

Coaching to prepare students for their school-to-work transition: conceptualizing core coaching competences

Niels van der Baan, Inken Gast, Wim Gijsselaers and Simon Beusaert
*Educational Research and Development, School of Business and Economics,
Maastricht University, Maastricht, Netherlands*

Received 13 November 2020
Revised 2 April 2021
11 November 2021
22 December 2021
Accepted 6 January 2022

Abstract

Purpose – The present study proposes coaching as a pedagogical intervention to prepare students for transitioning to the labour market. Taking a competence-based approach, the proposed coaching practice aims to enhance students' employability competences to facilitate a smoother school-to-work transition. However, what transition coaching looks like remains largely unclear. Moreover, in competence-based education, teachers are expected to be highly skilled coaches, facilitating students' transition to the labour market. The present study aims to map the core competencies of a transition coach.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative design was adopted to map the core competences of a transition coach. Data were collected from two focus groups, consisting of coaches in higher education and in the workplace.

Findings – Results show that, to create the necessary support conditions, a coach creates a safe coaching environment and supports students in setting goals, guide them in the activities they undertake to attain these goals, and asks reflective questions. Moreover, the coach stimulates students' ownership by putting the student in the centre of the decision-making process. Furthermore, the results emphasize the importance of the coach's professional attitude and knowledge about the transition process and the labour market.

Practical implications – The article concludes with practical implications for novice transition coaches and teachers in higher education.

Originality/value – The present study adds to the agenda of graduate work readiness by proposing a coaching practice aimed at preparing students for their transition to the labour market.

Keywords School-to-work transition, Work readiness, Coaching, Employability competences, Higher education, Workplace

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

School-to-work transition marks an important turning point in the lives of many graduates. In 2017, for example, approximately 4.8 million students in the EU completed higher education and took the first step into the labour market (Eurostat, 2019). However, that transition does not always go well, and an unsuccessful transition to the labour market can have long-term consequences for the careers of starters, such as long-term unemployment, lower job satisfaction and accepting a job below their skill level (Baert *et al.*, 2013; Ryan, 2001; Salas-Velasco, 2007).

Traditionally, research on the transition to the labour market has taken a labour economics perspective (Teichler, 1999) and focused on the duration of the transition



process, for example, how long graduates take to find adequate employment (e.g. [Vanoverberghe et al., 2008](#)). However, the transition period brings more challenges than merely obtaining a job. Among them, key issues are related to job fit, and how students acquire the necessary competencies enabling them to adapt to the dynamic workplace and continuously develop themselves ([Braun and Brachem, 2015](#); [Winterton and Turner, 2019](#)). In this respect, it is essential to facilitate graduates in making the shift from the relatively stable context of higher education to a context that is still largely unknown to them. Graduates often encounter difficulties adapting to this new context, because they feel unprepared to cope with the demands of the workplace ([Grosemans et al., 2017](#)). Preparing students to cope with these demands of the workplace is an important task for higher education, in order to help students to adjust more easily to the dynamic labour market ([Koen et al., 2012](#)). It has thus become apparent that transition is a process, rather than a single event; it starts as early as the final year of higher education and only ends when graduates have found adequate employment in the labour market ([Grosemans and Kyndt, 2017](#); [Nicholson, 1990](#)).

Because of the disconnection between higher education and the world of work, the Bologna declaration in 1999 initiated a change from the delivery of knowledge towards putting knowledge in the context of students acquiring competences. Higher education's increased focus on graduates' acquisition of competences geared to the needs of the workplace (e.g. [Baird and Parayitam \(2019\)](#); [Braun and Brachem \(2015\)](#)). This has influenced the emergence of competence-based education focusing on required graduates' behaviour within a range of relevant job situations and the knowledge, skills and attitudes ([Baartman et al., 2007](#)). Competence-based education is expected to better prepare students for their transition to the labour market and their professional future ([Koenen et al., 2015](#)). Within competence-based education, more emphasis is given to the coaching and guiding role of teachers. In addition, guiding students in acquiring and developing the necessary competences for the labour market and supporting them in formulating their own learning goals is seen as an integral part of the teaching profession ([van Dijk et al., 2020](#); [Koenen et al., 2015](#)). However, how teachers can best coach students in higher education as well as support them in acquiring and developing competences required for the labour market remains unclear ([van Dijk et al., 2020](#); [Spence and Oades, 2011](#)). Therefore, concrete coaching guidelines are needed to support teacher in their role as a coach to facilitate students' transition to the workplace.

In higher education, several pedagogical and didactical interventions have been implemented aimed at acquiring and developing students' generic competence, such as work experience through internships and work placements. In this respect, it aims to support students in their school-to-work transition. For work experience to contribute to the acquisition and development of students' competences, students need to be guided or coached to learn from these experiences. Without proper guidance these experiences are seen "as isolated pockets of learning" ([Blackwell et al., 2001](#), p. 282).

Coaching has already been studied as an intervention aimed at facilitating students' transition to the labour market in different contexts ([Gannon and Maher, 2012](#)). In their study, [Gannon and Maher \(2012\)](#) evaluated a coaching program in the Hospitality and Tourism sector in a UK university aimed at enhancing student employability. This study showed that the program was seen as a valuable intervention providing networking, industry insights, advice and opportunities support to foster students' employability. To support students in their competence development, [Spence and Oades \(2011\)](#) have developed a theoretical framework for coaching. Encouraging competence development goes along with a coach providing relatedness support, competence support and autonomy support. However, how a coach can create these supporting conditions to enhance students' competences required by the labour market and thus facilitate the transition process remains unclear ([Spence and](#)

Oades, 2011). Moreover, the transition process only ends at the workplace, when graduates have found stable jobs in terms of job position (part-time/full-time) and job satisfaction (Grosemans and Kyndt, 2017). Therefore, to support the full school-to-work transition, coaching for this transition not only takes place in higher education but also in the workplace. Existing coaching frameworks, such as the framework of Nora and Crisp (2008) of coaching in higher education or the framework of Spence and Oades (2011) of workplace coaching aim at academic, personal and professional development, and outline different characteristics and competences of a coach. However, to the best of our knowledge, a unified framework of characteristics and competences of a coach that is based on research situated in higher education and the workplace is still lacking.

The present study proposes coaching as a pedagogical intervention aiming at preparing students for their school-to-work transition by supporting in acquiring and developing competences required by the labour market. The present study identifies concrete coaching competences by reporting on two focus groups with experienced coaches in higher education and the workplace and answering the following research question:

What are the core competencies of a transition coach?

