

Working Paper 2023.1.3.1

- Vol 1, No 2

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## THAM VẤN HỌC TẬP Ở BẬC ĐẠI HỌC VÀ NHỮNG KHUYẾN NGHỊ ĐỐI VỚI GIÁO DỤC VIỆT NAM

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### **Tóm tắt**

Ngày nay, tham vấn học tập được chứng tỏ là một cách hiệu quả để cải thiện toàn diện các kỹ năng của sinh viên. Mặc dù các chương trình tham vấn học tập đang trở nên rất phổ biến trong giới học tập và cao đẳng nước ngoài bởi nó có những ưu điểm đáng kể, nhưng khả năng áp dụng tham vấn học tập vào chương trình học tập của Việt Nam vẫn chưa được nghiên cứu kỹ lưỡng. Thông qua nghiên cứu và tổng hợp dữ liệu thứ cấp, nhóm tác giả đưa ra những kiến thức cơ bản về tham vấn và tham vấn học tập, từ đó chỉ ra tác động tích cực to lớn của phương pháp này trong giáo dục. Bài báo cũng chỉ ra tầm quan trọng của tham vấn học tập thông qua việc đưa ra thành công của phương pháp này tại một số trường đại học ở nước ngoài. Vì vậy, việc có một cái nhìn tổng quan về tham vấn học tập trong giáo dục đại học, từ đó từng bước áp dụng vào giáo dục ở Việt Nam là một đề xuất cần thiết trong tình hình hiện nay.

**Từ khóa:** tham vấn, tham vấn học tập, giáo dục đại học, tham vấn đồng cấp

### **ACADEMIC COACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VIETNAM**

### **Abstract**

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Today, academic coaching proves to be an effective way to improve students' skills. Although academic coaching programs are becoming greatly popular among foreign academics and colleges since it has such significant advantages, the applicability of coaching to Vietnam's study program has not yet been thoroughly studied. Thereby, through researching and synthesizing secondary data, the authors provide an overview of coaching and academic coaching, thereby showing the great positive impact of this method in education. The article also points out the importance of academic coaching by providing the success of the method at some universities abroad. Therefore, having an overview of coaching in higher education to gradually apply to education in Vietnam is a necessary solution in the current situation.

**Keywords:** coaching, academic coaching, higher education, peer coaching

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## **1. Introduction**

In Vietnam, there are many forms of learning support that have been researched and applied in universities. However, academic coaching is not well known and widely used in Vietnam, particularly in academic support for students, despite its numerous achievements in enhancing students' academic performance in international context. Therefore, with a view to providing more knowledge and instances of academic coaching's application, the authors delivered this article to describe the basic concept, role, influence, and application of academic coaching in the higher education system. This will hopefully encourage colleges and other educational institutions to consider employing academic coaching in their learning support programs.

## **2. An overview of academic coaching in higher education**

### ***2.1. The historical development of academic coaching***

Freud, Jung, May, and Maslow's psychological theories of unrealized human potential are likely where the concept of coaching for bettering life, academic, and leadership skills are likely to originate from Freud, Jung, May, and Maslow's psychological theories of unrealized human potential. The first time psychological ideas were applied to coaching people in a non-clinical situation to improve the quality of their lives and work was in the second part of the 20th century. Professional coaching institutes and organizations appeared in the 1990s, such as the International Coaching Federation (ICF). The business sector has seen a significant expansion of life, work performance, and leadership coaching over this decade. Academic coaching became popular in the higher education environment at this time as a result of the growing emphasis on improved performance and initiatives to unlock human potential.

