work in that collective adherence to a coaching mindset fosters a more effective learning environment. The analysis indicates that coaching is contextualized for the military training environment, highlights the process of transformation as a direct product of leadership, and suggests that coaching and mentoring are often misinterpreted and misconstrued. The study also advocates the requirement for individuals and organizations to reflect on the wider impacts of their organizational culture, bureaucratic processes, and informal traditions. Lastly, the literature reminds the reader of the significant organizational differences between international high readiness forces.

Findings: The study finds a gap reduction in current methods and best practice; a product of significant levels of command direction and staff guidance across both the United States Marine Corps and the Royal Marines. The academic findings from the research are the existence of a confused coaching lexicon, the irrefutable value of a coaching mindset in military organizations, and leadership as an enabler for effective coaching. Practical findings include: recruit training as a prime environment for contextualized coaching and the inherent benefits in the allocation of coaching and mentoring roles to officers/SNCOs. Specific recommendations are threefold: CTCRM to explore the benefit of leadership/coaching policy, MCRD Parris Island to investigate the utility of an enduring mentoring model, and MCRD Parris Island to examine the value of establishing a permanent coaching cell.

Areas for future study: There are four avenues for further exploration: the impact of cultural diversification to coaching effectiveness, the delivery of coaching across the operating forces, coaching in the operational environment, and further examination of the coach/mentor paradigm across the services.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

“For our schools, it is more about the process of presenting information, and for our trainees, it is about what to think and what to do instead of how to think, decide and act. What I believe we need is an information age approach that is focused on active, student-centered learning that uses a problem posing methodology where our students/trainees are challenged by problems that they tackle in groups in order to learn by doing and also from each other.”

--MGen W.F Mullen III, CG TEMCOM, July 18th, 2018.¹

The character of warfare continues to evolve at pace. CG TECOM’s epigram above offers an insightful perspective on how the senior leadership of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) currently views the importance of delivering the highest standard of instruction in order to “make Marines” fit to operate on the 21st century battlefield.² Military training establishments are under significant pressure to attract people to join their ranks, increase throughput of initial training programs, drive down funding, and maintain standards (i.e. performance, legal, and moral). Military organizations continue to look at both traditional and innovative methods to make recruit training more efficient whilst maintaining high standards. Coaching is a key component in leadership; the approach enables critical thinking, perspective taking, active listening, and cultural awareness. However, the technique is not just about solving problems; it is about “discovery, awareness, and choice.”³ In the military environment, there is an enduring belief that coaching is an effective performance enhancing approach,⁴ and the employment of specific coaching techniques in initial recruit training assists in the development of high calibre individuals capable of high performance amid the significant pressures of the contemporary operating environment. Equally important, coaching has also been known to improve wastage rates due to the enhancement of recruits’ perceptions of the training environment.⁵

Since the turn of the century, there has been a host of studies written on coaching methodologies across industry and their respective impacts on various dependent variables (e.g.

trust-building, motivation, self-worth etc.) and companies have benefited greatly from the outputs from this research. However, there has been a void in the accompanying research in western military organizations who have the same basic goals of employee recruitment, retention, and individual and collective performance. Therefore, the aim of this short exploratory study is to compare present-day civilian coaching models with those currently being employed in the initial recruit training of elite high readiness military organizations, namely the USMC and the Royal Marines (RM). An initial review of the literature will focus on coaching theory, coaching across industry, military coaching, current USMC/RM coaching models, and issued command guidance from the military leadership to supplement coaching delivery. The priority will be to identify areas of anticipated variance between modern civilian coaching methods and the traditional military models, while stressing the unique environment of the initial stages of military training. The paper will offer guidance to the military practitioner as well as recommendations for future areas of academic focus. All research was conducted through secondary sources, consisting of hardcopy books, journal articles, academic essays, military orders, and service staff work.

Chapter 2. Research Aim and Research Questions

The overarching aim of this research is to better understand the value of military coaching and highlight the models currently being employed in recruit training in the United States Marine Corps and the Royal Marines. The study has three research questions:

- (1) Research Question 1. How does academia and wider industry currently approach the concept of coaching?

- (2) Research Question 2: What coaching models are currently being employed at Marine Corps Recruiting Depot (MCRD) Parris Island and the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM).

- (3) Research Question 3: Are the coaching models still fit for purpose, making marines capable of operating on the 21st century battlefield?

Chapter 3. Literature Review

Keywords:

Coaching.
Leadership development.
Mentoring.
Military.
Recruits.
Transformational leadership.

