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BRIDGING GUIDANCE AND GROWTH: MENTORING AND LANGUAGE COACHING IN UKRAINIAN POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

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In the evolving landscape of higher education, preparing master's and doctoral students is no longer just about transferring disciplinary knowledge. It now means helping emerging researchers develop critical thinking, autonomy, academic communication, and emotional resilience. Across the world, universities are rethinking traditional supervision models that prioritise control and evaluation over dialogue and reflection. For many postgraduate students—especially those working in a second language—this shift is not just desirable but necessary.

At the intersection of this pedagogical transformation lie two powerful approaches: mentoring and language coaching. When integrated, they create a learner-centred framework that enables students to become reflective, autonomous, and confident researchers. This combination aligns with international trends in doctoral training while addressing the specific challenges faced by Ukrainian higher education, where postgraduate students often struggle with English-language academic writing, research planning, and self-regulated learning. [1, p. 20]

Why Mentoring and Coaching Matter Traditional academic supervision often follows a directive pattern: supervisors assign tasks, observe progress,

and correct errors. While this model ensures accountability, it frequently limits the student's sense of ownership and self-direction. Mentoring, by contrast, is relationship-driven. It invites collaboration, trust, and mutual growth. A mentor supports not only the student's academic development but also their confidence, professional identity, and ability to think critically about research.

Language coaching adds another dimension. It focuses on how students communicate their research—in writing, in presentations, and in dialogue with the international academic community. Unlike conventional language teaching, coaching is personalised and metacognitive: it helps students understand how they learn, manage anxiety, and set meaningful goals. Neurolanguage coaching, an emerging approach grounded in neuroscience, emphasises emotional safety, cognitive engagement, and learner autonomy. For postgraduate researchers who must publish, present, and defend their ideas in English, this form of guidance can be transformative. [3, p.3]

Ukrainian Context: Local Needs, Global Standards Ukraine's higher education system is currently navigating a path of transformation. Through reforms connected to the Bologna Process and European frameworks, universities are aligning with global standards of research training. Yet many students still encounter linguistic, cultural, and methodological barriers that hinder participation in the international research community.

At institutions such as Mukachevo State University, educators have begun exploring integrated mentoring and coaching models. These initiatives combine academic guidance with tailored language support, aiming to help students not only write and publish but also think and act like researchers. For English majors and future educators, the focus extends beyond language proficiency—it includes developing a voice, an identity, and confidence within academic discourse.

Practical Outcomes Evidence from pilot sessions with master's students at Mukachevo State University shows clear benefits of combining mentoring with neurolanguage coaching. Surveys and interviews revealed that students became more independent in research design, more reflective about their learning, and more confident in communicating their findings.

Participants reported that mentoring created a supportive partnership rather than a hierarchical relationship. Instead of prescribing every step, mentors encouraged exploration and decision-making. One student reflected:

“My mentor guided me, but I was able to choose the research methods myself. It made me feel like a real researcher.”

Language coaching complemented this process by tackling linguistic and psychological barriers.

Students practiced expressing complex ideas in English, improved their writing structures, and developed a more academic tone. Through tools such as goal mapping, reflective journals, and personalised feedback, they gained both clarity and self-assurance. One participant shared:

“The coaching sessions helped me organise my ideas and use academic English confidently. Now I feel ready to present my research internationally.”

These experiences confirm that emotional and cognitive dimensions are inseparable in postgraduate education. When students feel supported, their motivation and persistence increase dramatically. Mentoring and coaching together create a psychologically safe space that reduces stress, builds resilience, and encourages creativity—qualities essential for sustainable academic growth.

From Dependence to Autonomy Perhaps the most meaningful transformation observed was in students’ autonomy. Ukrainian postgraduate programmes have long emphasised formal supervision, but less attention has been given to cultivating independent thinking. The integrated mentoring–coaching model reverses this imbalance.

Students began to take responsibility for their progress, set their research milestones, and evaluate their development. Reflective practice became part of their academic routine. By learning to self-assess, they also learnt to self-correct—an essential step toward becoming lifelong researchers rather than supervised learners.

This cultural shift mirrors broader educational trends worldwide. Modern postgraduate education increasingly values reflection, self-regulation, and resilience over mere compliance and task completion. Mentoring and coaching are not add-ons to this process—they are its very foundation.