Theoretical framework

Coaching for the school-to-work transition starts in higher education and continues at the workplace. However, coaching in higher education and coaching at the workplace are conceptualized differently. Therefore, the first step in designing a theoretical framework for coaching for the school-to-work transition is synthesizing the literature on coaching in both higher education and at the workplace, coaching goals and coaching competences, such as the support behaviours a coach provides. The focus lies on the “who”, “what”, “why” and “how” of coaching.

Coaching in higher education

Ample research has been done on coaching in higher education (Crisp and Cruz, 2009; Gershenfeld, 2014; Nora and Crisp, 2008). Gershenfeld (2014) defined coaching in higher education as a multi-dimensional construct with multiple purposes. However, academic and student success remains the primary goal of coaching in higher education. Coaching in higher education can also aim at competence and professional development. In a recent review, Nuis and Beusaert (2020) define coaching in higher education as a formal, structured process based on a supportive, reciprocal coach-coachee relationship. In the setting of Higher Education, coaching sessions are often offered as individual sessions. Not only can a faculty member coach students, but more experienced peers or alumni may also guide students in their academic development (Lu, 2010). Various support behaviours are necessary to stimulate the academic development of the coachee. Previous research has indicated that a coach should provide the coachee with (1) *psychological and emotional support*, (2) *psychosocial support* and (3) *career path support* (Nora and Crisp, 2008; Nuis and Beusaert, 2020; Ragins and Kram, 2007).

Psychological and emotional support refers to the coach as a listening ear. The coach actively and empathically listens to the fears and problems of the coachee to establish a safe climate. The coach also provides moral support and ongoing feedback regarding the fears and problems the coachee is willing to discuss. Discussions “must be conducted in a safe environment as perceived by the mentee” (Nora and Crisp, 2008, 343), so that the coach is able to identify the problem and propose a solution to the coachee. To establish a safe environment, the coach must provide *psychosocial support*, in which the interaction between the coach and the coachee is pivotal.

Psychosocial support refers to the presence of trust and intimacy in the interaction between coach and coachee. Psychosocial support also refers to coaching behaviours that promote students' personal growth concerning aspects such as self-efficacy and self-worth, including acceptance and confirmation (Ragins and Kram, 2007).

In addition, the coach provides the student with *career path support*. Career path support includes coaching behaviours that Ragins and Kram (2007) called *career functions*. "Career functions involve a range of behaviours that help protégés 'learn the ropes' and prepare them for hierarchical advancement within their organizations" (Ragins and Kram, 2007, p.5), such as showing the student how to seek and apply for jobs (Crisp and Cruz, 2009). By providing career path support, the coach stimulates the coachee to reflect on his/her learning experiences (Nora and Crisp, 2008).

Coaching at the workplace

Coaching at the workplace is primarily aimed at workforce development (Bozer and Jones, 2018; Cameron and Ebrahimi, 2014; Jones *et al.*, 2016). Workplace coaching is a goal-oriented process based on trust and discretion, and depending on the goal, workplace coaching can have a variety of outcomes (Grant and Cavanagh, 2007). In their review, Blackman *et al.* (2016) found a range of positive outcomes associated with workplace coaching, such as career development and advancement, improved psychological and social competencies, and enhanced self-awareness, assertiveness, and self-efficacy. In their meta-analytic review, Jones *et al.* (2016) distinguished between the affective, cognitive, and skill-based outcomes of workplace coaching. Affective outcomes refer to attitudes and motivational outcomes, such as self-efficacy, well-being, and job satisfaction. Knowledge gains fall under cognitive outcomes. Skill-based outcomes refer to the learning of new skills, such as leadership skills or problem-solving skills. Workplace coaching was found to have positive effects on all types of outcomes, with the largest effect size for the cognitive outcomes. Together, these cognitive, affective, and skill-based outcomes, or knowledge, attitudes, and skills, can be referred to as competences. Thus, to promote workforce development, coaching at the workplace is primarily concerned with competence development. Because coaching at the workplace is a goal-oriented process, based on trust and discretion (Bozer and Jones, 2018; Jones *et al.*, 2016), it is not necessary for the coach to have experience or expertise in the coachee's area of work. Coaching can also occur between two people of equal status within the organization (Jones *et al.*, 2016).

Spence and Oades (2011) develop a coaching framework on how workplace coaches can support employees in their competence development. These authors took a motivational perspective and argue that the self-determination theory (SDT) provides "a useful set of ideas for guiding [a] coaching practice" (p. 39). SDT assumes that people are inherently capable of behavioural change under the right circumstances and with the right supporting conditions. Personal development largely depends on the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs of the coachee: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 1985; Spence and Oades, 2011). A coach at the workplace can provide support for these three basic psychological needs. In providing *autonomy support*, the coach places the coachee at the centre of the decision-making process, by encouraging ownership over the coachee's own goal setting and development. The coach assists in establishing personal development objectives for the coachee and encourages proactive behaviour from the coachee by supporting goal accomplishment and professional growth (Jones *et al.*, 2016; Spence and Oades, 2011). To create a feeling of competence, the coach provides *competence support* by assessing the coachee's abilities and talents, rather than focusing on analysing the problems. This is supported by a study conducted by Grant and O'Connor (2010), who showed that solution-focused coaching, in which people are connected with their strengths, led to better outcomes in terms of self-efficacy, goal-orientation, and positive affect compared to problem-focused coaching. Effective coaching can only take place in a safe environment, where the

coachee feels safe to discuss personal problems and issues (Ragins and Kram, 2007). Coaching is a person-centred process, and by providing *relatedness support*, a coach can establish this safe coaching climate. By actively listening to the coachee, showing empathy, and being attentive and responsive, the coach is able to satisfy the coachee's need for relatedness (Spence and Oades, 2011). By taking care to satisfy these three basic psychological needs of the coachee, a coach is then able to promote employees' competence development at the workplace.

Towards an integrative view of coaching in higher education and coaching at the workplace

Although coaching in higher education and coaching at the workplace are defined differently, similarities can be identified. Before investigating the core competences a transition coach needs, the present study compares the 'who', 'what', 'why', and 'how' of coaching in higher education and workplace coaching. Concerning the 'what' and 'why' of coaching, both coaching practices can be defined as a formal, goal-oriented process based on a relationship of trust between the coach and coachee. Both practices aim at competence development, whether it is student success or workforce development, through the development of competences.

