Investigating the Impact of an Online Coaching Programme for Educators

دراسة عن أثر برنامج التدريب (الكوتشينج) عبر الإنترنت للمربين

by

MOHAMED BEN MELKI AZAZA

Dissertation submitted in fulfillment

of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER IN EDUCATION

at

The British University in Dubai

May 2021

DECLARATION

I warrant that the content of this research is the direct result of my own work and that any use made in it of published or unpublished copyright material falls within the limits permitted by international copyright conventions.

I understand that a copy of my research will be deposited in the University Library for permanent retention.

I hereby agree that the material mentioned above for which I am author and copyright holder may be copied and distributed by The British University in Dubai for the purposes of research, private study or education and that The British University in Dubai may recover from purchasers the costs incurred in such copying and distribution, where appropriate.

I understand that The British University in Dubai may make a digital copy available in the institutional repository.

I understand that I may apply to the University to retain the right to withhold or to restrict access to my thesis for a period which shall not normally exceed four calendar years from the congregation at which the degree is conferred, the length of the period to be specified in the application, together with the precise reasons for making that application.

Mohamed Ben Melki Azaza

_____

Signature of the student

COPYRIGHT AND INFORMATION TO USERS

The author whose copyright is declared on the title page of the work has granted to the British University in Dubai the right to lend his/her research work to users of its library and to make partial or single copies for educational and research use.

The author has also granted permission to the University to keep or make a digital copy for similar use and for the purpose of preservation of the work digitally.

Multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by either the author, the Registrar or the Dean only.

Copying for financial gain shall only be allowed with the author's express permission.

Any use of this work in whole or in part shall respect the moral rights of the author to be acknowledged and to reflect in good faith and without detriment the meaning of the content, and the original authorship.

Abstract

Coaching has recently grown into a popular professional development intervention, and its effect on teachers and school leaders has been documented in the literature. Coaching in education supports teachers' professional development, improves teacher efficacy and enhances student achievement. However, despite these reported benefits, little research has been conducted on coaching in the context of education compared to other disciplines and fields. The current case study aims to address this gap in the literature by providing insights into understanding coaching in an educational context by exploring the impact of an online coaching programme (i.e., Coaching for Educators) on a group of teachers, school leaders and coaches. The study also highlights the value of coaching as an effective professional development tool as well as its challenges in the context of education. The study follows a mixed-method approach utilizing both quantitative (i.e., survey instrument) and qualitative (i.e., interviews) tools. The evidence base afforded by both sets of data suggests that online coaching provides opportunities for learning and development for both educators and coaches, and promotes a culture of ongoing learning. The findings of the study also underscore the significance of collaborative processes and reflection as a result of the coaching conversations. Recommendations for policy, practice and research are made based on the findings of the study.

ملخص الدراسة

لقد أصبح التدريب (الكوتشينج) مؤخرًا شكلا شائعًا من أشكال التطوير المهني. وقد تم توثيق تأثيره على المعلمين وقادة المدارس في الأدبيات. ويدعم التدريب (الكوتشينج) في مجال التعليم التطوير المهني للمعلمين ويحسن كفائتهم ويعزز التحصيل العلمي للطلاب. بيد أنه على الرغم من هذه الفوائد، فقد تم إجراء القليل من الأبحاث حول التدريب (الكوتشينج) في سياق التعليم مقارنة بالتخصصات والمجالات الأخرى. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى معالجة هذه الفجوة في الأدبيات من خلال تقديم رؤى حول فهم التدريب (الكوتشينج) في سياق تعليمي من خلال استكشاف تأثير برنامج التدريب (الكوتشينج) عبر الإنترنت على مجموعة من المعلمين، مدراء المدارس والمدربين. كما تسلط الدراسة الضوء على قيمة التدريب (الكوتشينج) كأداة فعالة للتطوير المهني بالإضافة إلى تحدياته في سياق التعليم. تستخدم الدراسة المنهج المختلط باستعمال كل من الأدوات الكمية (الاستبيان) والنوعية (المقابلات). تشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن التدريب (الكوتشينج) عبر الإنترنت يوفر فرصًا للتعلم والتطوير لكل من المعلمين والمدربين ويعزز ثقافة التعلم المستمر. كما تؤكد نتائج الدراسة على أهمية التعلم التعاوني والتفكير كنتيجة لمحادثات التدريب (الكوتشينج). وأخير يقدم البحث جملة من التوصيات المتعلقة بالسياسة التعليمية، والممارسة والبحث في مجال التدريب (الكوتشينج).

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

C4E	Coaching for Educators
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTI	Co-Active Coaching Institute
ICF	International Coaching Federation
EMCC	European Mentoring and Coaching Council
ILM	Institute of Leadership and Management
MATCH	Mathematical Quality of Instruction Coaching programme at Harvard School
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
PD	Professional Development
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Coaching has recently grown into a popular professional development intervention (Saginor 2008), and its effect on teachers and school leaders has been documented in the literature (Anstey & Clark 2010; Cordingley 2005; Cornett & Knight 2009; Fullan & Knight 2011; Kraft & Blazar 2018; Lofthouse 2019; Zwart et al. 2008). Coaching in education supports teachers' professional development, enhances student achievement and improves teacher efficacy (Anstey & Clark 2010; Cordingley 2005; Fullan & Knight 2011; Zwart et al. 2008). According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2009), coaching is considered one of the fastest growing professional development forms. It is deemed more appropriate to meet the different development needs of teachers, given its flexibility as an inherently customisable intervention (Kraft & Blazar 2018). However, despite these reported benefits, little research has been conducted on coaching in the context of education compared to other disciplines and fields. Therefore, the current case study aims to address this gap in the literature by exploring the impact of an online coaching programme (i.e., Coaching for Educators) on a group of educators and coaches. The study follows a mixed-method approach utilizing both quantitative (i.e., survey instrument) and qualitative (interviews) tools. The following is an overview of the context of the study

1.2 Context

This case study investigating the impact of an online coaching programme for educators is situated within the larger context of an international online coaching programme aiming at supporting school leaders and teachers through coaching. Conducted by Coaching for

Educators (C4E) based in Gothenburg, Sweden, the programme serves educators, teachers, language trainers, school leaders and professional coaches worldwide (Richards 2021). C4E, which offers free coaching support to school leaders and teachers by involving volunteer-certified coaches from different countries, is funded by public donations from the Swedish government. Most of these coaches have coaching certifications and extensive experience, ranging from 100 to 2000 hours of coaching practice. C4E coaches hail from different parts of the world, and coach in many languages including English, French, Spanish, German, Swedish and Arabic.

C4E is on a mission to provide the benefits of coaching as a professional development tool to education (Richards 2021). It advocates an approach in which the coach is a facilitator who guides the coachee through a coaching conversation by posing powerful questions to determine how the coachees can aid in their skills progress (Richards 2021). The coach in this context may not have ready-made answers and solutions to the issues raised by the coachee. The answers reside in the coachees themselves who are supported by a professional coach to recognize and act upon them.

In its nascent stages, C4E used to contact professional coaches and invite them to join the organization. In return, the coaches were promoted on C4E's social media platforms. As a matter of fact, only a few coaches and educators participated in the first coaching programme in 2014, but subsequently, between 2015 and 2021, C4E gained popularity and the number of participants became manifold as more and more coaches developed an interest in joining it to provide professional support to educators all around the world. In

the beginning, C4E used to be managed by the founder, but for sustainability reasons, coaches have also been encouraged to volunteer administration time. Upon applying for the program, both the coaches and educators are interviewed for pairing reasons. The pairing of coaches and educators is based on three criteria which are language, availability and country or location. Teachers interested in joining C4E are both primary and secondary school teachers. The founder of C4E and a group of volunteering coaches are responsible for recruiting and enrolling coaches, informing and engaging educators, and establishing coaching partnerships. To add rigor and credibility to the coaching programme, coaches joining the programme must be certified by accredited coaching organizations, such as the International Coaching Federation (ICF) or the Co-Active Training Institute (CTI), the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). The coaching time offered to educators is up to four hours.

1.3 Rationale and Purpose of the Study

The impetus for this research is borne out of four reasons. First, given its focus, the current study aims to address a gap in the literature by investigating an international coaching programme in the context of education involving coaches and educators from different contexts and countries.

Despite the recent popularity of coaching and the fairly increase in the number of research studies on coaching in the past three decades, empirical and peer-reviewed research remains scarce (Sonesh et al. 2015; Wong and Nicotera 2006; Zepeda et al. 2013). Most significantly, there is a lack of research in exploring coaching in different contexts (Zepeda

et al. 2013), and particularly on coaching effectiveness in educational contexts (Lofthouse 2019) as most of the research conducted on coaching is descriptive and anecdotal. According to Killion and Harrison (2006, p.12), empirical research on coaching has been "thin to non-existent". Furthermore, systematic coaching programmes are still underdeveloped in different contexts, and research seeking to understand effective coaching and the skills and traits of effective coaches in education is lacking (Kraft et al. 2018).

It has also been argued that much of the coaching conducted in schools is based on anecdotal data and is mostly reactive in favour of the coaches (Klinzing 2019). Hence, more empirical research exploring coaching effectiveness is needed (Cornett & Knight 2009; Killion & Harrison).

The second strong rationale for conducting this study is that no study to date has specifically examined online volunteer coaching programmes designed for educators. The C4E online coaching programme, open to both school leaders and teachers globally, exemplifies a collaborative project involving certified coaches to support and coach educators in different aspects of their profession. Therefore, the scarcity of research on the impact of such online coaching programmes in the context of education motivated the researcher to investigate this area. This research study hopes for a better understanding of this research focus, and therefore aims to contribute to the knowledge base of research on coaching. Kraft and Blazar (2018) argued that research seeking to understand effective coaching could support the development of more effective coaching programmes in education. The findings from this study will help in understanding the coaching practices

and processes utilised in these online coaching programmes. Most importantly, it will contribute to understanding the dynamics of change underpinning the use of coaching as a professional development tool. Conducting such research is also premised on the belief that a better understanding of coaching processes and practices would contribute to refining coaching models and supporting continuing professional development and coaching practices (Tooth et al. 2013).

The third rationale has to do with my professional interest in investigating coaching. On one hand, having conducted previous research on effective teacher professional learning, I realised that coaching and mentoring are some of the effective professional learning activities. On the other hand, I am the current coordinator of the coaching and mentoring programmes in my college, which aim (a) to assist in developing faculty and enhancing their professional growth and learning at different career stages; (b) to develop teachers' competence and forge collaborative relationships; (c) to distribute teachers' professional learning across career stages and extend their professional development beyond the preparation and initial induction programmes. Being involved in the process of coaching and mentoring some of my colleagues, conducting such a study on coaching would enhance my knowledge and skills about these professional development forms.

Finally, due to the current situation with respect to COVID-19, causing the immediate closure of schools and universities and disturbed education all over the world (Sintema 2020), online learning seems to be the viable option for many educational institutions and educators to provide online education programmes including teachers' professional

development. Given its focus, the present study could provide insights into understanding coaching as an effective professional development model for teachers and school leaders in an educational context

1.4 Research Questions

The current study aims to investigate the impact of an online coaching programme on teachers, school leaders, and coaches. Consistent with this aim, the present study will attempt to address the following research questions.

1-To what extent does C4E online coaching programme contribute to the continuing professional development of teachers and school leaders?

2. How do school leaders, teachers and coaches perceive coaching as a tool for their professional learning and growth?

3. What are the teachers, school leaders and coaches' perceptions of the challenges of the C4E online coaching programme?

The following is an overview of how this dissertation is organised.

1.5 Organization of the Study

A particularly relevant starting point would be to describe how this study is organised. Chapter one outlines the study's rationale and purpose as well as the context in which it is conducted. Chapter two extensively reviews the literature on coaching in education. The first part of the review raises the terminological issues surrounding coaching. The second part provides a tentative definition of coaching in the context of education which will be advocated throughout the study. The chapter then presents the study's conceptual

framework aiming at situating this research within current approaches and arguments about coaching in education. After explaining the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings that influenced the study, chapter three provides an overview of the research methodology. It discusses the methodological choices and approaches as well as an account of the research design. It also entails the rationale and a detailed description of the mixed-method research. Furthermore, the chapter explains in detail the quantitative and qualitative methods and the strengths and weaknesses of both data collection methods; it also describes the pilot study and the sampling method. Subsequently, chapter four reports the main findings from the survey and the semi-structured interviews as well as an in-depth presentation and analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data sets. Chapter five discusses the findings of the study where both quantitative and qualitative data are merged and combined for triangulation reasons. Finally, it presents the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for both practice, research and policy.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Terminology

There is little clarity and consensus on the term coaching (Gallant & Gilham 2014; Rhodes & Beneicke 2002; Van Nieuwerburgh 2019) as there is a large diversity of views among researchers and coaching practitioners about defining coaching (Bloom et al. 2005; Lofthouse 2019), and some of these definitions are conflicting (Kraft & Blazar 2018). The proliferation of terms around coaching (e.g., mentoring, counselling and consulting) is indicative of what Lofthouse and Leat (2013, p.8) call an "identity dilemma" since many disciplines such as developmental and organizational psychology, organizational leadership and adult education claim ownership of coaching. Clutterbuck (2009) stated that there is no consensus on one definition of coaching even by renowned coaching organizations such as the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). According to Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011, p.81), there is a "need to have clarity concerning the distinctiveness of coaching and what delineates it from other development interventions". According to van Nieuwerburgh (2019), some researchers would consider clarifying this terminological confusion surrounding terms like coaching and mentoring as pedantic. Their rationale is to stay inclusive and open-minded in defining such terms. However, For the advancement of the scholarly field pertaining to coaching, terminological clarity is much needed.

For the purposes of this study, coaching is defined as a one-to-one relationship involving two individuals engaging in "an ongoing dialogue and relationship, the focus of which is to

improve skills, techniques, and behaviors that lead to professional and personal success"
(Barkley 2010, p.39). It is also defined as a one-on-one relationship (Ely et al. 2010)
involving the coach and the coachee to collaborate to both understand and assess the
coachee' developmental needs in order to explore new possibilities, and "to ensure
accountability and support for reaching goals and sustaining development" (Ting & Hart
2004, p. 116)". In an educational context, coaching is the process of providing guidance
and support as well as time to the coachees to explore and reflect on the learning
opportunities emerging from the coaching experience in order to implement and adapt the
new learning to their unique context and situation (Day 2000; Bozer & Jones 2018).
Describing coaching in the context of education, Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran
(2010) explained that it is a process of consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness.
In this context, coaching is not only a mechanism of asking powerful questions, listening
to coachees' concerns and issues, and expressing empathy. It is essentially a process of co-
constructing and co-creating learning experiences in a professional context in order to raise
more awareness and mindfulness (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran 2010).