### ***2.2. The definition of coaching***

There has been a discussion on the definitions of coaching for the past three decades since coaching began to gain popularity in the 1990s. Although there has been considerable consensus throughout the years, several authors have chosen different viewpoints and highlighted various features of coaching in their definitions. Gorby (1937) is considered to be the first to mention coaching in the workplace, however, the author does not mention coaching's formal definition. In

1992, Whitmore's groundbreaking book stated that coaching was about “unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them - a facilitation approach” (p.3). Following that, other definitions of coaching have been provided by other researchers. Bennett (2006) defined coaching as a procedure that helps people to create goals and then accomplish those goals. However, Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2019) suggested that coaching is “a Socratic-based dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (client) where the majority of interventions used by the facilitator are open questions which are aimed at stimulating the self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant”, which contributes to the differentiation of coaching from mentoring, advising, and other interventions. In the professional context, coaching is defined as “partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential” according to the International Coaching Federation (ICF). Along with the development of coaching, it is categorized based on the contexts and purposes such as professional coaching, life coaching, sports coaching, and academic coaching, ...

In this section, many researchers’ definitions of coaching are discussed. which laid the foundation for the application of this method to academia, leading to the birth of the term “academic coaching”. The next sections will provide a clearer insight into academic coaching including definition, classification, effects and universities around the world that have successfully applied academic coaching.

### ***2.3. The definition of academic coaching***

Nowadays, coaching has been a widespread phenomenon, especially in business and commercial settings as there is an increase in personal coaching programs. However, in the higher education context, coaching is slower to adopt as the use of this student support method in colleges and universities has just started.

The father of positive psychology, Seligman (2007) described the philosophy as “a psychological approach that focuses on the study of positive emotion, of engagement, and of meaning, the three aspects that make sense out of the scientifically unwieldy notion of happiness” (p. 266). Positive psychology aims at building on a person's positive qualities and directing future efforts toward that person's progress in pursuit of their goals. Academic coaching is a positive psychological strategy in which the coach tries to encourage the coachee (student) to improve their performance in order to accomplish particular objectives. In this process, coaches execute “the individualized practice of asking reflective, motivation-based questions, providing opportunities for formal self-assessment, sharing effective strategies, and co-creating a tangible plan”. The first step in the coaching process is self-assessment, which lays the groundwork for future development between the coach and coachee. In the second step, reflection, the coachee is prompted to share goals, motivations, and interests by employing open-ended questions. Goal setting comes after reflection as the final phase. Setting goals entails creating a plan of actionable measures that a coachee can take to advance toward obtaining those. At the core of the process, the coach engages coachees to reflect on themselves and promote them to take action by asking

powerful questions. Academic coaching is not just a method assisting students in gaining academic success, an academic coaching training organization - LifeBound (2018) described coaching as a partnership that helps students to “deepen their learning, take responsibility for their actions, improve their effectiveness and consciously create their outcomes in life” (p.16)

## ***2.4. The difference between academic coaching and other interventions***

### *2.4.1. The difference between academic coaching and academic advising*

Within academia, academic coaching is still struggling to stand apart from other interventions such as mentoring, counseling, or academic advising, ... The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), therefore, has worked out a formal definition of academic coaching to set it apart from other methods.

“Academic coaching is an interactive process that focuses on the personal relationship created between the student and the coach. The coach challenges the student to think about his or her personal and/or professional goals in order to relate them to his or her academic/educational goals. In this learning process, it is important for the coach to encourage the student to become more self-aware by understanding his or her strengths, values, interests, purpose, and passion”.

NACADA (2022) also considered academic advising to be an interactive process involving collaborative dialogue, however, the adviser “helps the student set and achieve academic goals” rather than promoting retention in the goal-setting stage. According to “Advising as Coaching”, Jeffrey McClellan and Clint Moser (2011) suggested that academic coaching can be an approach for advisers. Although it is undeniable that advisers can integrate the role of coaching into the advising process to promote students’ learning, performance, and personal growth, it is important that the incorporation is at an appropriate level, because the differentiation between the two methods is necessary to prevent the reduction of value of each.

### *2.4.2. The difference between academic coaching and mentoring*

Mentoring is an intervention and support which could appear to be similar to coaching in academic settings despite the difference in purposes and characteristics. Therefore, to differentiate coaching from mentoring, Vansickel-Peterson (2010) provided a description:

“A mentor often has many more years of experience than the person being supported. Mentoring is akin to role-modeling where the client sees attributes, qualities, or abilities in the mentor that he/she wishes to learn or emulate. Coaching is a partnering of two equals, which focuses on the unique and intrinsic qualities already within the client that may not be recognized or appreciated” (p. 35).

