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A research coaching and mentoring framework to nurture the development of emerging researchers

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The purpose of this project was to generate a conceptual research coaching and mentoring framework to nurture the development of emerging researchers, based on identified needs of research stakeholders in higher education in South Africa. A qualitative, theory-generative research design was used, employing multiple descriptive case studies as a research strategy, in order to explore, describe and understand the needs of research stakeholders in one public and one private tertiary institution. Based on the findings, an original conceptual research coaching and mentoring framework was developed to nurture the development of emerging researchers at tertiary institutions.

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Over the past two decades the higher education system in South Africa, and globally, has been subjected to vast changes. In 2001, the Ministry of Education released the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (DoE 2001). The plan aimed to produce the graduates needed for social and economic development in South Africa, and to achieve equity and diversity in the South African higher education system. Restructuring measures included the mergers of various tertiary institutions. A strong emphasis on sustaining and promoting research emerged.

Until 2001, the practice of research had had a rather “chequered history” in tertiary institutions on the African continent (Pandor 2004: 1). In South Africa, the history of public higher education was shaped to a large extent by apartheid. Privileged English- and Afrikaans-medium tertiary institutions developed their research profiles with government support. Teaching was also a priority in many tertiary institutions, because teaching generated finances (Pratt et al 1999, Stackhouse & Day 2005). A large number of students were underprepared for the rigours of a university education (Badat 2010).

The private higher education system in South Africa is equally complex. These institutions have similarly neglected research activities in favour of a stronger focus on vocational training and niche areas (Altbach 2007). Altbach (2007: 14) argues that this sector has not been concerned with building research capacity, since “research does not produce profits rapidly”. Competition, technology and the globalisation of education have, however, forced private tertiary institutions to expand their research capacity in order to raise their status and contribute more broadly to education, research and social reform.1

The above factors contribute to an overload of demands, as the next generation of researchers are subjected to more pressure than ever to improve their “research game” (Pearson & Brew 2002:

136, Visagie & Maritz 2009: 2), yet they often experience a lack of the support and nurturing necessary to sustain them (Rothman & Jordaan 2006, Visagie & Maritz 2009). This could, in turn, negatively impact on their physical and psychological well-being as well as their organisational and work commitment.²

Globally, a clarion call has been made for tertiary institutions to establish creative and effective research capacity building management systems within a nurturing research culture to encourage emerging researchers’ endeavours, without ignoring other forms of scholarly endeavour such as teaching.³

Pearson & Brew (2002) and Zhao (2001) postulate that the conventional model of research education and support has shown itself to be deficient in the face of the rapidly changing tertiary environment. Research managers, policymakers and funders have thus been preoccupied with finding ways to stimulate, improve and support the research performance and output of emerging researchers (Pearson & Brew 2002, Smeby & Try 2005).

This article is structured into the following key sections: a description of the problem statement, purpose and paradigmatic underpinning; a discussion of the methodology; a summary of the combined findings of two research cases, and a discussion of the conceptual research coaching and mentoring framework proposed to nurture the development of emerging researchers.

1. Problem statement

Kirkland (2005: 156) frames research management as “any activity instituted at the level of the institution which seeks to add value to the research activity of staff, without being part of the research process itself”. Over the past ten years there has been immense growth and progress in research management and research management support structures (INORMS 2010, Jackson-Malete 2010); yet a great deal remains to be learned. Adopting a research coaching and

mentoring framework may provide a support structure and offer a gateway to nurture and develop emerging researchers (Visagie & Maritz 2009).

We have observed that a number of tertiary institutions include aspects of coaching and mentoring in their strategic plans or within key performance indicators of academic staff (such as senior lecturers, supervisors and heads of department); yet these are often not operationalised, and there are relatively few clear frameworks as to how to address the implementation of these strategies. In addition, the terms “coaching” and “mentoring” have become vague words, used interchangeably, and cover a variety of training and support approaches in research management support structures. We are also concerned with regard to who will be the future research coaches and mentors. Given the gap between the growing numbers and needs of emerging researchers and the diminishing numbers of established researchers (Breier & Holness 2010), tertiary institutions may experience a lack of established academics or researchers (in particular, internally) to implement research coaching and mentoring. Established researchers often face high teaching or supervisory loads as well as external demands such as consultancy, leaving little time or energy to devote to research and research coaching and mentoring (Camara & Toure 2010, Johnson & Kisjes 2010). Similarly, less qualified researchers may not have the experience to provide worthwhile and effective research coaching and mentoring.