Next, overlap can be found in the 'how' of coaching. First, *career path support* is offered in both contexts. In higher education, providing career path support involves giving support in setting career goals and making decisions, by asking questions and stimulating students to reflect on their learning experiences (Crisp and Cruz, 2009; Nora and Crisp, 2008; Ragins and Kram, 2007). At the workplace, a coach provides *competence support* and assists employees in establishing personal and professional development goals by providing the employee with ongoing feedback (Bozer and Jones, 2018; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Spence and Oades, 2011). Even though a coach helps with setting personal and professional development goals, the coachee is stimulated to be proactive in attaining those goals, in both higher education and at the workplace, which relates to autonomy support. Within higher education, Ragins and Kram (2007) have termed this sponsorship: sponsoring or empowering the coachee in their advancement. Third, coaches offer relatedness support in both contexts. Within higher education *psychosocial* and *psychological/emotional support* is offered, which shows considerable overlap with *relatedness support* in workplace coaching. In higher education, the psychosocial dimension of coaching is "built on trust, intimacy and interpersonal bonds in the relationship" (Ragins and Kram, 2007, 5) and shows overlap with relatedness support as far as building a healthy, supportive relationship between a coach at the workplace and an employee (Bozer and Jones, 2018; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Spence and Oades, 2011). *Relatedness support* overlaps with the psychological and emotional dimension of coaching in higher education, in which a coach establishes a safe climate (Crisp and Cruz, 2009; Nora and Crisp, 2008).

Although coaching models in higher education and at the workplace have their own characteristics, careful investigation reveals several similarities. Coaching in both worlds have competence development as their fundamental goal. Next, both groups of literature identify similar support behaviours. They refer to relatedness and competence support to encourage students' or employees' competence development. However, providing autonomy support was not mentioned in higher education literature, but it was in the workplace literature. The biggest difference between coaching in higher education and coaching at the workplace concerns the "who" of coaching. While a coach in higher education is required to be more experienced in terms of academic subject knowledge or knowledge about the labour market, whether the coach is a faculty member or a peer, this is not a requirement for coaching at the workplace, where a coach and coachee can be of equal status (Bozer and Jones, 2018). Table 1 provides an integrative overview of the 'who', 'what', 'why', and 'how' of coaching in higher education and coaching at the workplace.

Table 1.
An integrative
overview of coaching
in higher education and
coaching at the
workplace

| | Coaching in higher education | Coaching at the workplace |
|-------|--|---|
| Who? | Someone who is more experienced | Not necessarily someone with more experience |
| What? | A formal, structured process based on trust | A goal-oriented process based on trust and discretion |
| Why? | Student development - Promoting student success and personal and professional development - Competence development | Workforce development - Competence development • Cognitive outcomes • Affective outcomes • Skill-based outcomes |
| How? | Providing: - Career support - Psychosocial support - Psychological and emotional support | Providing: - Competence support - Relatedness support - Autonomy support |

Method

Semi-structured focus groups were used, which elicit interaction between participants where they discuss concrete core competences of a transition coach (Morgan, 1996). This study will provide in-depth understanding of how a transition coach can create the necessary support conditions for students.

Participants

Two focus group sessions with coaches as participants were conducted in the Netherlands ($n = 4$) and in Belgium ($n = 5$) in October 2019. Participants were recruited from the researchers' networks and were selected based on their coaching experience either in higher education or at the workplace. Participants in the focus groups were coaches working as a coach in higher education ($n = 5$) or at the workplace ($n = 4$). These focus groups were mixed, with both coaches from higher education and coaches from the workplace as participants. In our sample, eight out of the nine participants (88%) were women. Participants' coaching experience ranged from less than two years of coaching experience (one participant) to more than five years of coaching experience (six participants). Ages varied from 31 to 55 years old ($M = 45.89$ years, $SD = 8.37$).

Procedure

The focus group sessions lasted approximately 2 h each, were audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim to facilitate the coding of the focus group discussions. The focus group sessions were chaired by an independent, experienced coach to mitigate the risk of interview bias, referring to the preconceived judgements of the researchers about the content of the focus groups. The focus group discussion guidelines were based on the theoretical framework, with open-ended questions about the who, what, why, and how of coaching for transition to the workplace (Bozer and Jones, 2018; Crisp and Cruz, 2009; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Nora and Crisp, 2008). The focus groups started out with more general questions about the goals of coaching and the tasks and responsibilities of coaches. Next, questions went into more detail about students' transition to the labour market, and how coaches can facilitate this transition. For example:

What should a coach do to help students make the transition to the labour market?

The six phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) were used to code the focus group discussion transcripts deductively and inductively, on a semantic or explicit level, and on a latent or interpretative level. To test the inter-rater reliability, the first author

and an independent peer researcher independently coded 10% of the focus group discussion transcripts. A satisfactory Cohen's kappa of 0.80 was reached.

Analysis

The coded data from the focus groups were analysed using the thematic approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Analysis of the results started with the core competences a transition coach needs. Based on the data, these core competences could be categorized as the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of a coach needed for supporting transition. Within the skills a transition coach needs, a distinction was made between the three different types of support behaviours a coach should provide: (1) *autonomy support*, (2) *competence support* and (3) *relatedness support* (Table 2).

Results

The present studies used semi-structured focus groups to identify core competences of a transition coach. The results are structured according to the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that together form the core competences of a coach for transition.

Coaching competences

Attitudes. Participants in both focus groups identified a coach's professional attitude as pivotal for supporting students' transition to the workplace. One participant defined a professional attitude as being engaged and involved with the coachee, without being emotionally attached, while other participants mentioned empathy as a core characteristic of a transition coach. During the coaching conversation, the coachee is in a vulnerable position. However, not only the coachee, but also the coach should open up and be vulnerable themselves. Results indicate that, aside from opening up, a transition coach must be transparent, discreet and have integrity, which facilitates the trusting relationship between the coach and the coachee. Because coaching is based on a trust relationship, a transition coach should be trustworthy and being able to build trust in a relatively short amount of time:

To be able to build trust in the very short timeframe. And that is . . . If that trust . . . people will connect very quickly and can go very quickly to a personal level. And, not everyone can do that, I see coaches who totally . . . who stay on the surface. And, the effect [of coaching] is much less if you have a superficial conversation. Or you will immediately go into that depth. So that is a characteristic of a coach that you really have to have. [Workplace coach – focus group 2]

Further analysis indicated that a professional attitude for a transition coach includes having passion for the coaching occupation, being curious and open-minded, but also knowing their own limitations, for example:

. . . to refer people when there are questions that are outside your scope, outside your role or outside your responsibility. [Workplace coach – focus group 1]

Knowledge. The primary responsibility of a transition coach is to prepare students for the labour market. Results indicate that a transition coach should, therefore, have knowledge about the labour market itself, in order to adequately prepare students for the transition. Should a student come to the coach with a question outside the scope of the transition, the coach should refer the student to other departments or institutions that can help the student with that particular question. In other words, a transition coach should know their own limitations. Further results indicate that a coach should also have knowledge about learning at the workplace and the coachee's learning processes and should pay attention to the coachee's learning.

| Code groups | Descriptive codes (N***) | Description | Example quotes |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Core characteristics*</i> | | | |
| | Coaching competences* (N = 13) | The competences - knowledge, skills, and attitudes - of a coach | "... So your professional attitude in the sense of you are involved, but not emotionally involved." |
| | Coaching experience* (N = 2) | The experience being a coach in general | "[Your] network and acquired experience - practical experience." |
| <i>Coaching behaviours</i> | | | |
| Relatedness support | Creating safe environment (N = 8) | The coachee needs to feel safe in order to share his/her problems with the coach | "So provide security." |
| | Listening (N = 3) | A coach should actively and attentively listen to the coachee | "I always try to listen to what I don't hear here. Yes. That is usually my context with which I start a coaching conversation." |
| | Creating trust (N = 10) | Coaching is based on interpersonal process relations between the coach and the coachee. A coach should build a trusting relationship with the coachee | "Create and build trust." |
| | Being transparent* (N = 9) | Informing the coachee about the goal of coaching and your role as a coach and the goal of the coaching trajectory. If a coach has different roles, for example also the role of assessor, the coach should be open and explicit about this towards the coachee | "And I try to explain that too. I will consciously sometimes say, 'And now I will stand up as HR, and now I will stand up as [coach].'" |
| | Being discreet* (N = 10) | A coach should not discuss parts of the coaching conversation with a third party | "I don't want my boss to know what we're discussing here." |
| | Expectations manager (N = 6) | The coach discusses what the coachee can expect from the coaching trajectory | "But students really come in and they say, 'yes I don't know whether I have to choose A or B, you are going to tell me what to choose.' I say, 'No, I'm not going to tell you that at all.'" "So to refer people when they ask questions that are outside your scope, outside your role, or outside your responsibility." |
| | Referring (N = 1) | If it's outside your scope (e.g. psychological issues), the coach refers the coachee to other departments/institutions | "Yes, but you guide the process. You actually manage his learning process as a coach." |
| Competence support | Guiding* (N = 8) | Assisting and steering the coachee in the process of goal attainment | "Explaining the processes, I think." |
| | Explaining* (N = 1) | Making the process and goals clear and explaining how to do something | |

(continued)

Table 2.
Coding matrix

| Code groups | Descriptive codes (N ^{**}) | Description | Example quotes |
|-------------|---|--|---|
| | Showing* (N = 2) | A coach can show or demonstrates the coachee how things are done | “That’s also what I mean by training on the job. just sit down at the computer together and search for vacancies together.” |
| | Sponsoring (N = 5) | Sponsoring or empowering their advancement. Stimulating the coachee to be proactive | “What is not there yet, what I often do during coaching, is encouraging people to cross that threshold. Encourage people to overcome their cold water fears.” |
| | Goal setting (N = 7) | A coach helps you explore, identify, and set your learning goals | “You have to put the finger on the right note, [identify] the right learning goal.” |
| | Help define action plan (N = 6) | After identifying the learning goals, the coach helps you to define actions and make a plan in order to attain those goals | “We now know what your learning goals are and we can make the link. Okay, what are we going to do now, we are going to work now.” |
| | Supports scaffolding* (N = 2) | The coach helps you to make those specific actions smaller | “By chunking. Small steps, chunking. Making bite-sized chunks” |
| | Giving advice* (N = 2) | The coach gives the coachee recommendations about what he/she should or should not do | “For example, sometimes they just ask, how should I prepare a CV. Then it is really just pure advice.” |
| | Exploring solutions* (N = 3) | The coach and coachee explore numerous possibilities that can lead to accomplishing his/her goals | “How many possibilities are there now, and exploring them.” |
| | Doing job simulation* (N = 3) | The coach simulates job interviews and helps with writing a CV or application letter | “And yes, of course what we do a lot with students is job interview simulation.” |
| | Offering tools* (N = 5) | Offering practical tools, such as checklists or list of abbreviations used at the workplace | “And I think, actually what you both said . . . Because you do that by making it very concrete. Also with such a glossary.” |
| | Offering a framework* (N = 2) | The coach provides the coachee with a structure in which he/she can work towards the goals | “And also providing a framework, a framework with steps to take.” |
| | Stimulating (self-) reflection (N = 15) | The coach challenges the coachee to take different perspectives and stimulates the coachee to look at him/herself by holding up a mirror | “Learning them to hold up their own mirror.” |
| | Asking questions* (N = 7) | A coach stimulates reflection by asking concrete, practical, and open ended questions | “Ask clarifying and in-depth questions.” |
| | Giving feedback (N = 2) | By giving ongoing feedback a coach can help stimulate reflection | “Then you also immediately give back to people if you notice something that does not help them.” |

Table 2.

(continued)

| Code groups | Descriptive codes (N***) | Description | Example quotes |
|------------------|---|--|---|
| | Evaluating one's own behaviour* (N = 6) | The coach stimulates the coachee to evaluate his/her own behaviour in terms of the impact it has on others | "You also have to see how it comes across to the outside world and what happens there. I call that impact, what happens there, and how does it come back to you." |
| | Exploring feelings* (N = 1) | Exploring how the coachee feels about his/her past experiences | "And also what do I experience here now. What do I feel now. Here and now, if I'm with you . . . When it comes to not listening well, [. . .] How do you feel it with me now, for example." |
| | Assessment of strength and weaknesses (N = 5) | "In-depth review and exploration of interests, abilities, ideas, and beliefs" (Nora and Crips, 2008, p. 343). The coach stimulates analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the coachee | "Knowing you strengths and learn how to use them" |
| Autonomy support | Stimulating ownership* (N = 13) | Encouraging coachees to take ownership of their personal and professional development. The coachee should take responsibility over his/her own learning process | "Stimulating ownership" |

Table 2.

Skills. The coaching skills mentioned by both focus groups could be divided into the three coaching dimensions defined earlier (relatedness support, competence support and autonomy support).