2.2 Coaching as a Professional Development Tool

Coaching is identified as one of the effective teacher preparation programmes (LeeKeenan
2020). According to Hafford-Letchfield et al. (2007), development and learning are
essentially "what both coaching and mentoring are about, and perhaps the strongest
philosophy behind coaching and mentoring is that everyone has some potential to learn,
grow and develop (Hafford-Letchfield et al. 2007, p. 167)". Recent research indicated that
coaching could be a powerful context where preservice teachers engaged in a coaching

relationship with an experienced peer could benefit from the feedback they receive about their practice (Clarke et al. 2014; Hoffman et al. 2015; LeeKeenan 2020). Helping teachers to attend to matters related to their daily practices facilitates what Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2010, p.12) call "natural learning".

Insights drawn from scholarly literature provide evidence of the effectiveness of coaching. Conducting a rigorous meta-analysis of teacher coaching research published since 2007, Kraft, Blazar and Hogan (2018) included only studies advocating quasi-experimental designs and randomized controlled studies. The review was also limited to two important outcome measures which are student achievement and teachers' instructional practices. For this purpose, 60 studies meeting the requirements of the study were included. The review findings indicated that coaching has a positive impact on both student achievement and the quality of teaching practices.

Given the challenging working context of teachers and school leaders, one-to-one coaching could be an effective form of professional development for both school leaders and teachers (Lofthouse 2019). Compared to formal types of professional development, such as training, one-to-one coaching provides both the coach and the coachee opportunities for a more flexible and tailored learning experience (Bozer & Jones 2018). A study conducted in the context of England utilized a focus group approach to explore the perceptions and the values of six coaches of their coaching practices. The qualitative study findings highlighted the significance and importance of dialogue and coaching relationships as well as the protocols and structures supporting these relationships (Lofthouse 2019). Most

importantly, the study suggested that in complex educational organizations, such as schools, coaching could be more suited to teachers and school leaders dealing with professional dilemmas and challenges. The study also suggested that coaching could be a potential and effective tool to address the issue of retention of school leaders and teachers inside schools (Lofthouse 2019). In an Australian study, Blackman (2010) argued that coaching is a way to encourage teachers with leadership potential to develop their leadership talent and help their retention within the profession.

In another review which included 250 studies conducted on coaching, Cornett and Knight (2009) identified the most prominent models in coaching in education which are peer coaching, instructional coaching, literacy coaching and cognitive coaching. According to Cornett & Knight (2009), these models share the following characteristics (a) an emphasis on the coaching conversation, (b) a deep value for teachers' professionalism and (c) giving importance to student learning. Synthesizing several studies on coaching in an educational context, Kraft and Blazar (2018) also concluded that coaching is usually used as a feedback and observation cycle in which coaches work with teachers, share and model research-informed pedagogical practices to be incorporated in classrooms. Furthermore, an extensive review of coaching in schools was conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in 2008. The review was commissioned by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA, 2008), and it concluded that coaching facilitated teachers' collaboration and reflection on their practice; it facilitated the knowledge and skills sharing among teachers; it promoted learning and change inside schools. The review also reported some challenges to coaching, such as workload and time pressure, the school

cultures and the school's commitment to advocate coaching as a model of teacher learning and development (Lord et al. 2008).

Coaching is used in schools to support teacher professional development, enhance student achievement and improve teacher efficacy (Anstey & Clark 2010; Cordingley 2005; Fullan & Knight 2011; Zwart et al. 2008). Reviewing some of the coaching programmes, such as the MATCH Teacher Coaching programme developed by the Mathematical Quality of Instruction Coaching programme at Harvard School of Education and the Boston Charter-Management Organization, Kraft and Balzar (2018) concluded that the coaching programmes had a positive impact on teachers' practice. Compared to other forms of professional development, coaching is considered a small investment with significant results for teachers and schools (Zepeda et al. 2013). Comparing coaching and mentoring, for instance, Leidenfrost et al. (2011) argued that whereas mentoring involves a more experienced peer to support the development of a less experienced peer, coaching provides equal opportunities for teacher development. Finally, coaching has also been acknowledged as an effective professional development model in both classroom instructional strategies and new curriculum implementation (Wong & Nicotera 2006). In the same vein, Kise (2009) considered coaching a teacher development strategy that could potentially support teacher professional learning.

According to Lofthouse (2019, p.1), advocating forms of professional development such as coaching is consistent with the notion of the "school-led self-improving system". Coaching is, therefore, part of a developmental approach that gives schools more say and agency in

developing their professional development programmes (Lofthouse 2019). In this context, the growth of coaching as a form of professional development could be explained by the diminishing role of formal external professional development (PD) programmes usually organized by education authorities in favor of in-house professional learning initiatives organized inside schools.

Finally, online coaching has emerged recently as one of the growing modes of coaching. Conducting a study in a US context, Parsons et al. (2021) concluded that teachers engaging in online learning reported some benefits such as the flexibility of accessing learning at any time as well as learning at their pace. In their recent study on teacher coaching, Kraft and Blazar (2018) also found little difference in the effectiveness of face-to-face coaching compared to online coaching. One implication from this finding, as suggested by Kraft and Blazar (2018), is that schools could benefit from implementing online coaching programmes. The following section looks at the challenges of implementing coaching in an educational context.

2.3 Challenges to Implementing Coaching in Education

It is worth noting that despite these reported benefits as explained earlier, coaching poses many challenges. Coaching is still undermined and crippled by performativity and managerial school cultures which resist acknowledging it as a form of teacher-led professional development (Lofthouse & Leat 2013). In such cultures, coaching often clashes with the audit and quality-driven policies of accountability and surveillance which promote one-size-fits-all professional development models. Lofthouse and Leat (2013)

recognize that there is tension with respect to coaching in school contexts in England in terms of the power and ownership of the learning process. The managerial and supervisory school improvement processes characterized by norms of surveillance and standardization hinder teacher agency and the ownership of coaching as a tool for teacher-led professional learning.

In a recent study investigating the effect of coaching on instruction and achievement, Kraft and Blazar (2018) raised several issues in their meta-analysis with respect to implementing coaching programmes at a large scale. The effectiveness of the coaching programme seems to be affected by factors such as the school culture, financial resources, standardization, teacher commitment and engagement. Emphasizing the effect of standardization and quality assurance regulations on coaching, Kraft and Blazar (2018) explained that the school accountability systems such as inspection aiming at monitoring school with its prescribed and limited professional standards (Pedder & Opfer 2010) constitute an impediment to less structured and teacher-led professional learning models such as coaching and mentoring. Moreover, the compliancy-based professional development policies that are tightly centralized do not provide spaces for teachers to engage in active learning activities (Lofthouse & Leat 2013 p.713) or what Webster-Wright (2009) called authentic professional learning in which teachers could experiment with their practice and come together to discuss these practices, challenge their beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning through collaborative learning activities such professional learning communities, school networks, coaching and mentoring.

Kraft and Blazar (2018) also identified coach quality as a major issue in coaching programmes at schools. Most of the coaches involved in the coaching programmes in the reviewed studies were either programme developers or key school staff. To bring such programmes to a larger scale, Kraft and Blazar (2018) recommended increasing the corps of coaches at schools by recruiting more specialized coaches, and training other teachers and school staff on coaching at schools.

Coaching could also raise some micro-politics and group dynamics issues. A longitudinal qualitative study was conducted in the context of urban secondary schools in the USA (Searby et al. 2016). The study investigated the politics of coaching assistant principals drawing on both semi-structured interviews as well as documents from the coaching leadership programme. The participants involved in the study were 22 participants, including 9 leadership coaches, 10 assistant principals and 3 programme staff. Most importantly, the study highlighted the impact of micro-politics on the leadership coaches and the coaching relationship between the school leaders and their coaches (Searby et al. 2016). The findings of the study revealed that principals dominated coaches' work either directly or indirectly which influenced the confidential relationship with the participating assistant principals.

On the other hand, Kraft and Blazar (2018) pointed out that financial constraints could be one of the factors affecting the quality of coaching due to the high expenses of hiring external coaches to work with teachers. Given its high costs, some of the financial decisions to cut budgets at schools often impact coaching by reducing the number of

coaching hours or the number of coaches (Kraft & Blazar 2018). Finally, it is worthwhile to note that although coaching has the potential to provide teachers with personalized professional support and with the opportunity of reflection and inquiry, coaching remains one of the expensive and time-consuming PD interventions (Gilbert 2016).

2.4 The Theoretical Framework of the Study

Learning from a socio-cultural perspective is an inherently embedded social and cultural activity that is shaped by learners as they interact within a specific context. In their guidance book entitled 'Coaching for teaching and learning: a practical guide for schools', Lofthouse, Leat and Towler (2010) conceptualize the coaching conversation as a co-construction of knowledge and a problem-solving process leading to new action and decisions about teachers' practice. They define co-construction as a cognitive development taking place during the coaching conversation.

The theoretical framework of the current study is rooted in the constructivist and socio-cultural theory of learning which maintains that learning is essentially a meaning-making process in which learners construct their learning journey by drawing on their experiences, prior knowledge and the context which they inhabit (Hudson 1999; Palincsar 1998). Drawing on the sociocultural theory, the study perceives coaching as a learning process that emerges from social interaction between a coach and a coachee engaging in a coaching relationship. Edwards and Westgate (1994, p.15) explain this social interaction further by indicating that "as we listen and as we talk, we learn what is necessary to know, do, and say in that area of social life or that setting" .

As a form of professional development, coaching has often been studied from a socio-cultural perspective (Gallucci et al. 2010; Heineke 2013; Teemant et al. 2011). Drawing on this perspective, learning is a shared and social process that is constructed when teachers participate in joint activities which are negotiated rather than imposed**.** Wells (1999, p.159) further conceptualizes learning as a social engagement involving learners in "activities to which they are committed, observing what they can already do unaided; then providing assistance and guidance that helps them to identify the nature of their problems in order to find solutions" . According to this conceptualization, coaching could be perceived as a kind of social engagement providing a particular context and professional space for collaboration between the coach and the coachee to learn and negotiate their learning. On the other hand, coaching is rooted in Schon's (1987, p. 510) reflective practice since coaching in an education context also involves processes of reflection on practice in which the coachees —who are the teachers in this context — engage in "continuing dialogue with the permanently changing situation of their practice, and in so doing, draw on both their knowledge-in and their knowledge-of-practice". According to Jewett and MacPhee (2012), educational coachers often encourage teachers to reflect on their practice during the coaching conversations.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Methodology

This chapter aims to provide an account of the research methodology used in the present study to explore the impact of an online coaching programme on a group of educators and coaches in the context of C4E. The chapter also presents the research design, the data collection and analysis methods as well as the selection of the study sample. Furthermore, it explores the research procedures for data collection and data analysis. The final part is an account of the reliability, validity and data triangulation strategies aiming at cross-validating the data as well as the ethical issues and procedures considered for this study. The following section looks into the methodological underpinnings and approaches underlying the current study

Guba and Lincoln (1994) identified four research paradigms: (1) positivism, (2) post-positivism, (3) critical theory and (4) constructivism. Drawing on Dewey (1938), the pragmatic approach has emerged as a flexible approach that would support the combination of different approaches justified by the research needs and the research questions guiding the study (Saunders et al. 2009). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a paradigm is the set of principles and beliefs which underlie people's worldviews. Shannon-Baker (2016) describes the research paradigm as the system of beliefs, values and practices that could potentially influence the researcher's decisions and choices of the methods adopted for the research study. The pragmatic paradigm underpinning this research is premised on the belief that a single research paradigm cannot by itself help

researchers learn thoroughly about a phenomenon they would like to explore. For this reason, the pragmatic approach allows the use of multiple methods based on the needs of the study (Kivunja & Kuyini 2017). Consistent with the principles of the pragmatic approach, the current study seeks to utilize both quantitative and qualitative data sets to explore the impact of an online coaching programme on a group of educators and coaches.

Finally, it is also important for researchers to clarify their values and beliefs which influenced and guided their research projects. Drawing on the conceptual framework of the study, the choices and decisions made in the development of the current research design are influenced by the constructivist and socio-cultural theory of learning and shaped by the research questions and the context of the study. Reflecting on the methods which were used for answering the research questions, it was deemed more appropriate to address the first research question which aims at exploring the impact of coaching on the professional development of teachers and school leaders through the questionnaire. However, the second and third questions which aim at exploring how educators and coaches perceive coaching and how educators change as a result of their participation in an online coaching programme require a more in-depth investigation using qualitative methods.