Bridging the Linguistic Gap For many Ukrainian students, academic English remains a significant hurdle. Even those with strong general English skills may struggle with the conventions of academic writing—structuring arguments, integrating sources, and maintaining coherence. Neurolanguage coaching addresses these issues holistically.

Instead of drilling grammar, coaches focus on how the brain learns and retains language. Students set their communication goals, break complex writing tasks into manageable stages, and receive feedback in a non-judgemental environment. Over time, this process enhances both accuracy and confidence. [3, p.5]

Moreover, when coaching is aligned with specific disciplines—linguistics, education, or social sciences—it becomes even more effective. Students learn not just English but the language of their field. This contextualisation accelerates their progress and prepares them to participate in international conferences, collaborations, and publications.

Emotional and Motivational Dimensions An often-overlooked aspect of postgraduate training is emotional well-being. Students frequently experience stress, self-doubt, and isolation—especially when writing in a foreign language. Mentoring and coaching address these challenges head-on.

Mentors provide empathy and encouragement, while coaches offer tools for emotional regulation and goal setting. Together, they help students navigate the ups and downs of research life with greater confidence and

motivation. Many participants described feeling more engaged, more connected to their academic community, and less afraid of making mistakes.

Implications for Ukrainian Universities The lessons from this integrated approach extend beyond one institution. They suggest a framework that can be adapted across Ukrainian higher education to strengthen postgraduate training.

1. *Embedding Mentoring and Coaching in Curricula* Rather than treating these as optional extras, universities can formally include mentoring and language coaching in postgraduate programmes. Pairing mentors and students based on research interests and integrating coaching sessions into thesis preparation courses creates a sustainable structure.

2. *Professional Development for the faculty* Mentors and language coaches need special training. Workshops in mentoring techniques, reflective dialogue, and neurolanguage coaching principles can equip faculty to support students more effectively.

3. *Policy Alignment and Quality Standards* Embedding these practices in institutional policy aligns Ukrainian programmes with European standards, promoting internationalisation and research quality assurance.

4. *Continuous Evaluation* Regular assessments—both quantitative and qualitative—ensure that programs evolve in response to student needs and remain evidence-based.

Challenges and Sustainability While the benefits are clear, challenges remain. Ukrainian universities often face resource constraints and limited access to trained mentors and coaches. Some students may initially resist reflective practices, accustomed as they are to directive teaching. Successful implementation, therefore, requires not only methodological innovation but also a shift in academic culture—toward openness, collaboration, and shared responsibility for learning.

Nevertheless, small-scale initiatives like those at Mukachevo State University demonstrate that change is possible and impactful. They show that mentorship and language coaching can bridge the gap between theoretical ideals and practical realities, preparing students for global academic participation.

The integration of mentoring and language coaching represents more than an educational technique—it signifies a paradigm shift. It redefines postgraduate supervision as a collaborative, reflective, and empowering process. It moves Ukrainian higher education closer to European and global models that value autonomy, competence, and emotional intelligence.

In the long term, such integrative programmes can help cultivate a new generation of researchers who not only produce knowledge but also understand themselves as thinkers, communicators, and lifelong learners.

The lesson is clear: when mentorship meets language coaching, research training becomes not just an academic journey but a personal and intellectual transformation.

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БАЛАНС ЕКОНОМІЧНИХ І ЕКОЛОГІЧНИХ ПРІОРИТЕТІВ: РОЛЬ У ПІДГОТОВЦІ ФАХІВЦІВ ДЛЯ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ СТАЛОГО РОЗВИТКУ ТЕРИТОРІАЛЬНИХ ГРОМАД

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Сучасні тенденції розвитку суспільства характеризуються посиленням взаємозалежності між економічними процесами та екологічними викликами. Для територіальних громад, які є базовими суб'єктами децентралізованого управління, пошук балансу між економічними та екологічними пріоритетами стає не лише питанням стратегічного планування, а й ключовим чинником стійкого функціонування у довгостроковій перспективі.

У цьому контексті важливу роль відіграє *підготовка фахівців нової генерації*, здатних мислити системно, володіти міждисциплінарними знаннями та приймати управлінські рішення з урахуванням принципів сталого розвитку. Вони мають не лише розуміти економічні механізми розвитку громади, а й володіти компетенціями у сфері екологічної політики, природокористування, «зеленої» економіки та соціальної відповідальності.

Проблематика взаємозв'язку освіти, сталого розвитку та формування компетентностей фахівців активно досліджується у працях як