In as much as research management is expanding, coaching and research coaching and mentoring also represent an emerging industry and niche area. Substantive theoretical frameworks are required to enable (research) coaching and mentoring to develop (Linley 2006, Sieler 2003). To our knowledge, there are currently few South African contextual research coaching and mentoring frameworks based on empirical data. De Gruchy & Holness (2007: xi) mention that their Emerging Researchers Programme at the University of Cape Town is at present the only “centrally managed, institution-wide, structured research mentoring programme for faculty members in South African higher education institutions”.
They state that the Emerging Researchers Programme was not consciously developed on the basis of a particular model but rather originated from experience of research and supervision.

In a presentation at the International Network of Research Management Societies Conference in Cape Town, Breier & Holness (2010) mentioned that they are in the process of theorising the approach to their crossdisciplinary research development programme at the University of Cape Town. Schulze (2009) reports on the implementation of a mentoring programme at the University of South Africa based on the ethnographic findings within this tertiary context. The author emphasises the urgency, based on contextual realities, of developing models and conceptual frameworks for mentoring. Theoretical frameworks act as a springboard for understanding more deeply what matters in the (research) coaching and mentoring process (Kauffman & Bachkirova 2008). The following research question arises: What should a conceptual research coaching and mentoring framework comprise in order to nurture the development of emerging researchers?

2. Aim
The aim of this project was to generate a conceptual research coaching and mentoring framework to nurture the development of emerging researchers, based on identified needs of research stakeholders in two tertiary institutions in South Africa.

3. Paradigmatic underpinning
Appreciative Inquiry, located within Social Constructionism, forms the philosophical foundation for this project. Social Constructionism signifies an approach to human science inquiry and practice characterised by a relational focus emphasising the notion that the world people create in the process of social exchange constitutes their reality (Gergen et al 2004). We recognise dialogue as the driving force behind the construction of reality in tertiary institutions, and view these institutions as the products of social construction. Appreciative Inquiry represents a “constructive
inquiry process that searches for everything that “gives life” to organisations, communities, and larger human systems when they are most alive, effective, creative and healthy in their interconnected ecology of relationships” (Cooperrider & Avital 2004: xii).

4. Clarification of key concepts

4.1 Research coaching and mentoring
We view research coaching as a collaborative process, between a research coach and coachee, that facilitates personal and professional development in order to achieve sustainable, high-impact research output. We agree with Pearson & Brew (2002) that mentoring is a mutual and collaborative learning alliance, going beyond mere research training and technical skills to include the emotional dimension. The (research) trainer focuses on knowledge and skills transfer, while the coach focuses on skills usage and competence development, and the mentor concentrates on personal development (Merlevede & Bridoux 2004, Pearson & Brew 2002). We have found that one can learn to be a coach, but one becomes a mentor because of one’s experience.

4.2 Research coach and mentor
A research coach and mentor could be an experienced scholar with training in research, coaching and mentoring. This individual may be an academic within the institution that is engaged in the professional capacity development of emerging researchers, or an external scholar who displays knowledge of the educational context and contextual demands.

4.3 Emerging researchers
Emerging researchers in the context of this project include academics who are striving to establish their research careers and research profile regardless of age, experience or rank (De Gruchy & Holness 2007). Emerging researchers may also include research supervisors and postgraduate research candidates.
5. Methodology

A qualitative, theory-generative research design was used in order to explore, describe and understand the needs of research stakeholders (Clark & Creswell 2010). The research strategy entailed multiple descriptive case studies (Yin 2009). The research was ideographic and contextual in nature (Babbie & Mouton 2001). Following the initial inductive departure, a deductive approach was employed in order to develop a conceptual research coaching and mentoring framework to nurture the development of emerging researchers. The conceptual framework was designed utilising the organising principles of Dickoff et al. (1968) (cf Table 2).