Similarly, Connor and Pokora (2012) indicated that meetings between mentor and mentee typically last for a long period of time, and in the meeting, the mentor provides mentees with wisdom and guidance on a specific subject based on his or her own experience (ICF). On the contrary, the coaching relationship lasts for a predetermined amount of time, the content is organized according to the coachee's stated needs, and coaching sessions are routinely arranged

in advance. D'Abate et al. (2003) pointed out that coaching focuses more on a particular goal while mentoring has a more general focus on an individual's growth. Modeling, counseling, advocating, and supporting are some of the traits that make a good mentor. Setting goals, envisioning practical applications, and offering feedback are the main concerns of coaching.

#### **2.4. The classification of academic coaching**

In many foreign institutions, academic coaching is widely applied with a variety of approaches and forms. In this article, we introduce two typical coaching techniques used in higher education: peer coaching and personal coaching.

In the realm of academic coaching, peer coaching is defined in a variety of ways. Peer coaching in the perspective of Ackland (1991) is a process where groups of teachers frequently observe each other and offer assistance, support, cooperation, and responses. According to Wynn and Kromrey (1999), peer coaching is a collaboration between pairs of practicum students, student teachers, or classroom instructors who observe each other as well as offering advice on how to effectively use teaching techniques and suggest initiative to recognize instructional demands. Peer coaching is a "collegial procedure whereby two faculty members willingly work together to enhance or broaden their approaches to teaching,".

Ladyshewsky & Varey (2005) developed an eight-step peer coaching model in which each stage is designed to achieve a particular and essential result. The results for each stage, as well as the adverse effects if that stage is not completed are also described in detail.

**Table 1.** A peer coaching framework

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Effect if missing</b>
1	Assessment	Peers assess one another for compatibility, stage of development and needs	Trust and understanding are not built and relationship fails
2	Planning	The timing and place for formal coaching sessions are agreed	If sessions cancelled, or inappropriately timed, sessions seen as unproductive
3	Scoping	Learner's needs and scope of session determined based on balance of priority and time	If coach drives the process, actions will not be relevant to learner and motivation will lapse

Stage	Description	Objective	Effect if missing
4	Purpose	Coach explores with learner real purpose, asking them to re-define the central question or goal	Only symptomatic and surface-level solutions discovered. Main goals not uncovered and achieved
5	Assumption	Coach asks learner to separate assumptions from facts. May provide alternative objective and non-evaluative perspective	Concerns may be misconceived and easily resolved by third party.
6	Possibilities	Conversations move from the problems to creative solutions Learner finds own path out of maze assisted by coach	If range of solutions not developed by learner and owned by them, process leaves learner feeling unempowered and dependent on coach
7	Actions	Conversation moves to verbal commitment and identified actions with clear outcomes	If unrealistic constraints not explored, actions will be frustrated. Trust in process declines as does follow-up of accountability of learner
8	Support	Follow-up accountability structured to assist in motivation, recognition and trust building and assessment	Without support, follow up is presented as accountability only. Process stops with one cycle, trust declines and learner less confident

**Source:** Ladyshevsky & Very (2005)

The peer coaching model described in this study is a helpful framework for helping learners comprehend the coaching process.