3.2 Research Design

The research design is defined as "a plan for a study, providing the overall framework for collecting data" (Leedy 1997, p. 195). It is also considered the blueprint for addressing the research questions. Creswell and Clark (2011) argued that when conducting a study, the

choice of the research methods is guided by the nature of the study and the research questions guiding the research. Given its focus, the current study is a case study adopting a mixed-method research design drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data sets to seek the informants' perceptions and views about the impact of the C4E coaching programme. A case study approach is defined as an empirical inquiry investigating a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-life context (Yin 2009, p.18). According to Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2012), one purpose of conducting a case study is to investigate a single unit such as an organization that is situated within a professional community by gathering rich and complex data over a period of time. The following figure is an outline of the research design used in the present study.
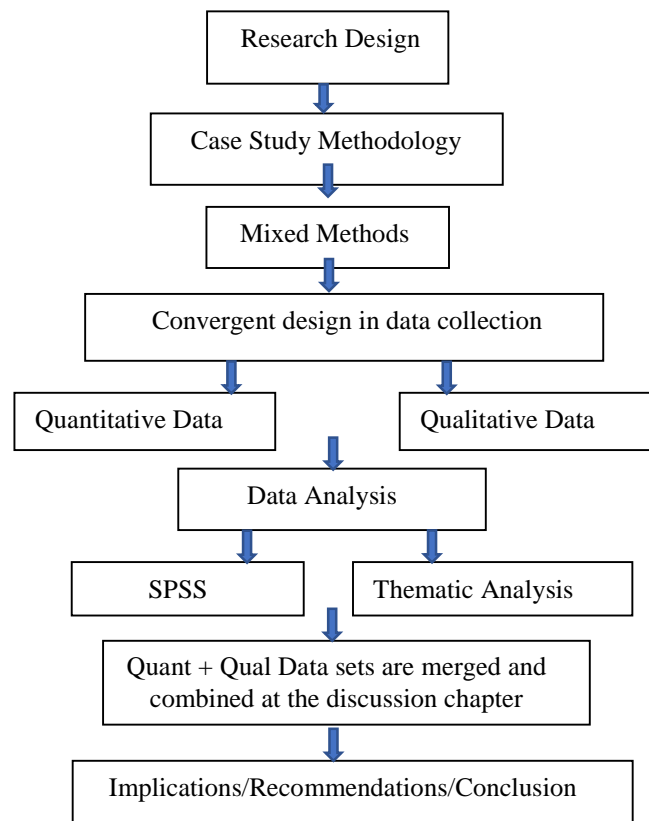
Figure1. Overview of the research design (Adapted from Creswell and Clarke, 2017)

3.3 Mixed-methods Design

Mixed Methods Research (MMR) is defined as the type of research in which a researcher "combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (Johnson et al. 2007, p. 123). Creswell (2009) explained three main procedures usually adopted to mix methods: (a) the sequential design, (b) the convergent design and (c) the transformative design. The current study adopted a convergent mixed-method research design in which both quantitative and qualitative sets of data were collected concurrently and complementarily. According to Creswell (2009, p.14), the researcher advocating a convergent design "converges or emerges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem". In this case, neither the quantitative nor the qualitative data necessarily confirm each other (Creswell 2009) and priority is given to both sets of data.

The convergent design was premised on the rationale that quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently for triangulation reasons (Creswell & Clarke 2017). Creswell and Clarke (2017) consider the convergent design one of the mixed-method designs in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently and then merged for the purpose of combining and comparing both data sets. According to Creswell (2009, p. 213), MMR is used to "offset the weakness inherent within one method with the strength of another" as well as to gather different but complementary data on the research topic (Creswell & Clarke 2017).

3.4 Research Participants and the Sampling Method

Respondents to the questionnaire (Appendix 4) included a total of 16 educators and 17

coaches. With respect to the interviews (Appendix 5), 7 coaches and 8 educators including

6 teachers and 2 school leaders participated in the semi-structured interviews. Most of the

research participants were female (82%) and only 8% were male. Both the educators and

coaches participating in this study come from different countries and speak different

languages. However, it is worthwhile to mention that since all of them speak English, both

the questionnaire and the interviews were conducted in English. The educators

participating in the C4E coaching programme fall under three categories: (a) principals and

headteachers, (b) experienced teachers, and (c) newly qualified teachers (Richards 2021).

With respect to the qualitative data, the sampling technique used in this study was

purposive sampling as the researcher involved coaches and educators who participated in

the coaching programme by receiving at least four coaching sessions. The sample size of

the coaches (i.e., 7 coaches) and educators (i.e., 8 educators) taking part in the qualitative

phase could be considered large enough to allow the diversity of views and ideas emerging

from the qualitative data.

The choice of these participants was premised on the rationale that unless the involved

educators and coaches have conducted some coaching hours, they would not be able to

provide rich data required for the study. The researcher also involved the C4E programme

coordinator as one of the interviewees on the premise that the information they will

provide would be valuable for the role of C4E and its impact on the professional

development of educators and coaches.

3.5 The Questionnaire

Surveys are appropriate data collection tools when "a quantitative or numeric description

of trends, attitudes, or opinions" (Creswell 2009, p.12) is required. The researcher aimed

at surveying the entire C4E population of both coaches and educators to seek their

feedback and views on the impact of the C4E online coaching programme. Questionnaires

are appropriate for gaining insight into participants' opinions, beliefs and demographics

since they afford opportunities for describing the frequency, incidence and distribution of

the items (McMillan & Schumacher 2006). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison

(2007), questionnaires are useful tools for collecting data on participants' attitudes,

preferences and experiences. The researcher collected the survey data by two online

surveys —the first for the educators and the second for the coaches— (Appendix 4), using

google forms which were sent to the research participants via emails. This has afforded

many advantages, the first of which is that responses are recorded immediately as soon as

the participates answer the survey questions. On the other hand, google forms are

considered a secure method for data collection (Agrawal & Maurya 2016).

The total of coaches involved with C4E is 60 whereas the number of educators involved is

100. Seventeen coaches responded to the questionnaire (Appendix 4) whereas only 16

educators decided to participate in the quantitative phase of the study. Amongst the 60

registered coaches, only 17 agreed to participate in the study. Questionnaire response rates

ranged from 30% for the educators and 40% for the coaches. Overall, the researcher received 16 responses from the educators representing a response rate of 40%. This is followed by an in-depth exploration of educators' and coaches' perceptions of the impact of coaching in the context of C4E which is explained in the following section.

3.6 Interviews

According to Henn et al. (2006), qualitative research is often utilized in real-life settings with the aim of understanding how research participants experience and understand the world. Teachers, school leaders and coaches in the current study are interviewed to provide insights into how they perceive coaching as a tool for professional growth and development. In order to explore school leaders' and teachers' perspectives, the interviews (Appendix 5) follow semi-structured protocols and are all audio-recorded following BuiD ethical guidelines. The rationale for using semi-structured interviews is that they are flexible in terms of the possibility of adding, modifying questions as well as probing emerging and important information.

All the online interviews were conducted through the Zoom Cloud Meetings application; however, they were audio-recorded using an external device. The rationale was to afford the informants the opportunity to turn on their cameras if they choose to do so, and at the same time to protect their identities as agreed in the informed consent (Appendix 1). All the interviewees decided to turn on their cameras during the interviews which allowed them to capture the informants' facial expressions and additional non-verbal cues. During the semi-structured interviews, both the educators and the coaches were encouraged to

express themselves freely, and raise any ideas they deem important and relevant to the study. The semi-structured interviews also afforded the flexibility to clarify, reiterate questions, modify them and probe for meaning to gain an understanding of what the research informants' believed, thought and felt about the impact of coaching and their involvement with C4E.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Following this step, an in-depth analysis of the qualitative data using thematic analysis was conducted in order to gain insight into how the educators and coaches perceived and evaluated the impact of coaching during their involvement with C4E. Two coding processes were utilized. First-level coding was useful in classifying the educators' and coaches' statements. On the other hand, second-level coding led to a refined classification of these codes into five categories.

3.7   Study Procedures and Ethical Approval

Prior to conducting the study, ethical approval was obtained from BuiD Research Ethics Committee. According to BuiD ethical guidelines, the research study should be conducted in accordance with its responsibilities to individual participants. Approval to conduct the study was also obtained from C4E. Subsequently, invitation letters and consent forms (Appendix 1) were sent to the educators and coaches explaining in great detail the purpose of the research project and the ethical procedures of the study. After that, links to the online surveys were sent to the study participants via email. Following purposive sampling, a group of school leaders, teachers and coaches were identified to be interviewed to provide insights into how they perceive coaching as a tool for professional growth and

development. In order to explore educators' and coaches' perspectives, the interviews followed semi-structured protocols. As the focus of the study was to find out what the educators and coaches perceived the C4E online coaching programme, more attention was directed to what educators believed about an online coaching programme and its significance and impact on them and their teaching, an area that has not been well researched in education. The data collection of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews extended over a period of two months from January 2021 to February 2021.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data analysis included two processes: (a) breaking down the data into small units of meaning (Maykut & Morehouse 2002), and (b) coding them into categories. The identification of these categories was derived from the interview informants' accounts and also informed by the literature review. In this context, both deductive and inductive approaches were used to identify the themes of the study. First, a deductive approach was used to look for evidence to support or refute the arguments identified in the literature. According to Creswell and Clark (2007), the deductive approach is a top-down approach to data analysis that starts from theory to the data in order to either contradict the data or add to the theory. Second, an inductive approach was useful in identifying further themes and sub-themes emerging from the participants' accounts. For the purposes of having a systematic data analysis, the researcher adopted Braun and Clarke's (2012) approach in qualitative data analysis which included 6 steps: (1) familiarizing oneself with data, (2) generating the initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes and (6) producing the report. The coaches and educators' (i.e.,

teachers' and school leaders') interviews were transcribed verbatim and were analyzed using a thematic approach. Theoretical memoing was used to ensure that the themes are contextualized in the literature. In this context, the literature review of the current study was useful in limiting the scope of my research as it informed both the questionnaire and the interview questions.

3.9 Pilot Study

A pilot study is defined as trying out or testing research instruments prior to conducting the research study (Baker 1994). After obtaining ethical approval from BuiD Research Ethics Committee (Appendix 3), the researcher started piloting the questionnaires and interviews. Firstly, the aim of piloting the quantitative and qualitative data tools was to further confidence in the data and test the reliability and effectiveness of both data collection tools. Secondly, the purpose of the pilot study is the ensure that the language, the instructions, the statements and the questions used in both the questionnaire and interviews are clear, unambiguous and relevant. The final objective was to check the suitability and the length of the questionnaire and the interview questions in terms of time (i.e., Are the questionnaire and the interviews short, long or too long?) The participants in the pilot study provided useful feedback, and in light of the responses provided by the participants, the questionnaire and interview questions were modified. One main insight I got from the pilot interview was that it was, to a certain extent, short because I did not use probing effectively. My awareness of the missed opportunities of probing in depth into the accounts and issues raised during the interview motivated me to read more about the effective use of probing in qualitative data.

3.10 Reliability Credibility and Trustworthiness of the Data

The following measures were taken in this current study to ensure the reliability, credibility and trustworthiness of the data. First, with respect to the questionnaire, quantitative validity such as Cronbach's alpha was used. Furthermore, the questionnaire was also reviewed by two associate professors teaching in a local university in the UAE. Since qualitative research requires different criteria other than validity and reliability (Lincoln & Guba 1985), sample integration legitimation and triangulation were used to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative data. Sample integration legitimation is defined as the use of the same research participants in both quantitative and qualitative data. Second, and in order to further confidence in the qualitative data, the emerging interview codes, categories, and themes were verified by another researcher from another higher education institution. Finally, the decision to use a mixed-method case study research design helped strengthen the study by compensating for the potential weaknesses and gaps in using qualitative or quantitative data collection tools.

Chapter 4: Findings of the Study

4.1 Quantitative Data

The questionnaire was organised into three main sections, the first of which focused on the demographic data in which the research participants were asked to indicate their age, gender, education level, years of teaching/coaching experience and information about their involvement with C4E. Section B focused on the respondents' perceptions of C4E whereas section C focused on the evaluation of the Coaching for Educators (C4E), and section D focused on the educators' and coaches' evaluation of their involvement in the coaching programme. SPSS was used in this study to aggregate the data, calculate means, standard deviations, and measure scale reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) and correlations.

4.1.1 Reliability of Scale (Cronbach's Alpha)

Respondents were asked a total of 49 statements, and each statement was evaluated on the same 5-point scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' (5) to 'strongly disagree' (1). To measure the reliability of the scale and the internal consistency of the statements as a group, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The overall questionnaire was reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of =0.896, which placed it above the threshold of 0.7, (i.e., the generally accepted level of sufficient reliability). Therefore, we can conclude that the scale is strongly reliable.

Table 4.1. Reliability of Scale (Cronbach's Alpha)

N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Level of Reliability
49	.896	Very reliable

4.1.2 Demographic Data

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, 16 educators and 17 coaches participated in the questionnaire. As Table 4.2 indicates, the percentages of female educators (87.5%) and coaches (76.5%) are significantly higher than that of their male counterparts, male coaches (12.5%) and coaches (17.6%), respectively. With regard to age, the average age of the educators was 44 whereas the mean age for the coaches was 46. With respect to qualifications, most of the educators hold a Bachelor's Degree (56.3%) while most of the coaches have a Master's Degree (58.8%). The questionnaire participants come from different backgrounds and countries including Australia, Britain, Canada, Germany, India, Ireland, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Spain, Ukraine and USA. However, it is important to note that the majority of educators come from Nigeria (43.8%), whereas the majority of coaches come from the USA (58.8%). Table 4.2 provides more details about the biographical profiles of the questionnaire respondents.

Table 4.2 Summary of the demographic data of the questionnaire respondents

	Educators		Coaches	
Nb	**16**	**100 %**	**17**	**100 %**
Gender				
Male	2	12.5%	3	17.6%
Female	14	87.5%	13	76.5%
Rather not say	0	0.0%	1	5.9%
Age Group				
25-29	1	6.3%	0	0.0%
30-39	5	31.3%	5	29.4%
40-49	4	25.0%	6	35.3%
50-59	5	31.3%	3	17.6%
60+	1	6.3%	3	17.6%
Education				
High School	1	6.3%	0	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree	9	56.3%	3	17.6%
Master's Degree	3	18.8%	10	58.8%
PhD/Doctorate	1	6.3%	4	23.5%
Other	2	12.5%	0	0.0%
Employment status				
Full-time	10	62.5%	6	46.2%
Part-time	4	25.0%	5	38.5%
Self-employed	2	12.5%	6	15.4%
Experience in Teaching				
3-5 years	0	0.0%	8	53.3%
6-10 years	7	43.8%	0	0.0%
11-15 years	5	31.3%	1	6.7%
16-20 years	1	6.3%	2	13.3%
+ 20 years	2	12.5%	2	13.3%
None	1	6.3%	2	13.3%
Nationality				
Nigerian	7	43.8%	0	0.0%
American	0	0.0%	4	23.5%
British	1	6.3%	2	11.8%
Romanian	0	0.0%	2	11.8%
Italian	1	6.3%	1	5.9%
French	0	0.0%	2	11.8%
Canadian	1	6.3%	1	5.9%
Australian	2	12.5%	0	0.0%
Ukrainian	1	6.3%	0	0.0%
New Zealand	1	6.3%	0	0.0%
Mexican / Spanish	0	0.0%	1	5.9%
Maltese	1	6.3%	0	0.0%
Malaysian	1	6.3%	0	0.0%
Irish	0	0.0%	1	5.9%
Indian	0	0.0%	1	5.9%
German	0	0.0%	1	5.9%
Filipino	0	0.0%	1	5.9%

When asked about their experience, educators reported a longer experience: 11.2 years on average, the most common answer being 6-10 years); whereas coaches reported an average of 8.1 years, the most common response being 3-5 years (Tables 4.2). With respect to the participants' involvement with C4E, the majority of respondents have been involved for 2 years or less. As indicated in Table 4.3, 87.5% of educators and 41.2% of coaches reported that it was their first year, and 47.1% of coaches reported involvement for 1–2 years.