5.1 Research setting and stakeholders

The first research case involved a faculty of health sciences that forms part of a public South African tertiary institution, with specific reference to two complementary health sciences departments (homeopathy and chiropractic). These departments historically formed part of the health sciences offering at a technikon that merged with the Gauteng-based residential tertiary institution in 2005. The research stakeholders (participants), who gave informed consent, totalled 49. The stakeholders included seven complementary health sciences academics (including two heads of department) and 42 BTech students. Access was negotiated through the Dean of the faculty, who also served as the gatekeeper.

The second research case refers to research that took place in a cross-border private tertiary institution established in a metropolitan district of Gauteng, South Africa, in 2001. It is wholly owned by one of Australia’s leading tertiary institutions. Nine stakeholders, all members of the Research Committee, chose to participate in the research. Access was negotiated through the Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor: Research.

5.2 Selection of stakeholders

In both cases, purposive sampling (De Vos et al. 2005) was used to ensure that specific elements were included in the sample. Purposive
selection was based on the following sampling criteria: willingness to participate in the research and provision of informed consent; being knowledgeable in terms of the research phenomenon, and active engagement in the research or research management process. Ethical clearance was granted by the ethics committees of the respective tertiary institutions.

5.3 Data-collection methods

Data were gathered by means of three focus groups (lasting 60-90 minutes each) (Krueger 1994); nine individual interviews (lasting 45-90 minutes each) (Clark & Creswell 2010); field notes (11 typed pages) (Wilson 1989), and 49 naïve sketches (3-6 pages each) (Giorgi 1985). Data collection took place on campus in both cases. The focus groups and writing of the naïve sketches took place in a lecturing hall, while the individual interviews were held in academics’ offices. A fieldworker was involved in the focus groups to record and write up field notes. Both authors were present during all data collection and personally conducted the focus groups and individual interviews. Focus groups and individual interviews were recorded by means of a digital voice recorder. Naïve sketches were written on a pre-prepared document template in which the central question was stated at the top and the rest of the pages were left unlined and open. Data saturation was reached when no new information was forthcoming in focus groups, individual interviews and naïve sketches, and the categories and themes had each been explored in depth (Corbin & Strauss 2008).

5.4 Data analysis

Data were analysed using the researchers’ modified version of Tesch’s method (Creswell 2003 & 2007). Interviews and focus groups were transcribed verbatim, and field notes were typed. Naïve sketches were added to the data set. The document on top of the pile was picked. While reading through the text, each researcher asked herself: “What is this about?” Thoughts were written in the margins of the document. On a separate blank page, the researcher copied the listed topics as they appeared. This process was repeated
for all the documents. Similar topics were clustered together. These were then arranged in three groups as major topics, unique topics and leftovers. The most descriptive wording for each topic was chosen, and these, in turn, became the categories. The total number of categories was reduced by further grouping categories as they related to one another. The categories were connected to form the central theme. The data sets of the two institutions were analysed separately and then compared for cross-validation purposes (cf Table 1).

5.5 Measures of trustworthiness

Strategies employed to ensure the quality of data included the following measures of trustworthiness (Guba 1981): credibility (triangulation, reflectivity and member checking); applicability (rich descriptions and purposeful sampling); dependability (code, recode procedures); confirmability (triangulation and reflectivity), and authenticity (fairness, awareness, understanding, action and empowerment) (Onwuegbuzie et al 2008).

6. Findings

Table 1 provides a summary of the findings of the two research case in order to situate the conceptual framework in the empirical data collected.