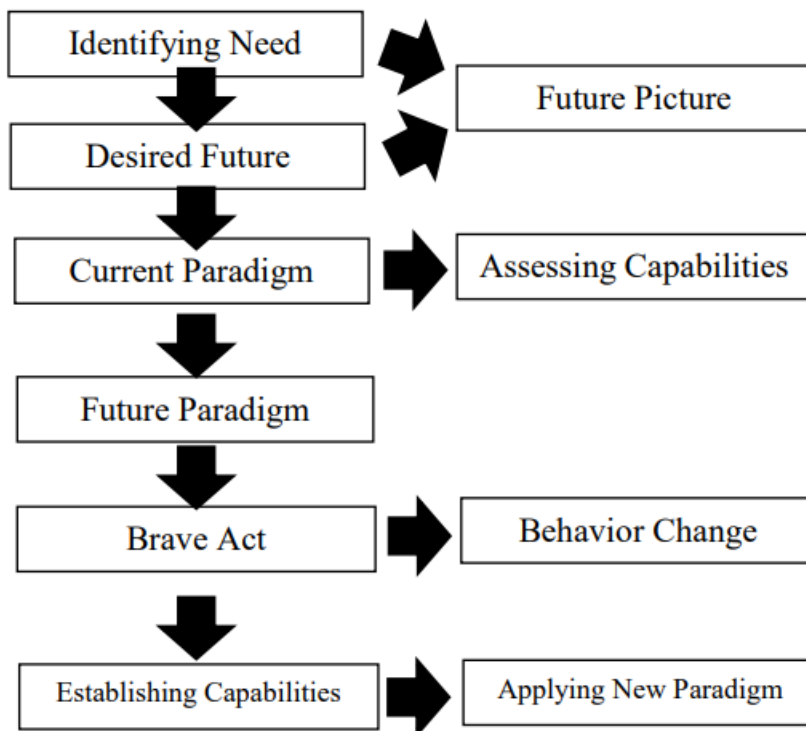
Regarding the effectiveness of peer coaching, it has been proved to strengthen protection from psychological distress, knowledge frameworks, enhanced self-reflection and awareness. Peer coaching involved students in metacognitively rich conversation that helped them build self-awareness and improved critical thinking. The formation of cognitive conflict and the understanding that various viewpoints existed created opportunity for ideas and feelings about their own thinking to develop. The elimination of outdated ideas and the emergence of new

approaches to resolving issues demonstrated that the peer coaching model was a suitable technique to promote constructivist learning.

However, peer coaching also receives some adverse opinions. According to SueChan & Latham (2004) and Spence & Grant (2006), peer coaches have been found to be less successful than professional coaches at fostering goal advancement and commitment.

Personal coaching is a comparatively new, unregulated profession that aims to assist functional people in setting and achieving objectives, overcoming challenges, and maintaining motivation. In the educational context, personal coaching can be considered as students being supported by professional coaches to reach their full potential and achieve their academic success.

A six step personal coaching model was developed by Kedem (2006) for the use in a personal academic coaching program in higher education. In the first phase, the coach and coachee assess the coachee's requirements and potential future aspirations or objectives. Current obstacles, aptitudes, necessary adjustments, and change-management strategies are identified in the second stage. Once the future paradigm has been established, the coachee increases self-efficacy to the point where he or she is prepared to put their techniques for change into action by doing a brave act. The brave act taking the initial step of action initiates the transformation process and movement toward goal achievement. The coach and coachee collaborate to completely incorporate the new paradigm when newly realized capabilities are formed.



## **Figure 1.** Kedem's six-step personal coaching model

**Source:** A Management Development Programme for Academic Staff (Kedem, 2006)

### ***2.5. The benefits of academic coaching***

Academic coaching has been proven to have positive effects on students through numerous research studies or programs applied in universities overseas. Academic coaches. Taking into account the fact that not all students possess the academic, study, and social abilities necessary for success in college, academic coaching offers students efficient assistance that helps them improve their learning and learning outcomes.

According to Challenge and Support Theory, developed by Nevitt Sanford (1966)<sup>[46]</sup>, students, especially those in college environments may not fully develop their potential skills due to having to suffer from too many or few challenges without a suitable method of supporting. To be more specific, when faced with too many problems, students may revert to less adaptive behaviors (such as procrastination and a lack of study) or perhaps ignore the problem utterly (i.e., skipping classes, not completing assignments). They restrict their growth and fall short of their developmental potential if they face too little challenge. If a student is experiencing difficulties in college due to their academic environment, peer connections, home issues, or adjustment to change, support is required. This idea can be applied to academic coaching since the academic coach works with the student to determine how tough the college environment is for them before giving them the right amount of support to advance their academic and personal development.