3.1 Coaching theory and practice in wider industry

A preliminary review of academia offers an opportunity to see the constants in the associated literature. There is moot universal agreement on numerous themes, including: (1) leadership and coaching as integrated activities, (2) enhanced organizational productivity via better management of human resources, (3) coaching as an effective management style, (4) foundations for successful coaching relationships, (5) the impediments to successful coaching, (6) the requirement for a coaching mindset, (7) the impact of not coaching employees, and (8) the importance of timing in the development of an effective coach/client relationship.

Leadership and coaching are critical components in any organization as these respective organizational approaches provide overarching guidance and individual empowerment. Sharpe, in his explanatory essay *Coaching – a Means to Improve Employee Productivity*, states that efficient HR management has become central to “providing the military with a competent and ready force structure,” citing Clark and Koonce in the assertion that coaching make managers better at their core role as well as bringing “employees into closer alignment with new organizational goals and priorities.”⁶ Lisa Boyce, R. Jeffrey Jackson, and Laura Neal in *Building Successful Leadership Coaching relationships* offer the building blocks for effective coaching relationships, namely rapport, trust, commitment, and collaboration.⁷ Major Staples US Army;

in his extensive Masters’ thesis on military coaching and collegiate coaching; emphasizes leadership and teamwork, through the prioritization of collective commitment, shared values, and a positive working environment.⁸ Similarly, Halle cites the essential components of collective high standards, focus, flexibility, accountability, and teamwork.⁹ The author signposts the reader to the important balance of “forceful motivation,” stresses the avoidance of any adverse motivation where “criticism can be devastating to team confidence and erase months of progress,”¹⁰ and highlights the impact to other team members in an individual’s poor performance.¹¹

The issue of criticism, and the pitfalls associated with the related issue of *disrespect*, is worthy of specific note as it is omnipresent in the literature. In her article titled *Coaching People through Difficult Times*, Darling provides a thought-provoking anchor for the respect/disrespect dichotomy, splitting the verbs across the terms of validation, inquiry, possibility, and responsibility.¹²

	If I disrespect you	If I respect you
Validation	I give orders without an explanation	I take time to set a context for our work
Inquiry	I construct elaborate theories to explain your behavior	I ask questions to understand you
Possibility	I focus on short-term expectations	I keep the long-term perspective
Responsibility	I see “you” versus “us”	I become your partner

Table 1. Observations on respect/disrespect across the four variables of validation, inquiry, possibility, and responsibility.

Similarly, Hardy et al. focus on the impacts to the individual, stressing the multiple enablers to what they call “high performance expectations:”¹³ individual consideration and value; intellectual stimulation; courtesy; self-confidence; resilience; and contingent reward – “provision of positive reinforcement to followers in return for appropriate follower behavior.”¹⁴ Staples focuses on the resultant fear that emits from negative interactions, commenting on its ability to cause paralysis, and its significant threat to success.¹⁵ Moreover, Rue warns of the perils inherent in organizations where employees do not receive the training and support to task delivery, thus sending out the “meta message that the employee – and the work they do – are not very important nor of particular value to the organization.”¹⁶ However, and on a more positive note, the literature also signposts the reader to possible solutions, including: sustainment of a coaching frame of mind; advocating the “approach of inquiry rather than censure;”¹⁷ good listening and better questions;¹⁸ the timing of the engagement as both coach and client need to be volunteers, engaged in the process, and ready to act on the various outcomes;¹⁹ and finding the balance between being “supporting and caring, and being clear and direct.”²⁰

There is, however, significant variance in how academics and practitioners define (1) coaches, (2) the act of coaching, (3) the roles and responsibilities of a coach; and (4) the optimization of the coach/client relationship. First, Sharpe asserts that “coaches challenge employees, won’t let them ‘off the hook,’ help employees to be their best, and serve as catalysts to release the employee and team potential.”²¹ Halle describes coaches as people “who inspire another person to improve and remain challenged,” stating that they have a number of roles including “counselor, a mentor, and a tutor.”²² Harper labels a coach a “strategic confidant;”²³ explains that the mentor and client usually work in the same line of business whereas coaches concentrate only on specific developmental areas, and counters the perspective of a coach having

multiple outputs, arguing that the coach and mentor role are different due to the required levels of familiarity, formality, and technical experience. Rue supports this different perspective, stating that the act of mentoring involves “supporting the total human package (i.e. personal development, professional development, etc.).”²⁴

Second, Philippe Rosiniki provides an inclusive definition of coaching in his well-received book *Global Coaching* stating that coaching is a “term used to describe an effective methodology for facilitating ourselves and others to grow and develop into the more complete human beings that we are capable of being.”²⁵ Sharpe highlights the numerous definitions and models, before declaring that “coaching is team management, team leadership, and employee empowerment.”²⁶ Rue offers a more specific description of coaching as “the assistance offered on a specific goal/objective, is usually professional, and involves cognitive skill development or guidance in mapping a strategy to attain a desired outcome.”²⁷ Lisa Boyce et al. define the coaching relationship as “one-to-one helping relationship between a client and coach which is entered into with mutual agreement into to improve the client’s professional performance and personal satisfaction.”²⁸ Staples lists coaching as one of three principle ways of developing others, along with counseling and mentoring, and defines the method as the “guidance of another person’s development in new or existing skills during the practice of those skills.”²⁹