Table 1: Summary of findings of two research cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective of the study</th>
<th>Research case 1</th>
<th>Research case 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explore and describe the research output realities and needs of academics and students in order to diversify principles of business coaching in a tertiary context</td>
<td>Describe how research coaching can support academics and students to facilitate research output</td>
<td>Discover participants’ realities and wishes regarding the existing research culture in order to establish the applicability of implementing research coaching and mentoring to facilitate a nurturing research culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A dichotomous research output reality related to the dominant discourse of contextual challenges and an alternative discourse of contextual strengths

**Category 1: Contextual strengths**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisors:</th>
<th>Being part of the research community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful supervisor-student relationship (motivational, support, discourse)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students:</td>
<td>Staying focused</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Category 2: Contextual challenges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisors:</th>
<th>Students:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate research training</td>
<td>Time constraints (tension between teaching and research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time constraints</td>
<td>Lack of supervisory support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of supervisory support</td>
<td>Negative emotive responses due to a lack of support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Desire for a nurturing research environment

- Continued personal and professional development
- Improved supervisory support

Wishes for a coaching and mentoring programme

- Holistic in nature
- Based within an appreciative framework
- Pragmatic outcomes-based approach
- Set within a research framework that addresses goal-setting as well as leadership development
- Enhances open communication and discourse

The existence of a young research culture with positive intent that gives life and envisions a nurturing space for research outcomes embedded in a dichotomous reality at present

**Category 1: Life-giving forces**

- Researchers identity (influencer, mentor, intellectual, scholar)
- Passion-driven research culture
- Principle-centred research leadership and support

**Category 2: Aspects that inhibit growth**

- Knowledge, skills and confidence gap
- Gap between early career and established researchers
- Tension between teaching and research
- Negative emotive responses to contextual demands
The first research case explored the research output realities in a public tertiary institution in order to diversify the principles of business coaching to the tertiary context. Building on the knowledge gained in the first study, we then reviewed a second case in a private tertiary context with the aim of discovering stakeholders’ realities regarding an existing research culture and establishing the applicability of implementing a research coaching and mentoring programme. Although situated in different tertiary contexts, the findings were to a large extent similar. In both cases, a clear need was voiced for a nurturing research environment and support to facilitate and sustain quality research output. In each case, a central theme depicted a current dichotomous reality. Each theme was divided into two categories, namely contextual strengths or life-giving forces, and contextual challenges or aspects that inhibit growth. Each of the findings culminates in a desired outcome or wish for support.4

7. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework, as an emerging theoretical framework, utilises the six aspects of activity described by Dickoff et al (1968): agent, recipient, context, dynamics, procedure and outcome or destiny. The conceptual framework presents a context-specific, systematic view of the research phenomenon by describing the relationships between these concepts (Creswell 1994). The “agent” refers to the people who actualise the outcome of research coaching and mentoring; the “recipient” refers to the receiver of the research coaching and mentoring; the “context” refers to the environment in which research coaching and mentoring takes place; the “dynamics” explores the energy force igniting research coaching and mentoring; while the “procedure” emphasises the path or steps required to achieve the outcome, namely the destiny of research coaching and mentoring. The final aim of the conceptual

4 For an in-depth discussion of the findings of the first research case, cf Visagie & Maritz (2009).
framework is to generate a research coaching and mentoring pro-
gramme based on empirical findings and the literature.

Table 2 reflects the central concepts of the conceptual frame-
work, while Figure 1 provides a visual representation.

Table 2: Organising principles of Dickoff et al (1968)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>Research coach and mentor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary recipient</td>
<td>Emerging researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary recipients</td>
<td>Institutional stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary context</td>
<td>Research culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary context</td>
<td>South African higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>Facilitation of an appreciative research coach and mentoring life cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome/destiny</td>
<td>Engaged scholar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Research coaching and mentoring framework
Each aspect is now described as a building block, leading to a description of the conceptual framework for nurturing the development of emerging researchers.

7.1 Role of the research coach and mentor as agent

The “research coach and mentor” refers to the professional person who participates in facilitating research coaching and mentoring in the tertiary institution. This person is committed to research capacity development; has experience and training in the fields of research, coaching and mentoring; has a proven research track record, and is familiar with the South African tertiary context. The research coach and mentor may be an internal academic or an externally appointed scholar who meets the above requirements. Our engagement as external research coaches in the two tertiary institutions that form the basis of this project convinced us that understanding the educational context, its strengths and demands is vital to ensuring programme success. De Gruchy & Holness (2007: 12) similarly found that prior association of senior research scholars appointed as mentors in the University of Cape Town’s Emerging Researchers Programme was a “significant advantage”. At present, an accredited research coaching and mentoring qualification is not available in South Africa. We responded to this educational need by diversifying a business team coaching programme to provide certified research coaching and mentoring training (Maritz 2010).