Table 4.3. Involvement with C4E

	Educators		Coaches	
n=	16	100%	17	100%
How long have you been involved with C4E?				
First year	14	87.5%	7	41.2%
1-2 years	2	12.5%	8	47.1%
3-5 years	0	0.0%	1	5.9%
+ 5 years	0	0.0%	1	5.9%
How many coaches / Teachers do you work with?				
2-5 teachers/coaches	0	0.0%	12	75.0%
1 teacher/coach	16	100%	5	25.0%

In response to the question "*How many teachers have you worked with?*" 75% of the coaches mentioned working with more than one coach, whereas all the teachers mentioned working with only one coach. The quantitative data reveal some interesting information about the teaching experience of both educators and coachers. More than 43% of the teachers said they worked more than 6 years with a mean of M= 11.2. Interestingly enough, 53.3% of the coaches have worked as teachers for more than 3 years with a mean of M= 8.1.

4.1.3 The Effectiveness of the Coaching Programme (C4E)

1-To what extent does C4E contribute to the continuing professional development of

teachers and school leaders?

One major focus of the questionnaire was to seek participants' views on the effectiveness

of the coaching programme they have been involved in. Overall, both groups rated the

effectiveness of the C4E programme very highly in contributing to the Continuing

Professional Development (CPD) of teachers and school leaders, averaging above 4.00 on

every aspect.

Table 4.4 The effectiveness of the Coaching Programme (C4E) – average values

	Educators			Coaches		
	n=	Mean	SD	n=	Mean	SD
1. The C4E coaching programme is relevant and useful to teachers.	16	4.81	.54	17	4.76	.56
2. C4E provides opportunities for the coaches/coachees to develop professionally.	16	4.81	.40	17	4.53	.72
3. C4E promotes commitment among the coaches/coachees to change.	16	4.63	.62	17	4.47	.72
4. C4E coaches support teachers on a full range of teaching and learning strategies.	16	3.94	1.00	17	3.76	.90
5. The coaching programme improves teachers' capacity to solve problems.	16	4.69	.48	17	4.41	.51
6. The coaching programme promotes coaching as a means for reflection on teachers' practice.	16	4.56	.73	17	4.76	.44
7. The coaching programme promotes collaboration and sharing of expertise and knowledge.	16	4.31	1.01	17	4.06	.75
8. The coaching programme promotes a culture of support and empathy for teachers' concerns.	16	4.94*	.25	17	4.47	.62
9. The coaching programme leads to a change in teachers' practice and methods of working with students.	16	4.31	.79	17	4.24	.66
10. The coaching programme helps teachers develop action plans to integrate what they / what the coachees have learnt from the coaching sessions into their teaching / classroom practice.	16	4.31	1.01	17	4.24	.75
11. The coaching programme exposes teachers to different perspectives/ways of addressing issues in their practice and student learning.	16	4.56	.63	17	4.47	.72

12. The coaching programme helps facilitating discussions on issues in teachers' practice.	16	4.25	.77	17	4.41	.71
13. The coaching programme supports the well-being and professional growth of educators.	16	4.75	.45	17	4.65	.61
14. The coaching programme maintains confidentiality with teachers' information.	16	4.81	.40	17	4.94	.24
15. The coaching programme promotes a culture of ongoing learning and development.	16	4.56	.51	17	4.88*	.33
16. The coaching programme leads to teacher-based solutions and outcomes.	16	4.50	.82	17	4.76	.56
17. The coaching programme promotes respect of the coachees' context, beliefs, values and culture.	16	4.81	.54	17	4.71	.47
18. The coaching programme acknowledges and supports teacher autonomy in the design of goals, actions and methods of accountability.	16	4.63	.62	17	4.65	.61

p-value <0.05, significant difference between coaches and educators

Scrutinizing the data more closely, and as shown in table 4.4, the following items provide evidence from the quantitative data of the effectiveness of the C4E programme. The teachers and school leaders clearly thought that C4E was relevant, useful and provided opportunities for learning and development and promoted a culture of ongoing learning.

Responding to the question of how teachers and school leaders perceive coaching as a tool for professional learning and growth, both the teachers and coaches emphasized the following learning activities presented in order of importance and the level of agreement between educators and coaches as reflected in their responses.

1. Coaching meaningful conversations. (Educators: M=4.94*, SD=.25; Coaches: M= 4.47, SD= .62).

2. Problem solving (Educators: M=4.69, SD=.48; Coaches: M= 4.41, SD= .51).

3. Reflection (Educators: M=4.56, SD=.73; Coaches: M= 4.76, SD= .44).

4. Collaboration and sharing of expertise and knowledge. (Educators: M=4.31, SD=1.01; Coaches: M= 4.06, SD= .75).

5. Discussions on issues in teachers' practice (Educators: M=4.25, SD=.77; Coaches: M= 4.41, SD= .71).

Most importantly, to gauge the effectiveness of the C4E coaching programme, the researcher used the Pearson correlation to measure the strength of the relationship between the statement "*The C4E coaching programme is relevant and useful to teachers*" and other statements in the first section of the questionnaire. The correlation was significant with 14 out of the 17 statements marked with * and **. As shown in Table 4.5, the strongest relationship was found with the statements "The coaching programme leads to teacher-based solutions and outcomes" and "C4E promotes commitment among the coaches/coachees to change." We can conclude that the more the coaches/educators agree that the programme leads to teacher-based solutions and outcomes, the more they rate the programme as useful and relevant for teachers. Likewise, the more the coaches/educators feel that the programme promotes commitment among the coaches/coachees to change, the more they rate the programme as useful and relevant for teachers.

Table 4.5. The effectiveness of the Coaching Programme (C4E) – correlations

Statement	The C4E coaching programme is relevant and useful to teachers.
C4E provides opportunities for the coaches/coachees to develop professionally.	.546**
C4E promotes commitment among the coaches/coachees to change.	.673**
C4E coaches support teachers on a full range of teaching and learning strategies.	.362*
The coaching programme improves teachers' capacity to solve problems.	.433*
The coaching programme promotes coaching as a means for reflection on teachers' practice.	.353*
The coaching programme promotes collaboration and sharing of expertise and knowledge.	.472**
The coaching programme promotes a culture of support and empathy for teachers' concerns.	.636**
The coaching programme leads to a change in teachers' practice and methods of working with students.	.471**
The coaching programme helps teachers develop action plans to integrate what they / what the coachees have learnt from the coaching sessions into their teaching / classroom practice.	.256
The coaching programme exposes teachers to different perspectives/ways of addressing issues in their practice and student learning.	.653**
The coaching programme helps facilitate discussions on issues in teachers' practice.	.337
The coaching programme supports the well-being and professional growth of educators.	.528**
The coaching programme maintains confidentiality with teachers' information.	.545**
The coaching programme promotes a culture of ongoing learning and development.	.265
The coaching programme leads to teacher-based solutions and outcomes.	.775**
The coaching programme promotes respect of the coachees' context, beliefs, values and culture.	.606**
The coaching programme acknowledges and supports teacher autonomy in the design of goals, actions and methods of accountability.	.423*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.1.4 The Reasons for Involvement with C4E

For coaches, by far the most important reason for involvement with C4E was "*It is an opportunity to provide personal and professional guidance and support*" (average 4.59 on a 1-5 scale). The second most important reason was "*I want to work with teachers individually, providing support on a full range of teaching aspects*" (average rating: 3.94), and the third reason was "*I want to enhance my coaching practice*" (average rating: 3.47). On the other hand, the most important reason for educators was "*I want to enhance my career and professional development*" (4.63), the second most important was "*It is an opportunity to receive personal and professional guidance and support*" (4.56) and the third main reason was "*I want to enhance my teaching practice*" (4.25). Comparing the two groups, educators gave higher scores than coaches, which means a higher involvement from their side. Nevertheless, the difference was statistically significant only on one aspect: "*I want to enhance my career and professional development*".

Table 4.6 The reasons for involvement with C4E – Average values

	Coaches			Educators		
	n=	Mean	SD	n=	Mean	SD
Coaches: My participation in C4E is part of my accreditation as a certified coach Educators: My participation in C4E is part of my formal professional development required by my school/institution.	17	1.53	.72	16	2.25	1.53
Coaches: It is an opportunity to provide personal and professional guidance and support. Educators: It is an opportunity to receive personal and professional guidance and support.	17	4.59	.62	16	4.56	.89
A friend of mine recommended C4E to me.	17	2.18	1.33	16	2.13	1.67

Coaching would help me attain my career aspirations.	17	3.12	1.58	16	4.00	1.10
Coaches: I want to enhance my coaching practice. Educators: I want to enhance my teaching practice.	17	3.47	1.42	16	4.25	1.24
Coaches: I want to work with teachers individually, providing support on a full range of teaching aspects. Educators: I want to work with coaches individually, seeking support on a full range of teaching aspects.	17	3.94	.75	16	3.94	1.00
I want to enhance my career and professional development.	17	3.18	1.33	16	4.63*	.72

p-value <0.05, significant

Amongst the three main benefits of participating in the C4E programme, two were the same for both coaches and educators. Both rated high: "*My participation in the C4E coaching programme is a worthwhile investment of my time and energy*", and "*C4E supports teachers/educators to reflect on their successes and failures, to learn from their past performance*." For coaches, the third-highest rated aspect of the involvement with C4E was "*C4E improves coachees' performances/outcomes.*" For educators, the third main benefit was "*I am more aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a result of the coaching programme.*" Comparing the two groups, educators clearly scored higher with respect to their involvement with C4E, which means they valued the involvement more than the coaches did. Especially, educators gave significantly higher ratings on five aspects highlighted in table 4.6.

4.1.5 Coaching Topics

The highest rated coaching topic was "Goal setting and prioritization" both for coaches (average 4.71 on a 1-5 scale), and for educators (4.63). The second highest rated topic was

"Engagement and motivation" for both groups (4.65 and 4.56 average values in the two groups). For coaches, the third highest rated topic was "Time management" and "Interpersonal skills and communication" (equal rating, 4.65). For educators, the third highest rated topic was "Leadership development and people management". Overall, coaches rated "Time management" significantly higher than the educators did. Although there was no statistical difference between the two groups on other statements, the coaches rated every aspect of the programme higher than the educators did, as the Table 4.7 indicates.

Table 4.7. Coaching Topics – average values

	Coaches			Educators		
	n=	Mean	SD	n=	Mean	SD
1. Curriculum and instructional practices	17	2.76	1.35	16	2.94	1.39
2. ICT skills and online learning	17	3.00	1.27	16	2.44	1.09
3. Teaching students with special learning needs	17	2.94	1.34	16	2.63	1.26
4. Teaching in a multicultural setting	17	3.53	1.33	16	3.25	1.29
5. Student discipline and behavior problems	17	3.24	1.44	16	3.06	1.24
6. Leadership development and people management	17	4.47	.72	16	4.50	1.03
7. Team dynamics	17	4.18	1.07	16	3.69	1.14
8. Skill development	17	4.41	.80	16	4.13	.72
9. Career planning and development	17	4.53	.51	16	4.25	.86
10. Goal setting and prioritization	17	4.71	.47	16	4.63	.62
11. Engagement and motivation	17	4.65	.61	16	4.56	.51
12. Work/family balance	17	4.47	.87	16	4.06	1.06
13. Time management	17	4.65*	.49	16	3.81	1.05
14. Interpersonal skills and communication	17	4.65	.49	16	4.37	.81

p-value <0.05, significant difference between coaches and educators

4.2 Qualitative Data

The current section reports the qualitative findings of the study. To begin with, the open

coding of the data identified five broad categories and themes. Quotes from the informants'

accounts were useful in explaining and providing rich descriptions of the five themes. The

educators and the coaches' accounts were compared across all interviews to ensure that all

the themes and categories were consistently supported. The first level of data analysis was

conducted by examining the educators' and coaches' interviews looking for general

categories. During the second level of data analysis, the researcher focused more on the

connections and links between the emerging topics, categories and groupings.

As mentioned in the methodology section, the sampling technique was purposive sampling

and priority was given to the teachers, school leaders and coaches who practically

participated in the coaching programme and had engaged in a coaching relationship for a

period of time. Priority was also given to informants who participated in the questionnaire.

The rationale for selecting the interview informants from the questionnaire respondents

was to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative data. The total

participants in the interviews were 13 interviews which included two school leaders, six

teachers and seven coaches. Table 4.8 gives more information about the interview

informants.

Table 4.8   Participants' biographical information

Name	Gender	Nationality	Employment	Language Spoken
Educator 1	Female	British	School Principal	English
Educator 2	Female	Canadian	Middle manager director of learning strategies	English
Educator 3	Female	England	Teacher/ Language trainer	English
Educator 4	Female	Malta	Support educator/ Learning Assistant	English
Educator 5	Female	Nigeria	Teacher of music	English
Educator 6	Female	Nigeria	Primary school teacher	English
Educator 7	Female	French	Teacher of English	English
Educator 8	Male	Canada	Associate Professor (University)	English
Coach 1	Female	Netherlands	Self-employed	Spanish, English, Dutch
Coach 2	Female	Italy	Self-employed	English, Italian
Coach 3	Female	Germany	Self-employed	German, English
Coach 4	Female	Spain	Self-employed	French, English, Spanish
Coach 5	Female	USA	Self-employed	English
Coach 6	Male	France	Self-employed	English, French, Spanish
Coach 7	Male	British	Self-employed	English

The following are the themes that developed from the qualitative data. In the following sections, we will look closely and each theme.

1. Effectiveness of the coaching programme

2. Reflection

3. Online Coaching

4. Agency in coaching

5. Challenges of the coaching programme

4.2.1 Effectiveness of the Coaching Programme

Almost all the interview informants thought that C4E had positively impacted their professional growth. The following quotes presented in Table 4.9 provide evidence of the same.