Basically, academic coaching relies on the relationship between the coach and student, how the coaches seek and build up the bond and this is the main characteristic of academic coaching. Therefore, Academic coaching's main goal is to transform the instructor from a distant, disinterested lecturer to a focused, enthusiastic academic coach who is proactive, enthusiastic, and intentional about student success. Teachers are better able to address the educational and academic needs of their students as they learn more about them. Indeed, early detection of underperforming students offers a chance to assist those who require assistance when they do. Academic coaches take their responsibility to intervene with comments that help the student move in the direction of success. This idea is based on findings from studies on Self-Regulated Learning.

#### ***2.5.1 Improving universities students' GPA***

In terms of improving students' GPA by academic coaching, a program applied in urban research university in the Southeast United States from 2015 - 2017 clearly showed significant increase in GPA of the academically at-risk students populations after joining the coaching program. A research on the success of the program was launched by Madeline Kyle Capstick in 2019, and it pointed out that "both full-time and part-time students that were placed on academic warning based on their previous semester GPA falling below a 2.00, saw an increase in their GPA whether they participated in the academic coaching intervention or not. Full-time students had a .686 higher GPA and part-time students had a .595 higher GPA if they participated in the



academic coaching intervention compared to students that did not participate. This increase for both participating and non-participating students may be attributed to the level of motivation they experience following their first academic remediation”.

Today, rubrics, directions, techniques, and any other details regarding how a good assignment is to be performed are likely to increase student performance. No longer can teachers assume that their pupils are aware of what they are searching for. Similar to this, many present-day students, including many successful ones, could be lacking in fundamental study techniques. An increasing percentage of students bring "high school level" study habits to college since many college credits are acquired at the high school level. Academic coaches might be helpful in providing students with more information about academic abilities. The Undergraduate Academic Life program at Stanford University offers students the chance to schedule a meeting with an academic coach and go to workshops on time management, reading and note-taking, and procrastinating. To help students with various sides of college life, including passing tests, taking notes, reading, and time management, Stanford also publishes "study tip resources.

In addition, Madeline Kyle Capstick (2019) also suggested that students gain through gaining study techniques, obtaining emotional support, and receiving advice in navigating the college process from being directed through the academic demands of college. These kids improve their academic performance more than students on academic warning who do not make use of the extra assistance.

### *2.5.2 Improving universities students' retention*

Second, student retention, which refers to the percentage of students who are still attending their courses once they are enrolled, is a common goal for teachers, administrators, and policy makers. Tinto (1999) claimed that the secret to student retention is their ability to learn. As a result, academic coaching emerged with the same assumption: that levels of achievement and retention are poor and may be improved with adequate intervention and adjustments in teaching style. Since Tinto showed that faculty participation, rather than only the engagement of student affairs workers, is essential to institutional attempts to promote student retention, the method of academic coaching is therefore expected to have a beneficial influence on student retention. Academic coaching could give interested professors a means to actively and purposefully strive to build positive working connections with students. A coaching relationship gives kids the feedback, encouragement, and challenge they need to succeed in school and in life. There is some proof that changing one's approach in the classroom results in more engaged students and greater levels of learning.

### *2.5.3 Improving universities students' self-evaluation*

Glenn (2010) indicated that actively encouraging students to reflect on their study methods and to keep track of their learning can have a significant positive impact. Students can see their own abilities and shortcomings by receiving frequent feedback. This also helps coaches

determine students' personal needs, make a strategy to meet those requirements, and establish enduring habits to ensure accountability. Coaches assist learners in strengthening their capacity for self-evaluation while serving as role models for the belief that coaching is essential throughout one's career.

In order to better satisfy the expectations and needs of their students, academic coaches can also inspire pupils by altering the rules, regulations, and course requirements. Instead of being a rigorous, "old-school" professor, one who supports student activities helps instructors to connect with students more easily and win their respect. This is in contrast to rigid rules and regulations that have not kept up with the rising demands on undergraduate students.