With reference to the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1, the research coach and mentor interacts holistically with the primary recipient (emerging researcher), secondary recipients (institutional stakeholders), and the context. The context includes the immediate research culture situated within the South African tertiary environment. The interaction with the primary and secondary recipients entails a triangular coaching agreement that is guided by the recipients’ unique research capacity development needs. In line with the broader institutional strategic objective of building professional research capacity, the primary responsibility of the research coach and mentor is to facilitate the personal
and professional development of emerging researchers. Personal development is concerned with progressive growth in areas such as self-awareness, identity formation, confidence and accountability (Visagie 2010).

In a research coaching and mentoring framework, professional development consists of activities to enhance the emerging researchers’ research profile and career. Personal development and professional development are interdependent and thus result in the “development of a research consciousness and ability” (De Gruchy & Holness 2007: 34), ultimately resulting in sustained high-impact research output. These outputs refer to peer-reviewed publications, obtaining higher degrees, timely supervisory throughput of postgraduate candidates, grant funding, and National Research Foundation rating (De Gruchy & Holnes 2007).

The research coaching and mentoring relationship is built on the premise that people are naturally creative, resourceful and whole (Visagie & Maritz 2009). As a conversational and thinking partner, the research coach and mentor engages in the triangular coaching agreement to ensure that both recipients (the emerging researcher and institutional stakeholders) accomplish their goals in creating the envisioned framework destiny, namely, engaged scholarship.

The research coach and mentor should exhibit critical core competencies in relation to the triangular coaching agreement, based on the empirical research findings of Maritz et al (2009) and Visagie (2010). These competencies include knowledge of the research process, contextual and emotional intelligence, facilitation of generative conversations, mentoring, ethical coaching and mentoring practices, and continuous professional development through coaching supervision.

### 7.2 Role of the primary and secondary programme recipients

The primary programme recipient is the emerging researcher. Emerging researchers in the context of this framework include a
range of academics who are striving to establish their research careers and research profile regardless of age, experience or rank (De Gruchy & Holness 2007). Many of these academics are fulfilling a research supervision function without the necessary experience, competence or support. Inadequate research supervision has detrimental influences on the “development of the next generation of researchers and academics” (De Gruchy & Holness 2007: 5). The inclusion of research supervisors who recognise a personal need for research capacity development is therefore imperative.

The emerging researcher category also includes postgraduate research candidates. The inclusion of research candidates is in line with the heightened awareness among international communities of the potential benefits to a country of developing a supply chain of highly skilled personnel (Eggins 2008) who will, according to Pandor (2010), “provide a human capital resource that industries can use for growth”.

Enrolment in research coaching and mentoring determines emerging researchers’ readiness and genuine engagement in the process. Emerging researchers’ participation in research coaching and mentoring would therefore mostly be voluntary, but might be compulsory within specific grant programmes (De Gruchy & Holness 2007).

The research findings (cf Table 1) suggest that the role of influencer, mentor, intellectual and scholar is intrinsic to academic engagement and should be actualised in emerging researchers to produce a “vibrant research and development system which integrates the research and training capacity of higher education with the needs of industry and of social reconstruction” (DoE 2001: 4).

The “secondary programme recipients” refer to institutional stakeholders with a vested interest in implementing a research coaching and mentoring programme in the tertiary institution. These stakeholders include research management, deans, heads of department and faculty research committee chairpersons and members (De Gruchy & Holness 2007). As research managers and leaders, they are accountable for creating structures within the tertiary institution to build research capacity and to ensure that
the institution’s strategic research plan is actualised. The strategic research plan addresses extensive strategic research objectives in a quest for research excellence, research training, transferring more budgetary power to departments, as well as engaging and seeking collaborations with high-profile partners (Burger 2008).

The research findings (cf Table 1) indicate that emerging researchers expect institutional stakeholders to be role models for principle-centred leadership. Principle-centred leaders act with integrity; they relentlessly upgrade their teams; they act in ways that they would like their colleagues to act, and they make sure that their colleagues not only see the vision, but also live and breathe it (Collins 2001, Welch 2005).