Table 4.9 Informants' quotes indicating the positive impact of coaching

Educators' and Coaches' Perceptions of the Impact of Coaching			
Educator 1	*It certainly gave me the language, the structure with which to create it myself. And that was quite powerful. And I was quite moved by that afterwards,*	*Coach 1*	*And my hope is that coaching becomes something like going to the gym.*
Educator 2	*It helped with the burnout I think that was something that I found really, really inspiring and helpful. solving brain instead of that just ruminating and the emotions of it the frustration, or the, you know, whatever it might have been.*	*Coach 2*	*I think it should be taught in primary schools, I think young kids will pick it up so quickly and so easily, and it could open the way they can relate to each other.*
Educator 3	*I think it helped me a lot. Motivated me to be a coach. There are good results in coaching*	*Coach 3*	*And that's why I think coaching is just fantastic for everybody. coaching is very effective*
Educator 4	*it was like, I mean, like, a gold. I mean, finding a gold mine. like finding gold meet again, but so How heavy is that? Which was*	*Coach 4*	*So, I like to use the analogy of the car, when I'm a coach, and the co-pilots, yes, having their own car, get into their own destination, and I'm here to support them.*
Educator 5	*the results of coaching are amazing. I will describe it as phenomenal. I recommend that to my colleagues, I mean, I think everyone actually needs coaching.*	*Coach 5*	*It's bringing the understanding and the connection and the curiosity.*
Educator 6	*I would. Yes, I would recommend coaching*	*Coach 6*	*Not mentioned*
Educator 7	*it was a very good experience.*	*Coach 7*	*I think the impact of coaching is that it is bringing awareness*
Educator 8	*Yeah, the coaching sessions were really great*	*Coach 8*	*it should be spread on a wider, wider zone*

As demonstrated in Table 4.9, the qualitative data revealed that all the educators and coaches perceived the coaching positively. Educator 1 (E1) is a school leader who describes himself as an international educator. He is not familiar with coaching as a form of professional development in the context of education. He had four coaching sessions. He thinks coaching is gaining momentum. Describing his involvement with C4E, he explained that coaching has piqued his curiosity for some time, which urged him to join C4E. Upon joining, E1 was given a list of coaches to choose from. Elaborating further, E1 explained that he was quite selective as he chose a coach from the same context (i.e., New Zealand) where he worked before as an educator and educational leader. One of the areas of development he wanted to be coached on is decision-making. In response to a question about the effectiveness of these coaching sessions, E1 mentioned that they were very beneficial and allowed him a plan of action. Coaching, according to him, supplied the language and the structure to practice powerful and effective self-reflection.

Comparing coaching to other forms of professional development such as attending workshops and conferences, E1 thought that traditional forms of professional development do not fully engage the participants since most of the PD activities and programmes are imposed on educators, which reduces their effectiveness. Coaching, on the contrary, could be fully engaging since the coachee controls the agenda and is 100% clear about the purpose of the coaching session. E1 uses co-piloting as a metaphor to describe coaching.

> So it's very different, you know, as a coaching model, you are in the driving seat. And you can take that vehicle wherever you want to go. So it is much more

powerful. And when you get out of the car at the end of the trip, you're exactly where you need to be. So I mean, I think I think it is very, very good (E1).

E1 found coaching similar to professional learning communities (PLC) in the sense that it is also a collaborative activity and encourages teachers to reflect on their practice. According to E1, the coach needs to be skilful. He described his C4E coach as a good listener, who is able to bring him back on track. Describing the coaching session, he has experienced, E1 explained that the coach helped him to think and talk in a non-judgmental way.

I think the ability to get me to talk.... to get me to think and process. Yes. And I think that is a skill. Really, and just the ability to be non-judgmental. Yes. You know, I think the coach at the end of the day is a people person. They have to like people, they have to understand people, they can't be judgmental or critical in any way (E1).

In response to the question 'W*ould you encourage teachers at your school to join C4E?*', Educator 1 thought that coaching is a growth process that should be incorporated within the school culture. In the same vein, Educator 6 indicated that coaching is important for teachers especially for new teachers who are still unfamiliar with different aspects of teaching. According to E3, engaging in a coaching relationship was an opportunity to explore important areas and make critical decisions about her professional life and career. E3 describes herself as a language trainer. She has also been involved in coaching recently as she aspires to be a certified coach. She wants to use coaching in language training because many of her adult language students (30–45 years old) seem to have other issues,

such as time management and identifying goals, and they often approach her to assist them with those.

E3 started getting interested in C4E when she attended one of the online coaching workshops organised by C4E and then had a worthwhile and useful coaching session with one of the C4E professional coaches. Elaborating on the motivation behind seeking help from C4E, E3 said she wanted to further her personal development as she was also experiencing burnout. She thought that teachers use much coaching in their practice which they might be unaware of. Concerning the effectiveness of online coaching, E7 believed that it all depends on the coach. Describing her involvement with C4E, E7 pointed out that C4E coaching is a complete programme including several spaced-out coaching sessions. She started the programme in the middle of the lockdown in 2020 when they were instructed to teach online. It was a critical period in which they felt overwhelmed with the new changes due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Describing her coach, E7 thought her coach was a good listener as she managed to build a good rapport with her. She further explained that her coach utilised some strategies and tools, which made the coaching process engaging.

In agreement, most of the coaches, as Table 4.9 indicates, also thought that coaching had a positive impact on the educators. According to Coach1 (C1), the main purpose of coaching is to support educators who themselves need to support their students.

4.2.2 Coaching as a Means of Reflection

Reflection emerged as one of the most significant themes in the study. The majority of participants in the study reported that C4E coaching afforded opportunities for inquiry and reflection. The qualitative data provides evidence that most of the educators engaged in two forms of reflection (i.e., reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action) during the coaching conversations. Emphasizing the importance of reflection, E1 mentioned that one of the highlights of the coaching conversations is reflection. More importantly, E1 added that he enjoyed these coaching sessions because they were opportunities to reflect and to interact with other professionals.

> And actually, that's the moment and that's what I found quite enjoyable. Because I could actually talk about my job with somebody who, who seemed relatively interested. Their job is to facilitate you to reflect and to think about your position and your role (ED1).

E1 also acknowledged that although as an educational leader he often urges teachers to reflect on their practice, he does not find the time to reflect on his own leadership practices

> I wonder to what degree do I really reflect. I'm so busy telling other people to reflect, I don't have the time to reflect on myself. And one of the great things that I enjoyed about these coaching sessions particularly, was it was an opportunity for me to talk about my role, yes, to talk with specifics, and to reflect. And, you know, and I think that's what I enjoy the most (E1).

In agreement, C2 pointed out that teachers usually reflect on their students but hardly reflect on themselves. In the same vein, E5 also noted that teachers tend to focus all the time on their students' learning challenges to enhance their students' learning and overcome their challenges. They do not have much time to reflect on their teaching

challenges. C4E coaching opportunities in this context were timely in the sense that some volunteering professionals seek teachers' support in reflecting on their teaching practices. Similarly, E6 indicated that reflection was an important ingredient of the coaching process she has engaged in during her participation in C4E coaching programme. E5 went further to explain that coaching helped coaches think and develop critical and creative thinking about their daily teaching experiences and challenges. She described coaching as a discovery process where the coachee engages in self-discovery through reflection.

> So basically, at the end of coaching session, you're expected to discover a side of you that you've never really, really taken notice of before. So it's not like you're going to be taught anything or your way to be spoon-fed, or your problems that need to be solved on the platter of gold. It's rather good to take it through, you know, faces of deep thinking Yes, of yourself, about what to do about your goals about the challenges achieving those goals, and the possible solutions that will help you solve the problems (E5).

E3 also notes that coaching has opened for her opportunities to discuss areas not expected to be discussed. She finds the coaching process rewarding because it invites inquiry and reflection. E3 describes this coaching process:

> First of all, listen to feedback from the other person and then reflect on what can be better. What would I do better next time? What worked well, because unexpectedly, you do something or you say something and then you think (E3).

Finally, C4 believes that reflection is a core practice in coaching. According to her, reflection is a daily practice that all human beings engage in. Elaborating more on the significance of coaching, C4 described coaching as a process of reflection in which a coach seemingly asks

the coach a set of open-ended questions. However, at a deeper level, it is an active process of learning involving the challenging of entrenched beliefs and assumptions.

4.2.3   Online Coaching

Another important theme was online coaching. Responding to a question about the mode of coaching they tend to prefer, almost all the educators and coaches said they prefer online coaching. These preferences for online learning are captured in the following excerpts.

Table 4.10 Informants' perceptions about online learning

Educators	Educators' perceptions of online coaching	Coaches	Coaches' perceptions of online coaching
Educator 1	*There was no difference.*	Coach 1	*I have the opportunity to coach somebody in India, I have the opportunity to coach somewhere in Mexico, I have the opportunity to coach them in Africa. So, the answer is yes. This opens possibilities.*
Educator 2	*I feel the conversations have a very different nature to them than they would if we were sitting in a room. On the other hand, you and I probably wouldn't be having this conversation any other way than we're having it right now.*	Coach 2	*I've mainly worked online since the beginning.* *When you are online, that is, first of all, much more availability. It's more straightforward.*
Educator 3	*Online coaching. Yes.* *This person is somewhere far away. And, you know, this physical distance, it creates some, maybe it's for me, but some, you know, safety.*	Coach 3	*I am very happy, as you said, you don't need to go to travel some kilometers*
Educator 4	*less stressful. Online existence is less stressful* *Yeah, so it doesn't matter. Yeah. Whether it's online or*	Coach 4	*I'm very, very resistant to that. But let's be honest, it is so much advantageous I can help more people than before. Because before I could have maybe four,*

	face up or face to face, you can still win, you can still establish the chemistry even. Even online.		*three people a day, because I would have to go from a place to another one*
Educator 5	*I don't like being online. On the other hand, you and I probably wouldn't be having this conversation any other way than we're having it right now. Yes. Without me and I'm in Oakville, so you know, so there are advantages. It's opened up advantages, but I absolutely prefer face-to-face.*	Coach 5	*To be honest with you, all I have ever done is online. And that's all I ever wanted to do.*
Educator 6	*I prefer online coaching*	Coach 6	*I'm for online coaching.*
Educator 7	*I think it would be nice to have half more visuals or tools that are used online. So, I think like using a whiteboard, maybe being able to pull something in the sessions.*	Coach 7	*I switched to online. And yeah, it's different. It's much more efficient*
Educator 8	*Yeah, I kind of I don't mind it through the boom. Yes. Yeah, definitely. And my coach was in France, because the reason that Toronto coach didn't respond.*		

The coaches and educators expressed mixed views, but the majority preferred online coaching. E1, for instance, found no difference between online and face-to-face coaching, especially since this year educators got habituated to it given the current situation of COVID-19. C1 also pointed out that she has conducted different types of coaching including telephone and face-to-face coaching, and she found no difference between these forms and online coaching. C1 also confessed that if had she been asked the question about online learning before COVID-19, she would have said "no" as she never even imagined

that online learning could ever replace face-to-face learning. C3 said that during COVID 19, she clocked 500 hours of online coaching as part of the coaching programme, which she described as beneficial and useful. Before COVID-19, she preferred face-to-face coaching, but once she experienced online coaching, she changed her mind. C3 supports online coaching although she believed it does not afford the same opportunities of establishing rapport and communicating directly which characterise face-to-face coaching. However, C3 also believed that online coaching is beneficial because it saves time and energy for both coaches and coachees.

4.2.4 Agency and the Coaching Process

Agency is another theme emerging from the educators and coaches' interviews. The qualitative data revealed that the coaching process offers teachers and school leaders more agency in choosing their coaches, the coaching topics and the strategies in addressing the issues identified during the coaching conversations. A wide range of topics has been identified by interview informants. These topics range from professional to personal. However, as table 5.2 shows, most topics discussed during these coaching sessions revolve around professional aspects of the teachers' and school leaders' work. E7 notes that coaching could cover two major areas, the first of which is professional where teachers can work on different aspects of their teaching and develop their practices. On the other hand, coaching could be a private space where they can work on their growth mindset as well as motivation and identify areas of personal development.

Apart from the choice of the coaching topics, the qualitative data revealed that the coaching process empowers the teachers and school leaders to lead the coaching conversations. C4, for instance, compared the coach to the co-pilot, whose role is to assist the coachee during the conversation. Describing the coaching process, she has experienced with C4E, E5 explained that coaching does not follow a ready-made template. The session starts with identifying goals. Then the coach asks questions around these goals and then selects areas they have talked about to elaborate and delve deeper into these areas using incisive questions. The session ends with a task in which the coachee is expected to follow up on certain strategies to address some of the challenges identified at the beginning of the session. The next coaching session, E5 further explains, builds on the previous one and continues the work towards identifying other challenges. C1 admitted that she has coached many educators on many topics including aspects of their practice such as pedagogy or areas related to their professional development. However, C1 also points out that teachers and school leaders decide on the topics to be raised during the coaching sessions. Describing the role of the coach, E3 emphasised that the coach does not instruct or advise.

> The coach was not there to instruct me or, you know, to give us some advice, or something like that, that was me taking this journey. But I was, even though I know that it works this way. But still, when it happens to you, it's really amazing that you start here, and you come to something totally different than unexpected (E3).

The following chapter integrates both sets of data and discusses them in light of the three research questions and the literature review.

4.2.5 Challenges to Coaching

In the semi-structured interviews, both the educators and the coaches were asked about the challenges of the coaching programme. The following are the major ones identified by the interview informants:

1. Culture

2. Time

3. Commitment

5. Technical issues

One of the salient challenges was the cultural background of the coachees/coaches. C1 noted that with certain contexts and cultures, her coaching became at certain times more demanding. She felt that she was not understood, especially if she was coaching some teachers from a non-western background, and that she needed multiple clarifications to communicate effectively. She thought this might be due to different approaches to teaching and professional development in those contexts. This requires, C1 elaborates, much learning on her part of these contexts. According to the C4E founder, one of the challenges facing coaches is cultural knowledge. The issue was critical enough for them to consider conducting some cultural training for the coaches.

> How to work with people from different cultures. Again, we don't have a formal programme, we are now going to teach you but we bring up the question, how is it working with people from Portugal? If you've never done that before? How is it working with people from India? More people? (C4E founder).