Relatedness Support. A transition coach should provide relatedness support by creating a *safe environment* in order to freely discuss the fears and uncertainties of the coachee. Results indicate that in order to establish a safe environment, a transition coach should *actively listen* to the coachee and be able to manage the expectations of the coachee by *creating a mutual understanding* of the goals of the coaching sessions, as illustrated by one participant:

But students really come in and they say, 'Yes, I don't know whether I have to choose A or B. You are going to tell me what to choose.' I say, 'No, I'm not going to tell you that at all.' [Higher education coach – focus group 1]

In addition, results indicate that to establish a safe environment, a transition coach should *build trust*, *create transparency* and *act discreetly*. Both focus groups identified building trust as pivotal for a safe coaching environment. Creating transparency and being discreet are especially important for transition coaching in a workplace context. At the workplace, other interests such as retention might play a role, which do not necessarily align with the goals of the coachee, who might plan to leave the company to seek opportunities elsewhere. It is important to agree on the goal of coaching, which refers to expectation management, and to be transparent about this with the coachee, and if necessary, with the manager or a third party. In addition, a coach can have multiple roles, for example, the role of supervisor, manager, or assessor. It is also pivotal to create transparency for the coachee on what role the coach is taking on. For example, one participant coaching at the workplace explained:

And I try to explain that too. I will consciously sometimes say, 'And now I will stand up as HR, and now I will stand up as [coach]. [Workplace coach – focus group 2]

As for discretion, both focus groups identified creating confidentiality as a key component of a safe environment. A transition coach should not discuss the coaching sessions with a third party, especially in a work setting where different interests collide. Figure 1 summarizes the results categorized as relatedness support.

Competence Support. Providing competence support involves helping the coachee set future (career) goals and attain those goals. Both focus groups identified *stimulating the coachee’s reflection* as a key component for providing competence support. By stimulating reflection of coachees, they are able to evaluate and adapt their own behaviour in the future. It is this reflection that enables coachees to keep developing themselves. For example, one participant defined this process as:

To think about it in such a way that you are able to find the solution to the problem yourself. [Higher education coach – focus group 1]

Specific coaching behaviours to stimulate a coachee’s reflection were identified during the focus group discussions. Results suggest that a coach should start by providing *assistance with setting (career) goals* and *assessing the abilities, strength, and weaknesses of the coachee*. By starting with goal setting, the coach makes sure that the coaching conversation becomes goal oriented and purposeful. Although assessment of the coachee’s strength and weaknesses is the next step, coaches in our focus groups agreed that the focus should be on the coachee’s abilities, strengths, and talents instead of the coachee’s weaknesses. Based on the strengths, abilities, and talents of the coachee, the goal can be adjusted. The next step is then *making an action plan* and working towards goal attainment:

We now know what your learning goals are and we can make the link. Okay, what are we going to do now? We are going to work now. [Higher education coach – focus group 2]

To make an action plan more concrete, steps to be taken towards goal attainment are identified. These smaller steps build on each other in order to reach the end goal, a process termed *scaffolding*. One participant used the term “chunking” for this, dividing your action plan into small concrete steps:

By chunking. Taking small steps. Making bite-sized chunks. [Workplace coach – focus group 1]

However, it is the coachee who works towards the goal themselves. The coach empowers the coachee and encourages proactive behaviour, termed *sponsorship*. In addition, the coach *provides a framework* for the action plan and the concrete steps to take. Even though it is the coachee who takes these steps themselves, the coach provides a range of support behaviours, including *guiding, explaining, showing, and advising*. The coach guides them through the action plan and explains the different steps. The coach can show or demonstrate how to perform certain tasks. In our focus group discussions, showing or demonstrating was linked with on-the-job-training in the workplace context. In addition to guiding, showing, and explaining, the coach sometimes gives advice to the coachee about which steps to take. One participant worded it:

So you go through it with them, but in the end they also make decisions and steps. You merely give advice. [Higher education coach – focus group 1]

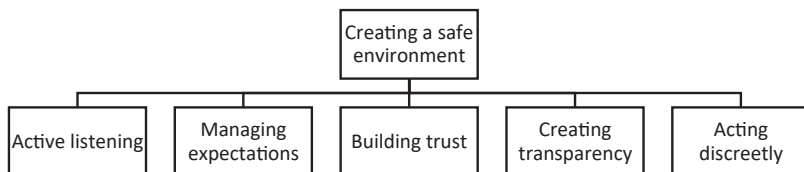


Figure 1.
Coaching behaviours
for relatedness support

Again, it is the coachee themselves who works towards goal attainment. However, together with the coachee, the coach can *explore the possible paths* the coachee can take, the *possible solutions*. To support the coachee further in their goal attainment, the coach offers practical tools to the coachee; for example, in a workplace context this could be a list of unknown words or jargon.

After concrete actions have been taken towards goal attainment, the coach can evaluate this behaviour together with the coachee by *asking open-ended, in-depth, and reflective questions*. Both focus groups identified *giving feedback* as a vital part of evaluating. Moreover, results suggest that a coach can help the coachee see the effect of his behaviour on others and his environment. One participant defined this as impact:

You also have to see how it comes across to the outside world and what happens there. I call that impact, what happens there, and how does it come back to you. [Focus group 2]

Another coach from the same focus group related the impact on others to explicitly envisioning what empathy means and putting yourself in others' shoes:

When I say and do this, it comes across to the other person like that. So actually learning to make empathy visible, learning to put yourself in the shoes of the other. [Higher education coach – focus group 2]

The results for competence support behaviours are summarized in [Figure 2](#).

Autonomy Support. During the focus group discussions, empowering and encouraging proactive behaviour by the coachee was frequently mentioned. The coachee is put at the centre of the decision-making process, and the coach only guides, explains, shows how things are done, and advises the coachee during this process. These concrete coaching behaviours also relate to providing the coachee with autonomy support. By *handing over the responsibility* to the coachee and *stimulating proactive behaviour* by the coachee, the coach stimulates the coachee's ownership of their own development. A coach should make clear that it is the coachee who is in charge of their own transition and career path, as illustrated by this quote from a participant: "You sit behind the wheel of your own career path, your own job." [Higher education coach – focus group 2]

[Figure 3](#) summarizes the results found for providing autonomy support.