7.3 Primary and secondary contexts
All the parties involved in the triangular coaching agreement function within a given reality or context. Mowday & Sutton (1993: 198) define context as “stimuli and phenomena that surround and thus exist in the external environment to the individual…” The context includes the physical environment, referring to adequate resources in terms of time, research training, budget and information. Johns (2001) points out that the context mostly operates in such a fashion that it provides either opportunities for, or constraints to, human behaviour in organisational settings.

The primary and secondary contexts represent continuing opportunities for research capacity development in the tertiary landscape. The primary context in Figure 1 refers to the research culture, while the secondary context pertains to the South African tertiary environment. Emerging researchers carry out their research activity within departments which, in turn, form part of faculties (Smeby & Try 2005) and of the tertiary institution positioned within the national context. Research outputs are influenced by factors operating at all these levels, resulting in a need for research development programmes that are able to marry the research agendas of different stakeholders, both institutional and national.
Stakeholders who took part in the research (research case 2) described a research culture as “a particular set of values and a particular set of outcomes” embedded in an institutional environment where “leadership is imperative”. A research culture emerged as “something that should consistently be practised”, something “self-driven”. “It is something that you cannot see, it is so entrenched that it doesn’t stand out, but you can see it in the end product.”

The findings of both research cases indicate that the immediate research cultures of these two tertiary institutions simultaneously exhibit life-giving forces that contribute to the experience of a nurturing research culture and contextual challenges perceived as a hindrance to meeting research outputs (cf Table 1). The following emerged as contextual strengths or life-giving forces contributing to a nurturing research culture: meaningful supervisor-student relationships; being part of a research community; the ability to stay focused; researcher identity; a passion-driven research culture, and principle-centred research leadership and support. Smeby & Try (2005) similarly found that good collegial communication and collaboration with colleagues result in effective research units, while isolation and interpersonal conflicts characterise ineffective units.

“Contextual challenges” refer to research knowledge, a skills and confidence gap, time constraints, inadequate supervision, a gap between early and established researchers, and tension between teaching and research that influences the psychological well-being of the emerging researcher. Stakeholders in both cases reported on the negative emotional responses resulting from their engagement in a research culture which they perceived to be unsupportive in certain respects. These contextual challenges reduce emerging researchers’ motivational levels and impair their research productivity (Gill 2009).

In a previous article, Visagie & Maritz (2009) argued that research coaching and mentoring can contribute to a nurturing research culture related to the supportive and outcomes-driven nature of coaching and mentoring interventions. Clutterbuck &
Megginson (2005) add that coaching facilitates the emergence of strategic competence in institutions.

The achievement of national and international research recognition forms part of the research agenda of the tertiary institution, representing the secondary context (cf Figure 1). The National Plan for Higher Education (DoE 2001: 5) provides a framework for “ensuring the fitness of the higher education system to contribute to the challenges that face South Africa in the 21st century” and expects institutions to give priority to rectifying the shortcomings in current academic development. Capacity to implement the national objectives, however, remains a concern in tertiary institutions related to “an overload of demands and an under-supply of response capabilities in higher education institutions” (Rothmann & Jordaan 2006: 87).

7.4 Dynamics: Appreciative Inquiry philosophy

The Appreciative Inquiry philosophy represents the energy source of a research coaching and mentoring programme and is depicted as an arrow in the conceptual framework (cf Figure 1). The arrow symbolises the progressive nature of the research coaching and mentoring life cycle, situated in stakeholders’ wishes for a coaching and mentoring programme that is holistic and entrenched within an appreciative framework. The Appreciative Inquiry stance opposes a problem-saturated approach that focuses on individual and organisational deficits. We agree with Rothmann & Jordaan’s (2006) argument that too much attention has been paid to unhealthy and dysfunctional aspects in tertiary institutions.

The following assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry philosophy were adapted to guide framework actualisation (Preskill & Coghlan 2003):

- In the context of tertiary institutions, something works.
- What the emerging researcher and institutional stakeholders pay attention to becomes their reality.
- Reality is constructed through the language that is used in the triangular coaching agreement and beyond.
• The act of asking questions, or the nature of dialogue, in the triangular coaching agreement influences the emerging researcher and institutional stakeholders in some way.
• It is crucial to respect differences and realise that emerging researchers and institutional stakeholders bring their whole selves to work.