Cognisant of the importance of culture in coaching, Coach 4 who is half French and half Cambodian pointed out that she used her cultural knowledge in coaching and she was successful in dealing and communicating differently with people coming from different cultures. She thought cultural knowledge is important in effective communication. She, for instance, was selective in utilizing language expressions that are context and culture-appropriate during the coaching conversations.

Time was another challenge identified by both educators and coaches. C1, for instance, thought that teachers do not have enough time for professional development due to their heavy workloads and commitments at their schools. When asked about the challenges encountered during C4E coaching, E1 mentioned time. His coach was in Scotland during the four coaching sessions. The difference in time (i.e., the coach's morning is actually the coachee's evening) prompted them to conduct the coaching session at 9 o'clock at night. C5 raised another challenge, which is about funding coaching organisations such as C4E. She pointed out that her involvement with C4E was for a good cause as she wants to serve educators. Coach 1 thought that education authorities such as education councils, the Ministry of Education and schools should support coaching for teachers and school leaders with more funding.

The final challenge pertains to promoting C4E. According to C4, C4E needs more visibility and involvement of people at the leadership level. Highlighting the leadership structures of the coaching organization, C4 suggests establishing organisational structures sustainable in the long run. Depending on a few leaders or organisers would not benefit C4E.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter aims to report and integrate both quantitative and qualitative data and discuss these findings vis-à-vis the literature review and the three research questions. The evidence base afforded by the quantitative and qualitative data suggests that coaching positively impacts both educators and coaches. Table 5.1 summarises these findings in relation to the three research questions.

Table 5.1   Summary of the Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Research Question	Quantitative data	Qualitative data	Similarities / Contradictions in the data sets
1-To what extent does C4E online coaching programme contribute to the continuing professional development of teachers and school leaders?	▪ Both groups rated the effectiveness of the C4E programme in contributing to the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of teachers and school leaders very high, with an average score above 4.00.	▪ The evidence base afforded by the qualitative data suggests C4E contributes to the PD of educators and coaches.	Consistency between both sets of data.
2. How do teachers and school leaders perceive coaching as a tool for their professional learning and growth?	▪ Coaching could enhance reflection, cooperation and dialogue.	▪ There is evidence in the qualitative data that many educators and coaches engaged in different coaching activities.	Consistency between both sets of data.
3. What are the teachers, school leaders and coaches' perceptions of the challenges of an online coaching programme?	▪ This question was addressed through qualitative data.	Perceived challenges ▪ Culture ▪ Time ▪ Commitment ▪ Network instability	
Emerging findings in the qualitative data.		▪ Coaching promotes educators' agency.	

The following section discusses in more detail these findings in relation to each research question:

5.1   First Research Question

To what extent does C4E contribute to the continuing professional development of teachers and school leaders?

 With respect to the first research question, the results presented in Table 5.1 provide confirmatory evidence that both the educators and coaches agree that C4E contributes to their continuing professional development. Both the educators and coaches reported that the coaching sessions were conducive to reflection and collaborative learning. The findings of this study suggest that coaching could play a significant role in teachers' professional development. This is consistent with the literature that professional development programmes incorporating collaborative forms of teacher learning, such as coaching and mentoring could contribute to the effectiveness of teacher professional programmes.

With respect to the mode of delivery, the research informants mentioned that the C4E online coaching programme was very effective due to its flexibility and availability during the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings echo the literature, which maintains that online professional development could provide professional learning opportunities comparable to face-to-face learning (Stoetzel & Shedrow 2020). Both the flexibility and the ease of online learning contribute to the growth of this mode of learning for the teachers (Parsons et al. 2021). There is also evidence in research that school leaders and teachers engaging in online learning could have the opportunity to work with other coaches and teachers from

other schools and districts beyond their grade levels and build more "meaningful learning partnerships" (Matsumura et al. 2016, p. 34). Apart from being an alternative to the delivery of professional development (Elliott 2017), online learning could be an effective professional learning tool for teachers at a lower cost.

Furthermore, Kraft and Blazar (2018) noted that new online technologies could support coaching as a potential PD tool for teachers who might need specialized development in rural and small towns and villages. In case in-house coaching programmes are unavailable, Kraft and Blazar (2018) suggested that online coaching could be expanded to a group of schools and across schools. Another interesting finding was that almost all the educators were impressed by the coaches who were successful in building good rapport during the coaching conversations. The literature on coaching seem to support these findings, maintaining that the coach-coachee relationship is crucial to coaching effectiveness (Whitmore 2002), and therefore the success of coaching hinges on the level of safety and trust in the relationship. Whitmore (2002) recommends that during the coaching partnership, the coach should act as a 'sounding board, a facilitator, a counsellor and awareness raiser' (p. 40).

5.2   Second Research Question

How do teachers and school leaders perceive coaching as a tool for their professional learning and growth?

As shown in Table 5.1, the findings reporting positive attitudes towards coaching indicate that coaching could enhance cooperation and dialogue. Evidence in teachers' and coaches'

accounts reveals that coaching promotes educators' agency and communicates change

openly and positively, allowing opportunities for reflection and providing and receiving

feedback, especially that most of the coaches had worked as teachers. The findings also

provide evidence that coaching affords opportunities for teachers to collaborate and to

develop a better understanding of their practice. This is consistent with the literature that

coaching provides opportunities for collaboration and mutual learning as well as venues

for rich social experiences for educators to engage in co-learning partnerships.

Emphasizing the collaborative aspect of coaching, Gray (2006) considered the coach a

collaborative partner rather than an expert. The role of the coach in this regard is of the

collaborator and guide, who supports individuals to "become more confident, committed

and able to sustain their drive and commitment." (Gray 2006, p.478). Farina and Kotch

(2008) also argued that coaching enhances teachers' success and promotes collaborative

cultures in schools.

Reflection also surfaced as a particularly important finding warranting discussion. There is

evidence in the qualitative data that teachers reflected on different aspects of their teaching

practice. This is consistent with the literature that coaching has been effective in promoting

reflection (Nicolaidou et al. 2018). Schön (1987) pointed out that reflection often happen

when the practitioners face a discomforting issue in relation to an aspect of their

professional practice and wanted to change it in the future. The processes are called

'reflection-on-action' (i.e., reflection carried out after the event (lesson), and 'reflection for

action' (i.e., the process of thinking of changing your actions in the future), both of them

constituting important elements of the coaching conversations as expressed by the interviewed teachers and school leaders.

An increasing body of literature shows that coaching gives teachers the opportunity to take an inquiry stance towards their practice (Jewett & MacPhee 2012; Rodgers and Rodgers 2007). The study findings in relation to reflection also support the theoretical framework adopted for this study which conceptualises reflection also as a mode of learning that promotes active construction and creation of meaning and knowledge. According to Hafford-Letchfield et al. (2007), coaching is rooted in action learning because it promotes deeper processes of learning, reflection and problem-solving. According to Zhang et al. (2017), coaching provides four types of support: (a) academic, (a) technical, (a) emotional, and (a) reflective. The International Coaching Federation (ICF) which developed seven core competencies for professional coaches (International Coach Federation 2017) emphasises the importance of reflection. Interestingly enough, creating awareness is one of the key competencies the coach has to achieve through asking powerful questions that evoke reflection and inquiry during the coaching conversation (ICF 2017). In his definition of coaching, Wilkins (2000) acknowledged reflection as a critical component of the coaching process. By emphasizing these processes of reflection and active learning, both teachers and school leaders are empowered to assume responsibility for their own learning and professional development. According to Tonna et al. (2017), coaching in the context of education exemplifies a developmental approach promoting inquiry and contesting traditional top-down relations and interactions.

The qualitative data in particular are replete with examples where teachers engaged in reflecting on their practices attempting to identify critical issues in their practice and challenge their beliefs and assumptions. According to Dawson and Bondy (2003), by engaging in reflection, practitioners could understand, articulate and potentially change their practice. Dawson and Bondy (2003) call this process of engaging in reflection during coaching 'reflective peer coaching'. According to Shaw and Glowacki-Dudka (2019), reflection is critical in making informed decisions, developing a rationale for the teaching practices and awareness about limitations in our capabilities and performance as practitioners.

Reflection is also critical to school leaders, school improvement and effectiveness (Nicolaidou & Petridou 2011; Nicolaidou et al. 2018). Coaching conducted in a leadership context suggests that coaching could serve as a strategy in professional development programmes for school leaders (Hobson 2003; Underhill et al. 2007). Coaching could, in this context, support school leaders' learning, engagement and reflection (O'Neil & Marsick 2014; Nicolaidou et al. 2018).

5.3   Third Research Question

What are the teachers, school leaders and coaches' perceptions of the challenges of an online coaching programme?

Culture was one of the challenges that emerged from the qualitative data. The coaching context in which the current study was conducted is characterised by the cultural plurality of both coaches and coachees. As evidenced from the informants' accounts, coaching in a

different cultural context proved challenging to some coaches. In light of these findings, coaches need to cultivate cultural competence, i.e., the ability to function comfortably in cross-cultural settings and to interact harmoniously with people from diverse cultures. In other words, coaches need to become efficient cross-cultural communicators and acquire effective communication skills. According to Toll (2006, p.106), coaching conversations afford opportunities for "diversity of viewpoints and practices which lead to more ability to adapt".

C4E online coaching programme could be considered an instance of cross-cultural learning where educators and coaches from different cultural backgrounds engaged in learning experiences. Such transcultural learning could foster mutual understanding across cultural boundaries (Knight 2011). According to Lai et al. (2016, p.12), this cultural plurality could be conducive to new rich learning, "transcultural pedagogies and hybridised educational and cultural discursive practices that surpass the originals".

5.4 Emerging Themes

Agency emerged as one of the significant themes in the study. Professional agency is defined as the process in which "professional subjects and/or communities exert influence, make choices and take stances in ways that affect their work and/or their professional identities" (Lai et al. 2016, p.13). Evidence in both the qualitative and quantitative data indicates that both teachers and school leaders exercised agency in terms of their choice of the coaching topics raised during the coaching conversations. Table 5.2 summarises all the topics identified by the educators in both data sets.

Table 5.2   Coaching ttopics identified by the educators in both data sets

	Questionnaire	**Interviews**
Coaching Topics	1. Goal setting and prioritization (Educators: M=4.63, SD =.62; Coaches: M= 4.71, SD= .47).	▪ How to motivate teachers
	2. Engagement and motivation (Educators: M=4.56, SD =.51; Coaches: M= 4.65, SD= .61).	▪ Classroom management
	3. Interpersonal skills and communication (Educators: M=4.37, SD =.81; Coaches: M= 4.65, SD= .49).	▪ Burnout ▪ Leadership capacity ▪ Goal setting
	4. Leadership development and people management (Educators: M=4.50, SD =1.03; Coaches: M= 4.47, SD= .72).	▪ Classroom management,
	5. Skill development (Educators: M=4.13, SD =.72; Coaches: M= 4.41, SD= .80).	▪ Organizing the teaching process,
	6. Work/family balance (Educators: M=4.13, SD =.72; Coaches: M= 4.47, SD= .87).	▪ Dealing with other people, other teachers, dealing with the administration, parents.
	7. Career planning and development (Educators: M=4.25, SD =.86; Coaches: M= 4.53, SD= .51).	▪ Personal and professional goals
	8. Time management (Educators: M=3.81, SD =1.05; Coaches: M= 4.65, SD= .46).	▪ stress

The qualitative data revealed that what seemed to attract the educators most in the coaching conversation is the coaching process which empowered them and gave them a voice to articulate their views on practice-related issues. According to Smith (2019), traditional professional development has silenced teachers' voices and rendered them very passive recipients of professional development at schools. Hargreaves and Skelton (2012) argued that school management processes and agendas could harm collaborative teacher-led professional learning activities such as coaching. According to Lofthouse and Leat (2013), coaching in schools often operates within an ineffective model of teacher

professional development. In such professional development systems, there is little input from teachers and almost no opportunity for them to negotiate their practice. According to Lofthouse and Leat (2013), coaching could play a significant role as a more personalized and professional learning model which provides teachers the opportunity to be more agentic about their learning and practice.

The interplay of power in the expert/novice model of teacher education differs from the power relations within a coaching conversation, usually characterised by reciprocity, equality, sharing and collaboration. According to Lofthouse and Leat (2013), coaching is a form of professional development that is not heavily invested with power (Lofthouse & Leat 2013); it provides opportunities for engaging in reciprocal and equal roles during the coaching partnership. Creating a safe environment for dialogue and co-learning where professionals could engage with a range of ideas and viewpoints would also support teachers in becoming more agentic vis-à-vis their practice (Haneda et al. 2017).

The C4E coordinator noted that what distinguishes coaching from other professional development interventions, such as mentoring is that the coach does not bring subject knowledge to the coaching conversation. In this context, the coach is not the expert whose role is to answer questions and provide solutions to practice-related issues and instruct the teachers. This is consistent with the literature that coaching should embody a developmental approach that focuses on collaborative inquiry (Tonna et al. 2017). Within a coaching context, the coachee is honoured as a resourceful and knowledgeable practitioner (Morin 2016) and not as the expert whose role is to instruct teachers, answer questions and

provide solutions to practice-related issues. Comparing mentoring and coaching, Lofthouse and Thomas (2017) argued that the latter engages teachers more reciprocally and equally, leading to more collaboration and parity. Coaching, according to Lofthouse and Thomas (2017), is a more communal form of professional development and less affected by the power relations inherent in hierarchical and top-down professional relationships.

In this regard, the study findings are consistent with ICF's definition of coaching, which perceives coaching as a professional partnership between a coach and a coachee involving "a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential" (ICF, cited in Shaw & Glowacki-Dudka 2019, p.3).