Lastly, there is a myriad of direction and guidance and how best to create the optimal coach client relationship. Kinlaw, cited in Sharpe’s *Coaching – a Means to Improve Employee Productivity*, prescribes four components to the coaching relationship: counseling, mentoring, tutoring, and confronting.³⁰ Halle divides the role into three sub-sections: leading by example, mentorship, and the coach’s role in creating team cohesion through unified objectives.³¹ Rue prescribes a four-tiered coaching process of: the initial meeting; assessment; feedback and

planning; and implementation, monitoring, and consultation. Lastly, the Coaches Training Institute (CTI), an industry leader in leadership and coaching, utilizes the highly-acclaimed Co-Active Model, that “balances self-awareness, a keen agility with relationships, and courageous action to create an environment where individuals can be deeply fulfilled, connected to others, and successful in what matters most.”³²

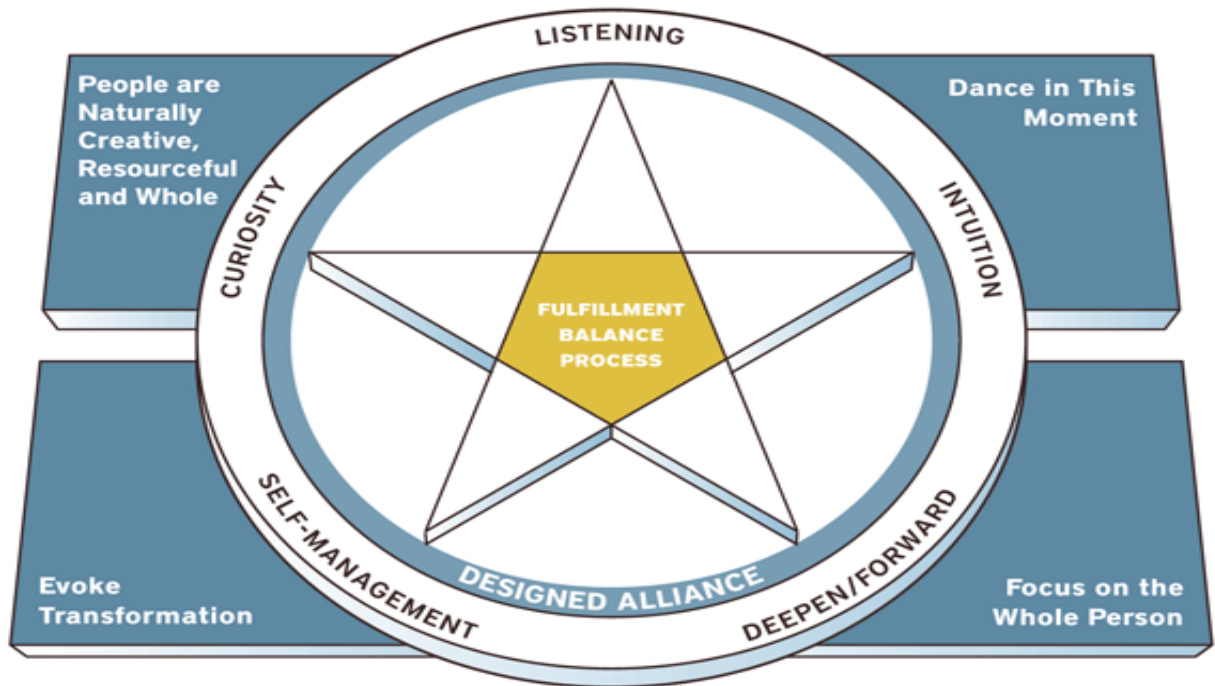


Figure 1. The CTI Co-Active Coaching Model

3.2 Coaching in elite military environments

There is a plethora of formal and informal direction across international defense organizations that dictate how best to coach individuals and groups. It appears in military doctrine, command guidance notes, and papers from respective staffs. The collective authors of