7.5 Procedure for facilitating an appreciative research coaching and mentoring life cycle

The coaching procedure refers to the life cycle involved in the establishment, progression and development of the coaching partnership (Zeus & Skiffington 2002). The appreciative research coaching and mentoring life cycle involves fluid and flexible aspects of structure and process rather than a fixed set of steps. The key focus of the life cycle is the personal and professional development of emerging researchers as the next generation of research leaders (cf Table 1).

The life cycle consists of three interrelated phases, namely: establishing the relationship; collaborative action, and inspired enactment (cf Figure 1). The life cycle may last from one to three years depending on the contextual needs, entry level of the emerging researcher, funding, and the contractual agreement. The life cycle consists of ongoing one-on-one as well as group coaching and mentoring sessions. The group sessions are a valuable resource in meeting emerging researchers’ need for peer support (De Gruchy & Holness 2007) and ensuring active engagement in experiential learning that transpires in a scholarly community.

7.5.1 Establishing the relationship

The research coach and mentor creates an interactive partnership with the primary and secondary recipients to ensure authentic engagement in the research coaching and mentoring process. The interactive partnership consists of the establishment of a clear contract to ensure a meaningful working relationship with both recipients and to assess the current situation, research culture, strategic institutional research objectives, skills levels, existing research
profile, and developmental needs of emerging researchers (Visagie & Maritz 2009).

Important aspects of coaching relationships include confidentiality, readiness for coaching and commitment of the coachee, alignment of expectations, and a process and criteria for measuring success (Baanders 2005). An effective and supportive relationship is based on the development of a psychologically safe, open, trusting and authentic environment (Visagie & Maritz 2009).

The triangular coaching agreement departs naturally from interaction with institutional stakeholders, followed by interaction with the emerging researchers. The research coach and mentor enters the coaching agreement from an appreciative stance, facilitating dialogue and discovery.

7.5.2 Collaborative action

Once the relationship has been attended to, outcomes and action plans are mutually negotiated in the coaching relationship to achieve the envisioned results. It is crucial that coaching stakeholders constituting the triangular coaching relationship fully understand their specific role and responsibilities (Dembkowski et al 2006). This requires the research coach and mentor to assist the emerging researcher to craft powerful outcomes in order to cultivate ownership for learning (Dilts 2003: 37, Hall & Duval 2003: 149). Ongoing research coaching and mentoring sessions include a process of negotiating and executing the emerging researchers’ agenda while taking cognisance of strategic departmental and institutional research objectives. Agenda points might include choosing a research topic; crafting a research proposal; compiling a research plan; achieving different steps in the research process, and publishing articles in scientific journal.

The process entails continuous reflection, evaluation and feedback in the process of monitoring progress, revising the plan of action, follow-up and reporting. The “action plan” is guided by mutually agreed time frames. Reflection denotes a return to previous actions, events and thoughts as a way of evaluating the self. Evaluation of progress is part of confirming the emerging
researcher’s successes and institutional life-giving forces. Follow-up includes aspects such as continued dialogue with the recipients to provide continuous support, for example, through the use of e-mail conversations, telephone calls or social media.

7.5.3 Inspired enactment

Inspired enactment refers to the result of engagement in a research coaching and mentoring process. The concept “inspired” denotes being aroused to positive emotions and actions as a result of creative thinking and work. “Enactment” refers to something that has been performed, such as dance, or in this context, a scholarly activity that generates a positive stream of energy. It is closely related to a sense of progress in terms of personal and professional research development – a desired end state.

Amabile & Kramer (2010: 44) found that,

> When people sense that they’re making headway, their drive to succeed is at its peak. Making progress in one’s work – even incremental progress – is more frequently associated with positive emotions and high motivation than any other workday event.

Inspired enactment is evident in the ongoing personal and intellectual discourse echoing in the scholarly community. Institutional stakeholders have a sense of accomplishment based on the creation of favourable conditions for high-impact research output.