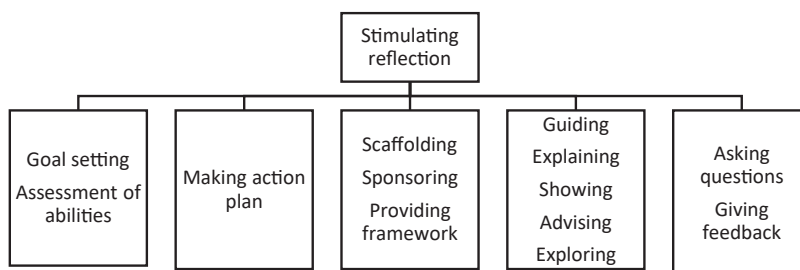


Figure 2.
Coaching behaviours
for competence support

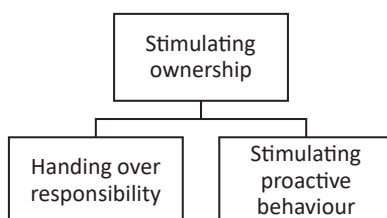


Figure 3.
Coaching behaviours
for autonomy support

Discussion and conclusion

The present study aimed at identifying the core competences of coaches who aim to support students in their school-to-work transition. By conducting semi-structured focus groups, the present study identified attitudes, knowledge and skills of a transition coach.

Coaching competences

Results from the focus group discussions indicated that a transition coach possesses certain competences – attitudes, knowledge, and skills – to support students in their transition to the labour market. The attitudes of a transition coach closely relate to the skills, or support behaviours, a coach provides to facilitate students' transition to the labour market. These attitudes refer mainly to the interaction of the coach with the coachee; without the attitudes suggested by the underlying theoretical understanding of coaching, the coach will be unable to provide the coachee with the necessary support. Results further indicate that a transition coach has knowledge about the labour market and the workplace. Since the coach is preparing the student for their school-to-work transition, it seems plausible that the coach must be up-to-date on the requirements of the labour market, such as the generic competences required (e.g. Braun and Brachem, 2015). Aside from the fact that a transition coach has a professional attitude towards the coaching process and knowledge of the labour market, the main findings of the present study provided support for our theoretical framework. The core competences of a transition coach can be categorized according to the three types of support: relatedness support, competence support, and autonomy support.

Relatedness support. First, a transition coach provides relatedness support and establishes a safe environment in which a coaching conversation can easily take place. This finding is in line with the study by Nora and Crisp (2008), who argued that coaching “must be conducted in a safe environment as perceived by the mentee” (p. 343). To establish a safe environment, a coach relies on several coaching behaviours, which Crisp and Cruz (2009) call psychosocial behaviours, referring to the quality of the coach-coachee relationship. Moreover, these psychosocial behaviours also relate to the attitudes of a coach. A coach with a professional attitude, who is reliable and dependable, can create and build a trusting relationship in a relatively short amount of time. Arguably, providing relatedness support is closely connected to the professional attitude of a transition coach. A coach who values a personal connection with the coachee and is empathic is able to create a safe environment where a coaching conversation can take place.

Competence support. Second, a transition coach provides *competence support*, in which they facilitate the decision-making process of the coachee by stimulating the coachee's development and reflectiveness. When the coach stimulates reflection, the coachee becomes a reflective learner, which allows the coachee to critically analyse their own behaviour which, in turn, leads to behavioural change and personal and professional growth (Beusaert et al., 2015).

Careful investigation of the behaviours associated with providing competence support reveals strong parallels with the continuing professional development cycle proposed by Rouse (2004). By setting personal or professional development goals, working towards attaining those goals, and evaluating these experiences, a transition coach is able to stimulate the coachee's reflection. This cycle consists of four phases: the reflective phase, the planning phase, the concrete experience phase and the evaluation phase. Concrete coaching behaviours are summarized in Figure 4.

Autonomy support. Finally, results of our focus groups indicate that it is the coachee themselves who takes steps towards goal attainment and takes the initiative in the coaching conversation, while the coach provides the necessary supporting conditions for the coachee to take these steps. Whilst stimulating proactive behaviour by the coachee is explicitly part of sponsoring within competence support, the results suggest that stimulating proactive behaviour and ownership is not limited to a specific phase within competence support, but

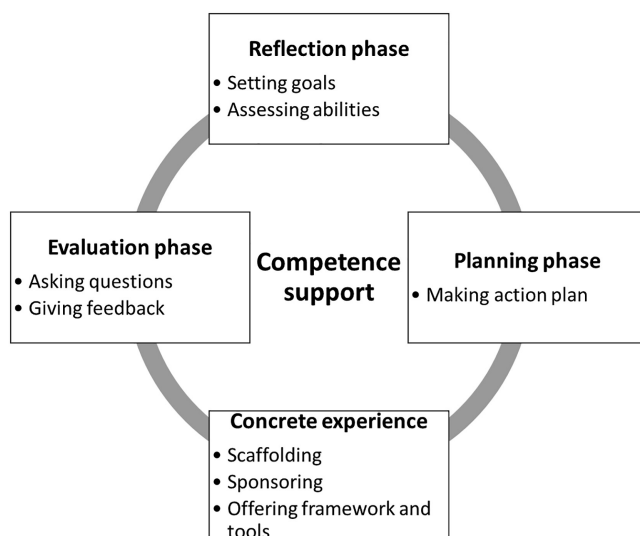


Figure 4.
Competence
support cycle

rather for the whole coaching process. It is the coachee who decides about goal setting, planning and taking concrete steps. By putting the coachee in the centre of the decision-making process, the coach satisfies the coachee's need for autonomy.

Interestingly, autonomy support was only defined as a support behaviour in the literature on coaching at the workplace and not coaching in higher education. However, our focus groups identified it as pivotal for transition coaching. Even though motivation theories, such as SDT, emphasize the importance of autonomy support for students' intrinsic motivation (Niemic and Ryan, 2009), autonomy support has not been described as a specific coaching behaviour in higher education. It can be argued that, as higher education provides a more structured and autonomy-supportive learning environment than the workplace (Grosemans *et al.*, 2017), it is more important and up to the workplace coach to satisfy employees' need for autonomy. In the more dynamic workplace, new employees have to take ownership over their own development in order to cope with the constantly changing demands of the job (Grosemans *et al.*, 2017). It can therefore be argued that in order to adequately prepare students for the labour market, students already need to learn to take responsibility and ownership over their own development in the future.