the influential paper, *The relationship between transformational leadership behaviors psychological, and training outcomes in military recruits*, state that “transformational leadership behaviors have been shown to positively impact a wide range of individual and organizational outcomes in a variety of contexts, including the military.”³³ Likewise, the conventional books on military leadership espouse the virtues of personal example, self-sacrifice, and character.³⁴ Major General Mullen CG TECOM, in the aforementioned military directive TECOM Commander’s Guidance, emphasizes the importance of recruiting and training marines who think critically and possess an “Intellectual Edge ... and a bias for action.”³⁵ MCDP1 Warfighting, which provides an overarching philosophy of the USMC, highlights the omnipresent natures of uncertainty in warfare, stating that war is unpredictable and that “opposed wills creates friction.”³⁶ However, its author - General Gray USMC, subsequently asserts that the solution is to be found in the three-tiered ownership of professional military education (i.e. education establishment, commander, and individual), decision-making as an instinctive process grounded in experience, and personnel management as a “means of fostering cohesion, teamwork, and implicit understanding.”³⁷ MCWP 6-11 Leading Marines echoes these fundamentals, stressing the importance of personal example alongside the integrated components of leadership and coaching.³⁸

Marine Corps Order 1500.61 Marine Leader Development formalizes this integration addressing the “key elements in the development of Marines necessary for them to succeed in their units and in life.”³⁹ Dated July 28th, 2017, the order states that the process of making Marines begins at entry-level training and makes the clear delineation between teaching, coaching, mentoring, and counseling, stating that all are vital in the development of subordinates. There are lengthy definitions of both coaching and mentoring:

Coaching is closely related to teaching. It is the process of both encouraging and demanding output. Coaching focuses on both individual and team success. Successful coaching draws greater performance from individuals and teams than they might realize they possess. All coaches are teachers. Good leaders are coaching every day. Good coaches welcome questions and feedback. Coaching and counseling are complementary actions. Coaching provides encouragement to succeed in stated goals. It is forward looking. The best leaders coach everyday and counsel as required. For marine leaders, coaching is a continued action.⁴⁰

Mentoring is a voluntary relationship between two individuals and should not be directed or forced. One individual has experience and knowledge and is seeking to guide another whose development they have taken interest in. The other individual seeks to lean, gain experience, and model his or her development after the person providing guidance. Mentoring happens most effectively when two individuals find commonality and although it is not limited to the chain of command, the initial relationship between leader and led should contain an element of mentoring. Most leaders naturally mentor others. In a mentoring relationship, teaching, coaching, and counseling usually occur.⁴¹

The order covers the fundamentals of the senior/subordinate relationship, citing the 13th Commandant, General John A. Lejeune, in that should be akin to “that of a teacher and scholar, or a parent and child.”⁴² It advocates a collective responsibility to establish an environment where “ongoing and regular interaction and feedback assist marines in their individual development so that Marines understand, embrace and live our core values both on-duty and off-duty and are prepared to assume progressively greater leadership responsibilities.”⁴³ Additionally, leaders are required to “sustain the transformation, help them achieve their full potential, and prepare them for long-term personal and professional success.”⁴⁴ The directive also provides a list of the apt areas for senior/subordinate discussion: fidelity, fighter, fitness, family, finances, and future. The directive is signed off by the current Commandant, General Robert B. Neller, who signposts the reader to the Lejeune Leadership Institute (LLI) as the primary supporting organization. The institute’s website declares its vision as “to be the Marine Corps’ premier institute in the areas of leadership and ethics so that its leaders are prepared to thrive in an evolving and complex world.”⁴⁵

3.3 Case Study 1: Marine Corps Recruiting Depot Parris Island

Beginning the Transformation, dated May 28th, 2008, is the central strategy to “transform recruits into United States Marines through Values Based Training (VBT).”⁴⁶

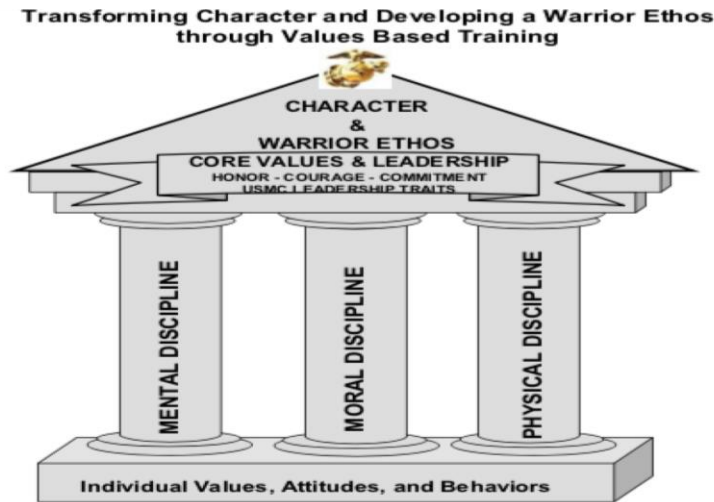


Figure 2. The VBT model.