7.6 Outcome/destiny: engaged scholar

The central point of the concentric circles (cf Figure 1) throughout the design illustrates the envisioned destiny of facilitating a formal research coaching and mentoring programme in tertiary institutions, namely the emergence of an engaged scholar who forms part of a scholarly community. The concentric circles depict the echo of scholarly activity, transcending from engaged scholarship situated in a community of practice, and ultimately contributing to social

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reform. The outcome is in line with the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (DoE 2001: 4), which calls for “the development of professionals and knowledge workers with globally equivalent skills, but who are socially responsible and conscious of their role in contributing to the national development effort and social transformation”.

We draw from Boyer’s scholarship model (1990), as the model provides an integrated framework of scholarship that opposes the reductionist teacher versus research debate. Boyer (1990) postulates that scholarship consists of four overlapping functions, namely discovery, integration, application and teaching. Scholarship of discovery pertains to the research function in academic settings, and is grounded in the assumption that “disciplined, investigative efforts within the academy should be strengthened” (Boyer 1990: 17). Scholarship of discovery contributes to the advancement of human knowledge within a nurturing research culture. Pape (2000) claims that part of discovering knowledge includes paying attention to the advice of mentors and role models. Support networks generated during the discovery process are an invaluable source of inspiration for future research efforts.

The second function, integration, centres on the ability of academics to build multidisciplinary connections and to integrate research findings into a larger body of knowledge (Boyer 1990). In a research coaching and mentoring context, this might include opportunities to form partnerships with other academics and to open space for intellectual discourses – “tea under the tree” – sharing, as a participant commented in one of the case studies.

Scholarship of application challenges the scholar to apply his/her knowledge for the greater good of society. Boyer (1990) links this to an inquiry into the role of knowledge in addressing consequential problems. Scholarly service requires scholars to demonstrate values underlying service to society at large. Research coaching and mentoring is in essence values-driven, based on a “morally rigorous and humanistic approach to work and relationship(s)” (Clutterbuck & Megginson 2005: 19).
Finally, Boyer (1990) considers teaching to be a key function of scholarship. Intellectually engaged teachers stimulate active learning and encourage students to be critical, creative thinkers with the capacity to be lifelong learners. It is clear that Boyer’s model of scholarship calls for a balanced view of the scholarly functions of research, service and teaching.

Based on this model, the term “engaged scholar” refers to an emerging researcher who seeks scholarly activity related to all forms of scholarship. The engaged scholar demonstrates “lifelong commitment to thinking, questioning, and pursuing answers” (Pape 2000: 995).

8. Conclusion
In as much as research management support structures are expanding, research coaching and mentoring equally represents an emerging industry and niche area in need of theoretical frameworks in order to understand more deeply what matters in the research coaching and mentoring process. Based on the findings of two descriptive case studies, a contextual emerging conceptual framework was presented to nurture the development of emerging researchers. The framework describes the research coach and mentor as interacting holistically with the emerging researcher, institutional stakeholders, and the context. The interaction takes place within a triangular coaching agreement. The Appreciative Inquiry philosophy represents the energy source of the framework. The research coaching and mentoring life cycle is presented within three fluid phases, envisioning an engaged scholar positioned within a larger scholarly community. This conceptual framework aims to address the current void of empirically based, contextual research coaching and mentoring frameworks.

Although research coaching and mentoring is a vital and valuable support structure, we do not believe that it is a universal panacea for all emerging research support and learning needs. Other research management structures such as the culture, strategic vision, institutional and personal values and human capital
structures of the tertiary institutions equally need to be in alignment to nurture the emerging researcher.

A possible limitation to the development of this conceptual framework is that it is still in its infancy. We believe that it is important to document and communicate as we live and implement research coaching and mentoring. The buy-in of stakeholders, the training of coaches and mentors and sustained action and interaction are critical to the implementation of research coaching and mentoring programmes. Implementation guidelines for the conceptual framework will be communicated in future conference proceedings and publications. We further suggest that the conceptual framework, once implemented, be evaluated by stakeholders. Continuous refinement is suggested within both the quantitative and qualitative approaches.
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