5.5 Implications and Recommendations

As mentioned earlier, the aim of the study is to explore the impact of the C4E online coaching programme on a group of educators and coaches. Such a study would contribute to understanding coaching in an educational context. The study would also inform C4E by highlighting some areas of improvement and development to further meet the needs of both educators and coaches. Another significant implication is the great potential for integrating coaching in teacher development and education programmes. Both the educators and the coaches participating in this study thought that coaching should be integrated into the fabric of the school professional development programmes. Based on these insights, schools and education policymakers should take such findings seriously and promote and prioritise coaching as an effective professional development approach that could support educators as reflective practitioners and enhance their agency and active learning. These schools could, for instance, build networks with either local or

international coaching organizations such as C4E. The findings from this study indicated that schools have already sought the help of a PD organisation such as C4E to provide its coaching services to their teachers and school leaders. One of the interviewed coaches mentioned that a school principal urged eight teachers to join C4E at their school. Kraft (2018) pointed out that investment in traditional forms of professional development had little impact. The onus is, therefore, on education policymakers to support innovative PD tools such as coaching (Kraft 2018) which could provide customised and flexible solutions to educators.

Both teachers, school leaders and coaches have emphasized the positive relationship between the coach and the coachee which impacted on the success of the coaching partnership. In light of these findings, this area of research needs further investigation. According to Bozer and Jones (2018), factors such as the role of the coaching relationship in rendering coaching successful are worthy of investigation. More research is also needed to explore in detail the dynamics of interaction and rapport between the coach and the coachee which lead to positive coaching outcomes. Such a research need is also echoed in other calls from the research community to explore the coaching relationship (Jarvis & Fillery-Travis 2006; Gessnitzer & Kauffeld 2015; Ianiro & Kauffeld 2014; Ianiro et al. 2013). Future research, for instance, could address the long-term impact of engaging in a coaching partnership with an external coach.

Notwithstanding the study findings with respect to the positive impact of coaching in education, some cautionary notes need to be made in this respect. First, coaching needs to

be integrated within a sustained and consistent approach to teacher professional development that would consider other forms of teacher learning such as mentoring, lesson study and professional learning communities. Embedding coaching in ongoing professional development activities would contribute to creating an organizational culture of continuous learning and development. As one of the coaches has fancily put it "I would like to see coaching as a habit like going to the gym".

Furthermore, for coaching to fulfil its potential as an effective professional development tool, it is important to develop and nurture supportive school cultures that promote collaboration, dialogue and peer support. Investing in coaching as a potential development tool for teachers and school leaders is, therefore, crucial to ensuring that schools become learning organisations where both teachers and school leaders learn from each other and share best practices. There is evidence in research that schools which develop cultures and capacity-building structures supporting teacher learning are likely to empower these teachers to exercise more agency in their schools (Frost 2012; York Barr & Duke 2004). For a sustained change in practice and to be more effective as a professional development tool, coaching should not be considered as an ad hoc and episodic intervention occuring from time to time. Rather, it should be considered along with other PD interventions including mentoring, professional learning communities and lesson study.

Finally, one of the interviewed educators (i.e., E7) cautioned that coaching should not become a dumping ground for expressing problems, issues and frustrations. Coaching, she further explained, differs from counselling in being a process of moving forward and

onwards by engaging the coachees in reflective processes of self-discovery to empower them to address their challenges. Research is, therefore, needed to understand what teachers learn in coaching conversations and how they translate their learning into practice. One final implication pertains to online coaching. The findings of the current study show that this mode of coaching holds significant potential for networking teachers and school leaders all around the world. Hence, education policymakers could play a critical role in supporting online coaching, especially for schools unable to afford the expensive teacher training programmes or to hire full-time coaches.

5.6 Limitations and Agenda for Future Research

The present study provides evidence of the positive impact of C4E coaching programme on a group of school leaders and teachers. However, data from the present study need to be interpreted within a number of caveats in mind. Some researchers observed a bias towards research on coaching. Such research, as argued by van Nieuwerburgh (2019) seeks to inflate the positive results of coaching as a tool for personal and organisational development and improvement. The rationale for such bias is that most of these researchers advocating this stance are overtly passionate about coaching (van Nieuwerburgh 2019), and they might themselves be involved in the business of coaching as coaches or training providers (executive, leadership coaches, etc.). Being the coordinator of the coaching and mentoring programme at the college, I am mindful of this bias that could result from my position. The onus is, therefore, on the researchers to maintain the credibility and rigor of this academic discipline by presenting multiple standpoints and perspectives and by highlighting the challenges and limitations of coaching.

One more limitation pertains to the small size of the study population participating in the questionnaire, rendering statistical generalisation (Gaikwad 2017) impossible. However, through in-depth investigation of the research topic and rich descriptions and analysis of the qualitative data, analytical generalisation would be more appropriate here. According to Yin (2015), analytical generalisation is the process of explaining how the study findings inform particular theoretical constructs or a set of concepts. This is applicable to this study which sought to demonstrate through the quantitative and qualitative data analysis the potential of coaching as an effective professional development in the context of education.

Finally, although many studies have been conducted on coaching, more research is needed to address questions related to coaching effectiveness, organizational factors contributing to coaching success, factors impacting the coaching relationship between the coach and the coaches, and the role of the coaching relationship in the coaching success (Bozer & Jones 2018). Longitudinal studies, in particular, are critical to gaining a better understanding of the dynamics and patterns of change resulting from coaching.

5.7 Conclusion

The study highlights the value of coaching as an effective professional development tool as well as its challenges in the context of education. It also underscores the significance of collaborative processes and reflection as a result of the coaching conversations. Most importantly, the present study provides evidence within its limits that the role of coaching in education should be re-thought, and that the suggestions and recommendations for policy, practice and research made by this study should be considered. According to Dawson and Bondy (2003), coaching could potentially provide a context for sustained dialogue and conversations among educators about learning and teaching; it could be also an opportune and effective way to reinvigorate the teaching profession and mobilize the professional capital at schools. On the other hand, coaching should be considered as one of the solutions among other professional development interventions aiming to improve teachers, teaching practices and schools. As one of the coaches affirmed, coaching has to work alongside other forms of professional growth to complement the development and improvement initiatives in schools.

Finally, notwithstanding these positive results, coaching remains an area of research that has not yet gained the consideration it merits. There is a need to focus on enhancing the professional rigor and credibility of the coaching field. The current study could be considered a serious contribution in this direction, especially that there is no study to date that has specifically explored an online volunteering coaching programme designed for educators. Bennett (2006, p. 242) explained that scholarly research on coaching could

support the professionalization of coaching and enhance its credibility as "a distinct and

recognised discipline".

References

Agrawal, A., Atiq, M.A. and Maurya, L.S., (2016). A current study on the limitations of agile methods in industry using secure google forms. *Procedia Computer Science*, 78, pp. 291-297.

Anstey, L. and Clarke, B. (2010). Leading and Supporting Mathematics Teacher Change: The Case of Teaching and Learning Coaches. *Mathematics Teacher Education and Development*, 12 (2), pp.5-31.

Baker, T.L. (1994). *Doing Social Research*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Barkley, S.G. (2010). *Quality teaching in a culture of coaching*. R&L Education.

Bennett, J. L. (2006). An agenda for coaching-related research: A challenge for researchers. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 58 (4), pp. 240.

Blackman, A. (2010). Coaching as a leadership development tool for teachers. *Professional development in education*, 36 (3), pp.421-441.

Bloom, G., Castagna, C., Moir, E. and Warren, B. eds. (2005). Blended coaching: *Skills and strategies to support principal development*. Corwin Press.

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*, *27* (3), pp.342-361.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, vol. 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57–71). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Clarke, A., Triggs, V. and Nielsen, W. (2014). Cooperating teacher participation in teacher education: A review of the literature. *Review of educational research*, 84(2), pp.163-202.

Clutterbuck, D. (2009). "Coaching and mentoring in support of management development", in Armstrong, S. and Fukami, C. (Eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Management Learning, Education and Development*, pp. 476-496.

Cohen, L., L. Manion, and K. Morrison. (2007). *Research methods in education*. 6th ed. London and New York: Routledge.

Cordingley, P. (2005). The role of coaching and mentoring in teachers' learning and development. *Education Review*, *2*(18), pp.68-76.

Cornett, J., & Knight, J. (2009). Research on coaching. *Coaching: Approaches and perspectives*, 192-216.

Creswell, J W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach,* 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: SAGE.

Creswell, J.W. and Clark, V.L.P. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage publications.

Creswell, J.W., Klassen, A.C., Plano Clark, V.L. and Smith, K.C. (2011). *Best practices for mixed methods research in the health sciences.* Bethesda (Maryland): National Institutes of Health, 2013, pp.541-545.

Creswell, J.W., & Plano Clark, V.L. (2007). D*esigning and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Darling-Hammond, L., Wei, R.C., Andree, A., Richardson, N. and Orphanos, S. (2009). *Professional learning in the learning profession*. Washington, DC: National Staff Development Council, 12.

Dawson, K. and Bondy, E. (2003). Reconceptualizing the instruction of a teacher educator: reflective peer coaching in teacher education. *Teaching Education*, 14(3), pp.319-331.

Day, D.V. (2000). Leadership development: A review in context. *The leadership quarterly*, 11(4), pp.581-613.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Logic: the theory of inquiry*. New York: Henry Holt.

Edwards, A.D. and Westgate, D.P. (1994). *Investigating Classroom Talk*. Psychology Press, New York, NY.

Elliott, J. C. (2017). The evolution from traditional to online professional development: A review. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education*, 33(3), pp.114-125

Ely, K., Boyce, L.A., Nelson, J.K., Zaccaro, S.J., Hernez-Broome, G. and Whyman, W. (2010). Evaluating leadership coaching: A review and integrated framework. *The leadership quarterly*, *21*(4), pp.585-599.

Fariña, C. and Kotch, L. (2008). *A school leader's guide to excellence: Collaborating our way to better schools*. Heinemann Educational Books.

Frost, D. (2012). From professional development to system change: teacher leadership and innovation. *Professional Development in Education,* 38(2), 205-227.

Fullan, M., & Knight, J. (2011). Coaches as system leaders. *Educational Leadership*, 69(2), 49-53

Gaikwad, P. (2017). Including rigor and artistry in case study as a strategic qualitative methodology. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(13), p.3431.

Gallant, A. and Gilham, V. (2014). "Differentiated coaching: developmental needs of coachees", *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, 3 (3), pp. 237-254. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMCE-12-2013-0059

Gallucci, C., Van Lare, M.D., Yoon, I.H. and Boatright, B. (2010). Instructional coaching: Building theory about the role and organizational support for professional learning. *American educational research journal*, 47(4), pp.919-963.

Gessnitzer, S. and Kauffeld, S. (2015). The working alliance in coaching: Why behavior is the key to success. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 51(2), pp.177-197.

Gilbert, A. M. (2016). *The nature of elementary science teachers' experiences with synchronous online, asynchronous online and face-to-face coaching* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Toledo).

Gray, D.E. (2006). Executive coaching: Towards a dynamic alliance of psychotherapy and transformative learning processes. *Management learning*, 37(4), pp.475-497.

Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y. (1994). *Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research,* In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, S. (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 105-117), Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hafford-Letchfield, T., Leonard, K., Begum, N. and Chick, N.F. (2007). Coach mentoring as a developmental tool in the workplace. *Leadership and management in social care*. London: Sage.

Hamilton, L. and Corbett-Whittier, C. (2012). *Using case study in education research*. Sage.

Haneda, M., Teemant, A. and Sherman, B. (2017). Instructional coaching through dialogic interaction: Helping a teacher to become agentive in her practice. Language and Education, 31(1), pp.46-64.

Hargreaves, A. and Skelton, J. (2012). Politics and systems of coaching and mentoring. *The Sage handbook of mentoring and coaching in education*, pp.122-138.

Heineke, S. F. (2013). Coaching discourse. *Elementary School Journal*, 113(3), pp.409-433.

Henn, M., Weinstein, M. & Foard, N. (2006). *A short introduction to social research*. London: Sage

Hobson, A. (2003). *Mentoring and coaching for new leaders: Full report*. National College for School Leadership.

Hoffman, J.V., Wetzel, M.M., Maloch, B., Greeter, E., Taylor, L., DeJulio, S. and Vlach, S.K. (2015). What can we learn from studying the coaching interactions between cooperating teachers and preservice teachers? A literature review. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 52, pp.99-112.

Hudson, F.M. (1999). The Handbook of Coaching: A Comprehensive Guide for Managers, Executives, Consultants, and Human Resources Personnel, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Ianiro, P.M. and Kauffeld, S. (2014). Take care what you bring with you: How coaches' mood and interpersonal behavior affect coaching success. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 66 (3), p.231.

Ianiro, P.M., Schermuly, C.C. and Kauffeld, S. (2013). Why interpersonal dominance and affiliation matter: An interaction analysis of the coach-client relationship. Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, *Research and Practice*, 6 (1), pp.25-46.

International Coach Federation. (2017). *Coaching: Frequently asked questions*. [Accessed 3 April 2021]. Available at: https://coachfederation.org/.

Jarvis, J., Lane, D. and Fillery-Travis, A. (2006). *The case for coaching: Making evidence-based decisions on coaching*. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Jewett, P. and MacPhee, D. (2012). A dialogic conception of learning: collaborative peer coaching. *International journal of mentoring and coaching in education*, 1 (1), pp. 12-23.

Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 1(2), pp.112-133.

Killion, J., & Harrison, C. (2006). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Kise, J. A. G. (2009). Differentiated coaching. In J. Knight (Ed.), *Coaching: Approaches and perspectives* (pp. 145-165). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Kivunja, C. and Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and Applying Research Paradigms in Educational Contexts, *International Journal of Higher Education*, 6 (5), pp.26-41.

Klinzing, K.S. (2019). *What the research says about instructional coaching*. Accessed 12 March 2021]. Available at :

https://www.cehd.umn.edu/carei/documents/InstructionalCoachingResearchReview2.19.pdf

Knight, J. (2011). Education hubs: a fad, a brand, an innovation? *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 15(3), pp.221-240.

Kraft, M.A. and Blazar, D. (2018). Taking teacher coaching to scale: Can personalized training become standard practice?. *Education Next*, 18 (4), pp.68-75.

Kraft, M. A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the causal evidence. *Review of educational research*, *88* (4), pp.547-588.

Lai, C., Li, Z. and Gong, Y. (2016). Teacher agency and professional learning in cross-cultural teaching contexts: Accounts of Chinese teachers from international schools in Hong Kong. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 54, pp.12-21.