The paper is nested in the earlier *MCRP 6-11D Sustaining the Transformation* (1999); a paper produced to introduce new training policies appropriate for the contemporary operating environment, and to provide commentary on “subtle changes in the norms and expectations of America’s youth.”⁴⁷ General Paul Lefebvre foreword in *Beginning the Transformation* reminds the reader that initial military training is only the first step in the “training and education continuum,” highlights the instructor’s enduring challenge as the imbuelement of personal ownership, and urges that every instructor-action is related to values-embodiment.⁴⁸ The paper provides a very detailed breakdown of recruit training, covering: (1) the unit’s mission: “We make marines who are committed to our core values in service to the country,”⁴⁹ (2) its intent:

“imprint core values on the soul of a basic marine,”⁵⁰ (3) an introduction of a *Warrior Ethos* where “fundamental values are focused on being warrior,”⁵¹ (4) a schematic of the VBT model (Figure 2), (5) the objectives of recruit training: character development, discipline, Esprit de Corps, military bearing, individual general military subjects, individual combat basic tasks, and combat conditioning,⁵² (6) VBT methodology, including a Systems Approach to Training (SAT) across the cognitive domain (MIND), psychomotor domain (BODY), and affective domain (SPIRIT), and (7) a break-down of the 12-week training program (Figure 3). It also stresses the critical function of the Drill Instructor (DI), detailing that “a DI’s conduct must be above reproach,” and that they must maintain a “professional lead, foregoing use of fear and intimidation techniques, in order to foster trust and confidence by subordinates.”⁵³

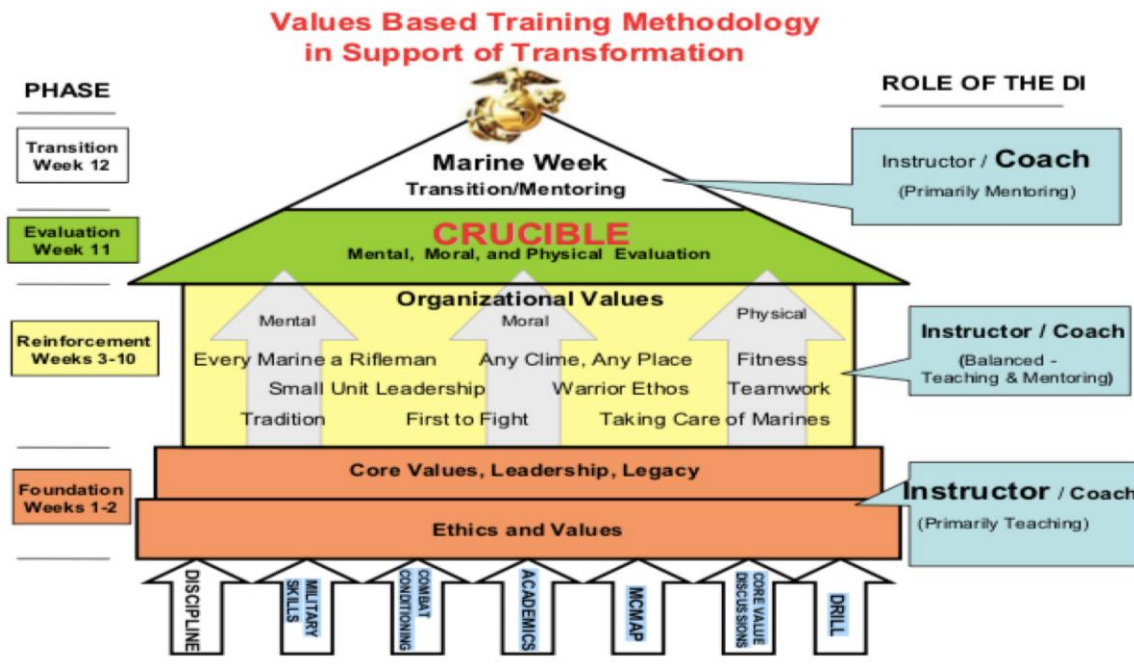


Figure 3. VBT training at MCRD Parris Island.

Finally, the directive makes an important acknowledgement in that a “basic marine is not fully trained for world-wide service,”⁵⁴ and that continued training will be required (i.e. Marine Combat Training [MCT]), Military Occupational Specialties [MOS] schools, and the operating forces, support establishments, etc.).

Finally, there are two current coaching-related initiatives ongoing at the unit that are worthy of note. These are “Share the Legacy” and the Recruit Adjustment and Motivation Program (RAMP). The former introduces recruits to former marines no longer on Active Duty; the latter is for promising, but non-performing individuals, where the Company First Sergeant facilitates access to influential people or events (e.g. observation of a graduation ceremony) in order to re-motivate the individual in question.