#### *2.5.4. Academic coaching improving students with disabilities*

Academic coaching, in addition to modeling, fosters achievement by giving students a safe space to learn, feel confident, and experiment with new approaches. For students with ADHD and learning difficulties, academic tutoring has a favorable impact on their academic performance. Scholars have discovered that academic coaching helps SWD by enhancing their communication and self-advocacy abilities, as well as their academic skills, self-regulation, and academic development.

In conclusion, an academic coaching program can benefit college students by ensuring student wellbeing, as well as assisting students in setting and achieving goals that will result in high levels of academic achievement and personal satisfaction. In addition, it encourages students to develop a habit of continuous reflection, goal-setting, and lifelong learning. Coaches can also provide students with a safe space for thoughtful reflection on academic, personal, and professional performance.

### ***2.6. The application of academic coaching in higher education***

Brown University, one of the Ivy League colleges in the United States, offers one-on-one academic coaching as an academic support service. The school's academic coaches are trained to support students in a variety of academic aspects and disciplines, consisting of humanities, social sciences, and STEM. The free personal coaching service enables students to hone their soft skills in test-taking, planning, and time management as well as enhance their experience at the university by reflecting on students' academic goals and personal aspirations, discussing their academic choices, and developing individualized strategies ("Academic coaching | Academic Support Services").

In addition, one of the prominent universities that have successfully applied academic coaching is the University of Cincinnati. The university launched UC Learning Commons' Academic coaching program with the aim to aid students in exploring their study habits and college success techniques (procrastination, time management, etc.) and strengthening such techniques through the process of practice and reflection. Students will have a one-on-one meeting with a peer academic coach when they attend a coaching appointment. Together with the coach, the student will evaluate their areas of strength and development in relation to wellness

and balancing priorities, study skills, motivation, ... and practice experimenting with different approaches. According to studies, students who take part in academic coaching are 10 to 15% more likely than their peers to continue working toward their degree and have higher graduation rates (“Academic coaching - Campus Life | University Of Cincinnati”).

The University of Alabama launched peer coaching and professional coaching programs to help students develop research-based study skills, implement time management and organization strategies, overcome test anxiety, improve note taking and analysis skills, navigate tutoring and supplemental instruction. Peer coaching provides students with chances to cooperate with their fellow students while professional coaching offers service with full-time staff members. Both approaches are dedicated to helping students to reach their full academic potential (“Coaching – success.ua.edu | The University of Alabama”).

The University of Tampa applied academic coaching program offered by Academic Success Center which focuses on students’ personal development, time management, goal setting, motivation, study skills, resource connection and campus engagement. The method is to guide students in the discovery process to help them reach their full potential. The academic coaching program offers students 3 options. The first option is appointment sessions with one-on-one appointments. The second is Drop-in sessions - a 30 - minute session with immediate assistance, prepared by identifying an area to work on and be ready to discuss strategies with academic coaches. The third type is structured coaching sessions, choosing this session, students can meet academic coaches 4 times a semester (“Academic coaching”).

### **3. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper provides basic knowledge about academic coaching and its influences to enhance students' studying performance in higher education.

Overall, Coaching is a professional conservation to help the coachee tackle their problems with their own solutions, and further is giving guidance to people about psychological counseling and awareness raising. Academic coaching is a term Coaching, which focuses on guiding students to achieve their goals on their own.

We have defined the effectiveness of the application of Academic coaching in universities today. Academic coaching is able to make students gain their scholastic achievement goals and positively influence the necessary cognitive processes needed to cope with everyday scholastic challenges. In addition, because of supporting learning by using active listening and question, academic coaching is emerging as an oriented approach that will enable students to become more disciplined, increase problem-solving as well as improve self-development. Along with these benefits, Academic coaching gained popularity among foreign universities around the world. However, in Vietnam, it has yet to be applied in higher education to help their students suffer from heavy study programs.

Through the paper, Vietnamese universities can consider applying academic coaching as a supporting method to improve their students’ academic performance.

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