The present study has identified concrete coaching behaviours and competences that are necessary for a coach to facilitate the transition from higher education to the labour market. Results of our focus groups support our theoretical framework about coaching and provide in-depth understanding of how a transition coach can establish the three supporting conditions necessary to support students in their transition to the workplace (i.e. relatedness, competence and autonomy support). It could be argued that the coaching behaviours and competences identified are not only relevant for a transition coach, but for all coaches, no matter the purpose of the coaching practice. Nevertheless, a specific requirement for a transition coach was identified as well, namely a transition coach should have sufficient knowledge about the labour market. Knowing which competences are required by the labour market allows the transition coach to steer the student in the right direction when formulating developmental goals and determining steps to take.

Moreover, the lack of competences required by the labour market might be too narrow a view of the problem of transition. The transition period is also accompanied by feelings of

uncertainty and a lack of motivation (Grosemans and Kyndt, 2017). The framework presented in this study draws parallels with SDT, a motivation theory, in which relatedness, competence, and autonomy form the three basic needs of individuals (Ryan and Deci, 1985; Spence and Oades, 2011). By providing the coachee with support for relatedness, competence, and autonomy, a transition coach may also increase students' intrinsic motivation to take the first step towards the labour market (Spence and Oades, 2011).

Limitations and recommendations for future research

The sample of experienced coaches who specifically coach for transition was drawn from a small population of coaches involved in the current project. Two focus group discussions were conducted, and all data points in relation to our theoretical framework were satisfied. According to the criteria proposed by Malterud *et al.* (2016), such as the aim of the study with its theoretical foundation and approach to the focus groups discussions and data analysis, we argue that our sample had sufficient information power. We were able to offer concrete coaching competences for coaching practice aimed at facilitating students' transition to the labour market. Participants in the focus groups were coaches from higher education or the workplace with several years of experience, ranging from less than two years of experience to more than five years of coaching experience. The participants had all taken on the role of a coach for several years, but not all were officially certified coaches. Due to the small sample size of the present study, future research is advised to collect repeated measures.

The present research presented core competences of a transition coach. However, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of a coaching practice aimed at facilitating students' transition to the labour market is still lacking. Therefore, our findings recommend evaluation of the effectiveness of these coaching competences in preparing students for their school-to-work transition. This calls for a more quantitative approach applying a longitudinal and experimental design, in which the effect of coaching on the school-to-work transition can be evaluated. In addition, coaching has always been a process involving interaction between two people, the coach and the coachee. It is assumed that by exhibiting the concrete coaching behaviours identified by the present study, transition coaches are able to support students in their need for relatedness, competence, and autonomy. How this supportiveness is perceived by the student or coachee might give valuable insights into the effectiveness of these concrete coaching behaviours and in how to set up effective coaching practices aimed at facilitating students' transition to the labour market.

Our findings suggest a range of competences that a transition coach must possess in order to facilitate students' transition to the labour market. Our results also indicated that the core competences of a transition coach show similarities with the competences of a professional coach (i.e. providing relatedness, competence, and autonomy support (Spence and Oades, 2011)). One of the distinctive features of a transition coach consists of possessing knowledge about developments in the labour market; what are emerging fields, what are changing market needs, how do changes in the work call for adaptations in programs? Future research should look further into what kind of labour market knowledge a transition coach should have to achieve optimal outcomes.

Implications

The present study provides concrete supporting conditions and behaviours for transition coaches on how to support students in their reflection and competence development. By setting goals with the student, guiding the student in their activity, giving feedback and asking open-ended questions, transition coaches create supporting conditions that foster students' reflection. In addition, it is important that it is the student who decides on the goals,

makes an action plan and undertakes activities. The coach merely guides the students in these activities. Furthermore, concrete coaching behaviours are identified that help the coach build a safe coaching environment in which students feel comfortable sharing their challenges, such as active listening and being discreet. Trainers can incorporate these concrete behaviours in training programmes for novice coaches in higher education.

The present study also suggests that the supporting conditions and behaviours found are not specific for transition coaches only, but are relevant for all coaches in higher education, regardless of the purpose of coaching. Since coaching is one of the core tasks for teachers in higher education (van Dijk *et al.*, 2020), the supporting conditions and coaching behaviours identified in this study can also be incorporated in teacher training programmes.

Conclusion

The present study identified various concrete competences transition coaches possess, suggesting that coaching can be a valuable pedagogical intervention to prepare students in their school-to-work transition. Since coaching is already seen as a core task of academic teachers (van Dijk *et al.*, 2020), we suggest that, with the focus on the labour market and knowledge about what is required by employers, teachers in higher education can play a valuable role in fostering student's competence development (i.e. by providing relatedness, competence and autonomy support) and facilitating students' transition to the labour market. Preparing graduates for their career on the future labour market may in this respect also be considered as a coaching process becoming part of the regular teacher roles of academic staff in higher education.

References

- Baartman, L.K.J., Bastiaens, T.J., Kirschner, P.A. and van der Vleuten, C.P.M. (2007), "Evaluating assessment quality in competence-based education: a qualitative comparison of two frameworks", *Educational Research Review*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 114-129.
- Baert, S., Cockx, B. and Verhaest, D. (2013), "Overeducation at the start of the career: stepping stone or trap?", *Labour Economics*, North-Holland, Vol. 25, pp. 123-140.
- Baird, A.M. and Parayitam, S. (2019), "Employers' ratings of importance of skills and competencies college graduates need to get hired: evidence from the New England region of USA", *Education + Training*, Vol. 61 No. 5, pp. 622-634.
- Beausaert, S., Segers, M. and Grohnert, T. (2015), "Personal development plan, career development, and training", in Kraiger, K., Passmore, J., dos Santos, N.R. and Malvezzi, S. (Eds), *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Training, Development, and Performance Improvement*, Wiley Online Library, Chichester, UK, pp. 336-353.
- Blackman, A., Moscardo, G. and Gray, D.E. (2016), "Challenges for the theory and practice of business coaching: a systematic review of empirical evidence", *Human Resource Development Review*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 459-486.
- Blackwell, A., Bowes, L., Harvey, L.E.E., Hesketh, A.J. and Knight, P.T. (2001), "Transforming work experience in higher education", *British Educational Research Journal*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 269-285.
- Bozer, G. and Jones, R.J. (2018), Understanding the factors that determine workplace coaching effectiveness: a systematic literature review", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Routledge Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 342-361.
- Braun, E.M.P. and Brachem, J.C. (2015), "Requirements higher education graduates meet on the labor market", *Peabody Journal of Education*, Vol. 90 No. 4, pp. 574-595.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006), "Using thematic analysis in psychology", *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Vol. 3, No. 2006, pp. 77-101.