3.4 Case Study 2: The Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM)

The Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) is the principal military training centre for the Royal Marines in Great Britain. Based at Lympstone in Devon, CTCRM selects and trains all Royal Marines Officers, recruits and reserves. CTCRM is also unique in that it also provides all NCO command training as well as training over 70% of all Royal Marines specialists.⁵⁵

CTCRM’s current coaching model is heavily influenced by ground-breaking research conducted in 2001 that studied the linkages between the recruit experience and voluntary withdrawal. More specifically, *A Review of the psychological aspects of Royal Marine Recruit Training* explored the relationship between recruit motivation and voluntary withdrawal, whilst comparing the findings to factors that optimize sporting performance.⁵⁶ The report suggested the existence of a gap between current training practices and ‘best practice’ in the sporting world,

and highlighted both the lack of coaching approaches and “misconceptions of the factors underlying recruit motivation.”⁵⁷ The report informed the CTCRM leadership that individuals saw CTCRM employment as “non-career enhancing,”⁵⁸ and that training teams felt “undervalued and unfairly criticised.”⁵⁹ It depicted an environment where Junior Non-Commissioned Officers (JNCOs) appeared to “embrace a *select-out* philosophy rather than a *train-in* philosophy,”⁶⁰ and where “high wastage rates in training were an expected part of an arduous syllabus.”⁶¹ Furthermore, it commented on the significant linkages between stress, the emotional response to injury, and emotional vulnerability;⁶² highlighted the infrequent use of individual feedback and praise;⁶³ condemned the overzealous frequency of reprimand, punishment, “public humiliation, and victimisation,”⁶⁴ and stressed the importance of the grounding of training in the operational life of a marine. The report’s recommendations were presented across four categories: the selection and retention of trainers, the leadership style and role of trainers, training design, and injury rehabilitation. The top priority was the implementation of an effective overarching coaching model that offered “enhanced training effectiveness whilst maintaining training standards.”⁶⁵

CTCRM’s response was swift and decisive. Two new initiatives were introduced to the organization: a “Teach, Coach, Mentor” (TCM) approach and the establishment of a Coaching Advisory Team (CAT). The new TCM approach aimed to foster a learning environment through the implementation of the triad of *teaching* – “the imparting of information within a specified timescale;”⁶⁶ *coaching* – although “heavily contextualised for our environment;”⁶⁷ and *mentoring* – “members of the Royal Marine Association (RMA) being attached to each troop, ensuring that the mentoring programme remains outside the line management system to ensure no conflicts of

interest.”⁶⁸ The approach has continued to evolve; however, it is now seen as the “current model of best practice throughout the tri-service community.”⁶⁹

The ‘guardians’ of the TCM approach are the experienced members of the CAT. The four-person team (1 x Warrant Officer, 2 x Colour Sergeants, and a civilian learning consultant) hold regular mandatory Train the Trainers programmes (TTT) for all new CTCRM instructors, maintaining a heavy emphasis on the importance of a sustaining a coaching mindset.⁷⁰ The team also delivers “coaching interventions” to groups and individuals who have struggled with the training syllabus in addition to a host of wider coaching initiatives. Since the introduction of the CAT and full development of the TCM program, the establishment’s training wastage rates have reduced by 9%.⁷¹

Chapter 4. Discussion

4.1 Initial observations.

The overarching and threefold aim of this research is to gain a better understanding of coaching, determine its value in the initial stages of military training, and gain an insight into the current coaching models being employed in the United States Marine Corps and the Royal Marines. However, the paper also asks the fundamental question: do current military coaching models assist in making marines capable of operating on the 21st century battlefield?

Preliminary analysis offers the following eight observations; they are in no specific order:

First, coaching is contextualized for the military training environment. This is first highlighted in the Royal Marines' document concerning the TCM approach employed at CTCRM.⁷² Insights gained from theory and industry support this perspective, arguing that *pure* coaching is client lead, focuses on client empowerment, and centers around a balance of listening and asking good questions. Frequent pressures in the military training environment restrict an instructor's ability to always engage in these practices and finding a balance between empathy and forcefulness is critical in fostering an effective instructor-recruit relationship.

Second, the process of transformation is a direct product of good leadership; the integrated act of coaching being the catalyst for the change. As aforementioned in Marine Corps Order 1500.61 Marine Leader Development: "good leaders are coaching every day."⁷³ The process of coaching improves self-awareness, breeds commitment to the organization, and aligns the individual to the higher purpose of their actions. Interestingly, transformation is utilized frequently in U.S publications and is a central tenet of military training in the U.S Marine Corps. However, there are less references in the corresponding literature in the Royal Marines.

Third, collective adherence to a coaching mindset fosters a more effective learning environment. Most keenly observed in the Hardy et al. intervention at CTCRM, the sustainment of a coaching mindset not only enhances the quality of training and the overall experience for the recruit, but it can also improve training wastage. Remedial coaching also offers an opportunity for those behind the learning curve to regain their positions with their peers – a key factor in voluntary withdrawals. Similarly, independent and self-confident individuals are better prepared for the hazards and risks of the contemporary operating environment. Military documents that attempt to define the 21st Century battlefield advocate critical thinkers, capable of making important decisions under the harshest of conditions. The literature presents coaching as the gateway to self-empowerment, better judgment, and superior decision-making.

Fourth, individuals and organizations need to reflect on the wider impacts of their organizational culture, bureaucratic processes, and informal traditions. Specifically, do they augment or increase the impediments to the creation and sustainment of this learning environment? Recruit negative responses (e.g. injury, emotional vulnerability, stress etc.) all reduce the benefits of this environment and increase the likelihood of failure. Instructors should grow the use of individual feedback and praise and be wary of the overuse of reprimand and punishment. All stakeholders must avoid public criticism of an individual as it is ineffective and has a host of second-order effects. Disrespect, it would seem, is the harbinger of ruin.

Fifth, there is confusion in the narrative relating to the coaching/mentoring relationship. Rather predictably, some academics argue that the acts are innately integrated;⁷⁴ others argue that the techniques are diametrically opposed.⁷⁵ Military organizations seem equally confused by the muddled lexicon. However, the formative paper, Marine Corps Order 1500.61 Marine Leader Development, provides ample context to each activity and presents them both as critical in the

leader-follower relationship. CTCRM echoes this sentiment by leaving the instructing and coaching to the training teams, but allocating mentorship to an external body of RMA volunteers.

Finally, the literature reminds the reader of the differences between the USMC and the RM. Despite their similarities in organizational mindset, operational utility, traditions, and readiness profile, the two corps differ in a number of ways. These are most acutely observed in their scale, organic capabilities, regulations, and formality. The training environments of these separate organizations are microcosms of this paradigm. MCRD Parris Island and CTCRM are vastly different training establishments; both products of their wider parental services. Thus, external observers should describe rather than define their respective activities, acknowledge their individual growth cycles, and markedly avoid direct comparison. The scope and limitations of the study restricted further exploration of the enduring relationship.

4.2 Limitations.

Research for this paper was conducted through secondary sources only (hardcopy books, journal articles, academic essays, military orders, and service staff work). To that end, the weakness in research design was that no primary data was collated for the study. There is certain value in the collation of contemporary perspectives from military practitioners on the present theme of coaching in recruit training. A possible method would be cross-sectional data collection through limited distribution of questionnaires to the two case study locations: MCRD Parris Island and CTCRM. This is within the scope of the underlying research design, but not possible on this occasion due to issues relating to time, access and ethical approval. Importantly, the final research design still enabled valuable discussion and delivered a number of key findings.

Chapter 5. Findings

5.1 Academic headlines.

There are three key headlines: (1) the existence of a confused coaching lexicon, (2) the irrefutable value of a coaching mindset in military organizations, and (3) coaching as a catalyst for effective leadership. First, there is divergence in the literature on what coaches do and the related definitions of coaching. Existing in both civilian and military literature, these inconsistencies are a product of a host of variables, including: time, stakeholders, training objectives, coaching relationships, and environment. This is especially prevalent in the coaching/mentoring paradigm. Second, the enduring theme of coaching, as a performance enhancing approach, is directly transferrable to the military landscape. The research indicates that the inherent benefits of a coaching mindset in recruit training are: increased individual motivation, improved individual performance, a reduction in the emotional vulnerability of recruits, and a reduction of training wastage. These outcomes are driven by command guidance, preliminary instructor training, the sustainment of coaching principles, and transparent feedback across the establishment. Lastly, coaching is an integral component in good leadership because it provides the framework to any leader/follower relationship. The process of coaching cuts across a host of leadership competencies. It is collaborative, encourages face-to-face engagement, unites teams, and empowers others to succeed. These are the building blocks of good leadership.

5.2 Deductions for the military practitioner.

The most formative finding from the research is that military recruit establishments have successfully narrowed the gap that existed between their respective training practices and “best-practice” in the civilian coaching world. This is evident in both MCRD Parris Island and CTCRM who have respectively transitioned to a the new 12-week VBT methodology and a TCM model. New coaching methodologies are now fully established across both recruit establishments which have enhanced recruit performance, improved individual satisfaction, and reduced training wastage. Such techniques include: preliminary training of the units’ instructors, institutionalization of the coach-client relationship, rapport-building, transparency, and feedback. Instructors in both locations are now more informed on the negative outcomes of reprimand and punishment, and more likely to prioritize constructive criticism, praise and award where appropriate. Plus, on a wider note, the research infers that both organizations maintain command visibility over the enduring difficulty of balancing coaching innovation, professional standards, and organizational bureaucracy.