- Cameron, R. and Ebrahimi, M. (2014), "Career paths: challenges and opportunities", in Harris, R. and Short, T. (Eds), *Workforce Development: Perspectives and Issues*, Springer, pp. 253-268.
- Crisp, G. and Cruz, I. (2009), "Mentoring college students: a critical review of the literature between 1990 and 2007", *Research in Higher Education*, Vol. 50 No. 6, pp. 525-545.
- Eurostat (2019), "Participation of young people in education and the labour market", available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Participation_of_young_people_in_education_and_the_labour_market#cite_ref-2 (accessed 13 May 2020).
- Gannon, J.M. and Maher, A. (2012), "Developing tomorrow's talent: the case of an undergraduate mentoring programme", *Education + Training*, Vol. 54 No. 6, pp. 440-455.
- Gershenfeld, S. (2014), "A review of undergraduate mentoring programs", *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 84 No. 3, pp. 365-391.
- Grant, A.M. and Cavanagh, M.J. (2007), "The goal-focused coaching skills questionnaire: preliminary findings", *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal Scientific Journal Publishers*, Vol. 35 No. 6, pp. 751-760.
- Grant, A.M. and O'Connor, S.A. (2010), "The differential effects of solution-focused and problem-focused coaching questions: a pilot study with implications for practice", *Industrial and Commercial Training*, Vol. 42 No. 2, pp. 102-111.
- Grosemans, I. and Kyndt, E. (2017), "Transition from higher education to the labour market: state of the art", in Kyndt, E., Donche, V., Trigwell, K. and Lindblom-Ylänne, S. (Eds), *Higher Education Transitions: Theory and Research*, Routledge, pp. 209-218.
- Grosemans, I., Coertjens, L. and Kyndt, E. (2017), "Exploring learning and fit in the transition from higher education to the labour market: a systematic review", *Educational Research Review*, Elsevier, Vol. 21, pp. 67-84.
- Jones, R.J., Woods, S.A. and Guillaume, Y.R.F. (2016), "The effectiveness of workplace coaching: a meta-analysis of learning and performance outcomes from coaching", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 89 No. 2, pp. 249-277.
- Koen, J., Klehe, U.-C. and Van Vianen, A.E.M. (2012), "Training career adaptability to facilitate a successful school-to-work transition", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Academic Press, Vol. 81, No. 3, pp. 395-408.
- Koenen, A.K., Dochy, F. and Berghmans, I. (2015), "A phenomenographic analysis of the implementation of competence-based education in higher education", *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol. 50, pp. 1-12.
- Lu, H.L. (2010), "Research on peer coaching in preservice teacher education - a review of literature", *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Elsevier, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 748-753.
- Malterud, K., Siersma, V.D. and Guassora, A.D. (2016), "Sample size in qualitative interview studies: guided by information power", *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 26 No. 13, pp. 1753-1760.
- Morgan, D.L. (1996), "Focus groups", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Annual Reviews, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 129-152.
- Nicholson, N. (1990), "The transition cycle: causes, outcomes, processes and forms", in Fisher, S. and Cooper, C.L. (Eds), *On the Move: The Psychology of Change and Transition*, pp. 83-108.
- Niemiec, C.P. and Ryan, R.M. (2009), "Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the classroom: applying self-determination theory to educational practice", *Theory and Research in Education*, Sage Publications Sage UK, London, England, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 133-144.
- Nora, A. and Crisp, G. (2008), "Mentoring students: conceptualizing and validating the multi-dimensions of a support system", *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 337-356.
- Nuis, W. and Beusaert, S. (2020), *The what and How of Mentoring for Student Reflection in Higher Education: A Literature Review*, Paper Presented at EARLI 2019, Aachen, Germany.

-
- Ragins, B.R. and Kram, K.E. (2007), *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research, and Practice, the Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research, and Practice*, SAGE Publications.
- Rouse, M.J. (2004), "Continuing professional development in pharmacy", *Journal of Pharmacy Technology*, SAGE Publications, Vol. 20 No. 5, pp. 303-306.
- Ryan, P. (2001), "The school-to-work transition: a cross-national perspective", *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 34-92.
- Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L. (1985), *Intrinsic Motivation and Self Determination in Human Behaviour*, Plenum, New York.
- Salas-Velasco, M. (2007), "The transition from higher education to employment in Europe: the analysis of the time to obtain the first job", *Higher Education*, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 333-360.
- Spence, G.B. and Oades, L.G. (2011), "Coaching with self-determination in mind: using theory to advance evidence-based coaching practice", *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, Vol. 9, pp. 37-55.
- Teichler, U. (1999), "Research on the relationships between higher education and the world of work: past achievements, problems and new challenges", *Higher Education*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 169-190.
- van Dijk, E.E., van Tartwijk, J., van der Schaaf, M.F. and Kluijtmans, M. (2020), "What makes an expert university teacher? A systematic review and synthesis of frameworks for teacher expertise in higher education", *Educational Research Review*, Elsevier, Vol. 31 November, p. 100365.
- Vanoverberghe, J., Verhaest, D., Verhofstadt, E. and Omey, E. (2008), "The transition from school to work in Flanders: a duration analysis", *Journal of Education and Work*, Routledge, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 317-331.
- Winterton, J. and Turner, J.J. (2019), "Preparing graduates for work readiness: an overview and agenda", *Education + Training*, Vol. 61 No. 5, pp. 536-551.

About the authors

Niels van der Baan, MSc. is master in Neuropsychology and Learning and Development in Organisations. Currently, he works as a Ph.D. candidate at the department of Educational Research and Development, School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University. His research focuses on the transition from higher education to the labour market, coaching and employability competences. Niels van der Baan is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: n.vanderbaan@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Dr. Inken Gast is Assistant Professor in the field of learning and development at the School of Business and Economics at Maastricht University, The Netherlands. Her current research focuses on teacher professional development, educational innovation, and employee well-being in higher education. She has a passion for positive psychology and combines this with her research on professional development and education. She has published in leading journals in the field of education and regularly presents her work at international conferences on education and learning and development.

Professor Dr. Wim Gijssels holds the chair of Educational Research at the Department for Educational Research and Development, School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University, the Netherlands. His research interests include leader identity development, team learning and expertise development.

Dr. Simon Beausaert is Associate Professor in the Field of workplace learning at Maastricht University, The Netherlands. His current research focuses on supporting (in)formal learning and assessment for learning at the workplace, and their relation with employees' professional development, employability and innovative working behavior. He has published in leading journals in the field of HRD and teaching and teacher education.

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com