Second, the research supports the traditional view that recruit training provides an appropriate environment for contextualized coaching. Strict adherence to civilian models, such as the Co-Active model, is not appropriate due to the nature of military training. It is in both the individuals’ and organizations’ best interest that recruits experience adversity, increased levels of stress, and the wider realities of warfare. In a military context, and rather predictably, it is right that mission accomplishment often outweighs the development of an individual. There are important second-order effects to such predicaments, namely: individual resilience, team

bonding, and organizational success. It is right that the instructors are empowered to work out how best to pursue the prerequisite balance of compassion and forceful motivation.

Third, the analysis advocates differing roles for officers and SNCOs with regards to coaching and mentoring. This theory is omnipresent across the literature, but is most prominent in Staples' work on military and collegiate coaching. The basic concept of the theory being that; whereas officers are more suited to coaching roles due to their organizational leadership, managerial oversight and wider scope; SNCOs provide innate mentorship through accessibility, exposure, and experience.

Finally, the literature infers that both establishments have transitioned to their current coaching methodologies through organic evolution and external intervention. CTCRM benefited significantly from the Hardy/INM report in 2000 with both the TCM approach and CAT cell being direct products from the study. The unit and wider service would now notably profit from the RM equivalent of MCWP 6-11 Leading Marines and Marine Corps Order 1500.61 – Marine Leader Development. Both documents are hugely valuable in their contextualization of organizational culture, leader-follower relationship, and subordinate development. Likewise, MCRD Parris Island has introduced a number of initiatives to improve recruitment, performance, and retention. Structural change to the core program, supplemented by the wider initiatives of “Share the Legacy” and RAMP, all depict a learning organization willing to innovate and incorporate lessons from wider sources. Furthermore, the subtle evolution of the role of Drill Instructor (i.e. instructor to coach) over the 12-weeks further cements this perspective. The result of these changes is a re-emphasis of the established General Lejeune leadership model of teacher - scholar / parent - child.⁷⁶ Further benefit could be accrued from exploring the organizational benefit of (1) a USMC equivalent to the RMA mentoring model and (2) the

creation of a permanent CAT equivalent to offer coaching subject-matter expertise and remedial coaching sessions for under-performing recruits.

5.3 Areas for future study.

The most promising areas for future study are fourfold: the impact of cultural differences on coaching effectiveness, cultural coaching in an operational environment, coaching delivery across the force, and further exploration of the coaching/mentoring paradigm in the military environment. First, the value of coaching may be impacted by increased cultural diversification. Research in this emergent area may identify productive outcomes for the leaders of the respective organizations. Second, the setting for this study is in a non-operational context; there could be significant interest in a subsequent investigation into similar themes in an operational environment where command and time pressures are drastically increased. Third, this study concurs with the wider research on the inherent benefits of coaching within a training establishment. Further research into the current coaching models across the wider organization may provide some interesting outcomes. Finally, more analysis on this coaching/mentoring dynamic would deliver interesting academic insights and practical recommendations for the respective organizations.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to better understand the value of coaching in recruit training and determine its effectiveness in making Marines capable of overcoming the inherent challenges of the 21st Century battlefield. Three questions formed the research framework, focusing on coaching theory, military methods of coaching, and the relevance of these latter models in the contemporary operating environment. Thus, the study sought to identify gaps in contemporary civilian coaching methods and those employed in recruit training in elite organizations; the value being further exploration of academic theories, the discovery of military outcomes, and the identification of practical recommendations for the respective organizations. Most importantly, this independent review asserts that coaching methods in elite high readiness military organizations continue to develop at pace, and there has been a distinct narrowing of the anticipated gap between employed methods and “best practice.” Furthermore, the currently employed coaching models significantly assist the development of enlisted Marines fit for contemporary operations across the services. The academic findings from the research are threefold: the existence of a confused coaching lexicon, coaching’s facilitating role in effective leadership, and the irrefutable value of a coaching mindset in military organizations. The military-centric outcomes are: coaching as the cross-cutting component of good leadership and individual transformation; the contextualization, and utility, of coaching methodologies in military training; and the requirement for organizations to be accountable for the wider impacts of their own organizational culture, bureaucratic processes, and informal traditions. Specific recommendations include: CTCRM to explore bespoke RM leadership/coaching doctrine, MCRD Parris Island to investigate the utility of an enduring mentoring model, and MCRD Parris

Island to examine the benefit of permanently establishing a coaching cell. Finally, the research highlighted four possible areas for future study: the impact of diversification to coaching effectiveness, the delivery of coaching across the respective services, coaching in the operational environment, and separate allocation of coaching and mentoring responsibilities across the officer and SNCO cohorts respectively.

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