Leedy, P.D. (1997). *Practical research: planning and design*. 6th ed. New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall

LeeKeenan, K. (2020). "We're just building!": a study of collaborative coaching interactions. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*. 9 (3), pp. 239-255

Leidenfrost, B., Strassnig, B., Schabmann, A., Spiel, C. and Carbon, C.C. (2011). Peer mentoring styles and their contribution to academic success among mentees: A person-oriented study in higher education. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 19 (3), pp.347-364.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985). *Establishing trustworthiness. Naturalistic inquiry*, 289(331), pp.289-327.

Lofthouse, R. (2019). Coaching in education: a professional development process in formation. *Professional development in education*, *45* (1), pp.33-45.

Lofthouse, R. and Leat, D. (2013). An activity theory perspective on peer coaching. *International journal of mentoring and coaching in education*, 2 (1), pp.8–20. doi:10.1108/20466851311323050

Lofthouse, R., Leat, D., and Towler, C. (2010). *Improving teacher coaching in schools; a practical guide*. CfBT Education Trust.

Lofthouse, R. and Thomas, U. (2017). Concerning collaboration; teachers' perspectives on working in partnerships to develop teaching practices. *Professional development in education*, 43 (1), pp.36–56. doi:10.1080/19415257.2015.1053570

Lord, P., Atkinson, M., & Mitchell, H. (2008). *Mentoring and coaching for professionals: a study of the research evidence*. London: TDA.

Matsumura, L. C., Bickel, D. D., Zook-Howell, D., Correnti, R., & Walsh, M. (2016). Cloud coaching. *JSD*, 37(4), pp.30–39.

Maykut, P. and Morehouse, R. (2002). *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophical and practical guide*. Routledge.

McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*. New York. Pearson Education, Inc.

Morin, J. (2016). Reflections on Coaching: The application of gestalt principles and positive psychology to transition coaching. *Gestalt Review*, 20 (3), pp.279-288.

National Foundation for Educational Research (2008). *Mentoring and Coaching for Professionals: A Study of the Research Evidence*. TDA.

Nicolaidou, M. and Petridou, A. (2011). Evaluation of CPD programmes: challenges and implications for leader and leadership development. *School effectiveness and school improvement,* 22 (1), pp.51-85.

Nicolaidou, M., Karagiorgi, Y. and Petridou, A. (2018). Professional learning through reflection promoted by feedback and coaching (PROFLEC) in Cyprus. *International Journal of Leadership in Education,* 21(4), pp.412-426.

O'Neil, J. and Marsick, V.J. (2014). Action learning coaching. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 16 (2), pp.202-221.

Palincsar, A. S. (1998). Social constructivist perspectives on teaching and learning. *Annual review of psychology*, *49* (1), pp.345-375.

Parsons, A.S., Kon, R.H., Plews-Ogan, M. and Gusic, M.E. (2021). You can have both: Coaching to promote clinical competency and professional identity formation. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 10 (1), pp.57-63.

Passmore, J. and Fillery-Travis, A. (2011). A critical review of executive coaching research: a decade of progress and what's to come. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, *4* (2), pp.70-88.

Pedder, D. and Opfer, V.D. (2010). Planning and organisation of teachers' Continuous Professional Development in schools in England. *The curriculum journal*, *21* (4), pp.433-452.

Rhodes, C. and Beneicke, S. (2002). Coaching, mentoring and peer-networking: Challenges for the management of teacher professional development in schools. *Journal of in-service education*, *28* (2), pp.297-310.

Richards, M. (2021). *Still Bringing a Coaching Approach to the Education System*. Independently published.

Rodgers, A., & Rodgers, E. M. (2007). *The effective literacy coach*. New York, NY: Teachers College Columbia University.

Saginor, N. (2008). *Diagnostic Classroom Observation: Moving Beyond Best Practice*, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2009), *Research Methods for Business Students* (5th Ed.), Pearson Education: Harlow

Schön, D. (1983). The reflective practitioner. London: Temple Smith.

Schön, D. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. Jossey-Bass.

Searby, L.J., Armstrong, D., Lochmiller, C.R. and Karnopp, J.R. (2016). The politics of coaching assistant principals: exploring principal control. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, 5 (3), pp.203-220

Shannon-Baker, P. (2016). "Making Paradigms Meaningful in Mixed Methods Research." *Journal of Mixed Methods Research,* 10 (4), pp. 319-334.

Shaw, L. and Glowacki-Dudka, M. (2019). The experience of critical self-reflection by life coaches: a phenomenological study. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 12(2), pp.93-109.

Sintema, E. J. (2020). Effect of COVID-19 on the Performance of Grade 12 Students: Implications for STEM Education. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 16(7), em1851. https://doi.org/10.29333/ejmste/7893

Sonesh, S. C., Coultas, C. W., Lacerenza, C. N., Marlow, S. L., Benishek, L. E., & Salas, E. (2015). The power of coaching: a meta-analytic investigation. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, *8*(2), pp.73-95.

Stoetzel, L. and Shedrow, S. (2020). Coaching our coaches: How online learning can address the gap in preparing K-12 instructional coaches. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 88, p.102959.

Teemant, A., Tyra, S., & Wink, J. (2011). Effects of coaching on teacher use of sociocultural instructional practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(4), 683-693.*Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17(7), pp.783–805.

Ting, S., & Hart, E. W. (2004). *Formal coaching*. The Center for Creative Leadership handbook of leadership development, 2, pp.116-150.

Toll, C. A. (2006). The literacy coach's desk reference: Processes and perspectives for effective coaching. Urbana, IL: NCTE

Tonna, M. A., Bjerkholt, E., & Holland, E. (2017). Teacher mentoring and the reflective practitioner approach. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, 6(3), pp.210–227. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMCE-04-2017-0032

Tooth, J.A., Nielsen, S. and Armstrong, H. (2013). Coaching effectiveness survey instruments: Taking stock of measuring the immeasurable. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 6(2), pp.137-151.

Tschannen-Moran, B. and Tschannen-Moran, M. (2010). *Evocative coaching*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Juliessey-Bass.

Underhill BO, McAnally K, Koriath JJ. (2007). *Executive coaching for results: The definitive guide to developing organizational leaders*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Van Nieuwerburgh, C. (2019). On the development of coaching: Where are we now? Coaching: An international journal of theory. *Research and Practice*, 12(1), pp.1–2. doi:10.1080/17521882.2018. 156386

Webster-Wright, A. (2009). Reframing professional development through understanding authentic professional learning. *Review of educational research*, *79*(2), pp.702-739.

Wells, G. (1999). *Dialogic inquiry: Towards a socio-cultural practice and theory of education*. Cambridge University Press.

Whitmore, J. (2002). *Coaching for performance*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing

Wong, K.K. and Nicotera, A. (2006). "Peer coaching as a strategy to build instructional capacity in low performing schools", in Wong, K.K. and Rutledge, S. (Eds), *Systemwide Efforts to Improve Student Achievement*, Information Age Publishing, Greenwich, CT, pp. 241-271.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research Design and Methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA Sage Publications.

Yin, R.K. (2015). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. Guilford publications.

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(3), pp.255-316.

Zepeda, S.J., Parylo, O. and Ilgan, A. (2013). "Teacher peer coaching in American and Turkish schools", *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, 2 (1), pp. 64-82.

Zhang, S., Liu, Q. and Wang, Q. (2017). A study of peer coaching in teachers' online professional learning communities. *Universal Access in the Information Society*, 16(2), pp.337-347.

Zwart, R.C., Wubbels, T., Bolhuis, S. and Bergen, T. (2008). "Teacher learning through reciprocal peer coaching: an analysis of activity sequences", *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24 (4), pp. 982-1002.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Informed Consent

I would very much like to invite you to participate in a study exploring the impact of Coaching for Educators (C4E) on a group of coaches and educators. This form will give you information about the study and what your participation will involve. Please take the time to read the information carefully.

Background Information:

The study investigates the impact of Coaching for Educators (C4E) on a group of coaches and educators. It aims to contribute to the literature by providing insights into understanding coaching in an educational context. The study is conducted by Mohamed Azaza and it is part of a thesis on the topic "Coaches' and Teachers' Perceptions of an Online Coaching Program" with the British University of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be invited to:

- participate in a questionnaire which takes between 20 and 25 minutes.
- participate in an online interview arranged at a time to suit the teachers/educators, with plenty of notice.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. The coach/teacher's decision whether or not to participate cannot affect his/her current or future relations with the institution represented by the researcher.

Confidentiality:

Only the researcher can have access to the data. He is required to maintain confidentiality regarding the identity of the coaches/educators as far as is possible. Results of this study may be used for research, publications, or presentations at conferences. Coaches' and educators' identities will be protected by using pseudonyms or codes, rather than their names or other identifying information. All data will be stored on password-protected computers accessible only to the researcher.

Risks

There are no risks

Contacts and Questions

If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact the researcher (Mohamed Azaza) via email moh.azazamelki@gmail.com or phone 00971553790099

Participant's Responsibilities and Permission:

I voluntarily agree and consent to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

- Inform investigators if I have any concerns or questions

- I agree that I have read the consent form and the conditions of this research study.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____
Signature of the Person Obtaining   Date
Consent

Appendix 2

Invitation Letter

Dear Coach/Teacher,

I am conducting a study investigating the impact of Coaching for Educators (C4E) program on a group of coaches and teachers. The study aims to contribute to the literature by providing insights into understanding coaching in an educational context. The study is conducted by Mohamed Azaza and it is part of a thesis on the topic "Coaches' and Teachers' Perceptions of an Online Coaching Program" with the British University of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

I am looking for teachers and coaches involved in the Coaching for Educators (C4E) program. You are kindly invited to contribute to this significant study which will offer unique insights in understanding coaching in an education context.

Here's what you may be interested in knowing prior to making a decision about committing to participating in this study:

- You will be asked to participate in a questionnaire that will take between 20 and 25 minutes
- You will be asked to participate in an online interview via Zoom which will require about 30-45 minutes of your time.

Please let me know if you are interested and if you would like additional information, kindly contact the researcher at moh.azazamelki@gmail.com or phone 00971553790099

Thank you for considering participating in this study.

Respectfully,

Mohamed Azaza

Appendix 3

BuiD Research Letter

www.buid.ac.ae

8th February, 2021

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that **Mr. Mohamed Ben Melki Azaza** with student ID number **20198057** is a registered full-time student on the **Master of Education in Management Leadership and Policy** programme at **The British University in Dubai** since **September 2019**.

Mr. Azaza is currently working on his dissertation titled **"Coaches' and Teachers' Perceptions of an Online Coaching Program for Educators"**.

Mr. Azaza needs your support in conducting surveys to complete his research.

This letter is issued on student's request.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Amer Alaya
Head of Student Administration

Appendix 4

Educators Survey

This questionnaire seeks to understand and explore the impact of a coaching program (Coaching for Educators C4E) on a group of educators and school leaders. The study aims to contribute to the literature by providing insights into understanding coaching in an educational context.

The questionnaire takes between 20 and 25 minutes. If you have any queries about this questionnaire, please feel free to e-mail: **moh.azazamelki@gmail.com**

Thank you for contributing your time and thoughtful responses to this questionnaire. Your participation in this research helps advance research on coaching in education.

Confidentiality

All information you provide is fully confidential, and will not be used for any purposes other than research for the project. Results from this questionnaire will be reported in summary or statistical form so that neither individuals/coaches can be identified.

Section A: About Yourself

Name: (Optional) _____

Directions: These questions are about you, your education and the time you have spent in teaching and education. In responding to the questions, please mark the appropriate box or respond by writing as instructed.

1. How old are you?

Under 25	25-29	30–39	40-49	50-59	60+

2. What is your gender?

Female	Male	Rather not say

3. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

High School	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	PhD/Doctorate	Other

4. What is your nationality?

_____

Section B: About your Teaching Experience

1. Where are you currently working?

_____

2. What is your main teaching subject?

_____

3. What grade level do you teach?

_____

4. What is your employment status?

Full-time	Part-time	Self-employed

5. How long have you been working as a teacher?

None	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	+ 20 years

Section D: About your participation in the C4E

1. How long have you been involved with C4E?

First year	1-2 years	3-5 years	+ 5 years

2. How many coaches do you work with?

1 coach	1-5 coaches	5 to 10 coaches	+ 10 coaches

Section E: About the Coaching Program (C4E)

1. Read each item carefully and place an X in the response box which most closely describes your agreement or disagreement with how each item describes C4E.

	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	The C4E program is relevant and useful to teachers.					
2	C4E provides opportunities for the coaches/coachees to develop professionally.					
3	C4E promotes commitment among the coaches/coachees to change.					
4	C4E coaches support teachers on a full range of teaching and learning strategies.					
5	The coaching program improves teachers' capacity to solve problems.					
6	The coaching program promotes reflection on teachers' practice.					
7	The coaching program promotes collaboration and sharing of expertise and knowledge.					
8	The coaching program promotes a culture of support, empathy for teachers' concerns.					
9	The coaching program leads to a change in teachers' practice and methods of working with students.					
10	The coaching program helps teachers develop action plans to integrate what the coachees' learned into their classroom practice.					
11	The coaching program exposes teachers to different ways of addressing issues in their practice and student learning.					
12	The coaching program helps in facilitating discussions on issues in teachers' practice.					
13	The coaching program supports professional growth of educators.					
14	The coaching program maintains confidentiality with teachers' information.					
15	The coaching programme promotes a culture of ongoing learning and development.					
16	The coaching program leads to teacher-based solutions and outcomes.					

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
17	The coaching program promotes respect of the coachees' context, beliefs, values and culture.					
18	The coaching program acknowledges and supports teacher autonomy in the design of goals, actions and methods of accountability.					

2. Read each item carefully and place an X in the response box which most closely describes your agreement or disagreement with the coaching topics covered.

	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Curriculum and instructional practices					
2	ICT skills and online learning					
3	Teaching students with special learning needs					
4	Teaching in a multicultural setting					
5	Student discipline and behavior problems					
6	Leadership development and people management					
7	Team dynamics					
8	Skill development					
9	Career planning and development					
10	Goal setting and prioritization					
11	Engagement and motivation					
12	Work/family balance					
13	Time management					
14	Interpersonal skills and communication					
15	Other					

Section F: About your involvement with C4E

1. Read each item carefully and place an X in the response box which most closely describes your agreement or disagreement with the reasons for your involvement with C4E.

	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	My participation in C4E is part of my formal professional development required by my school/institution.					
2	It is an opportunity to receive personal and professional guidance and support.					
3	A friend of mine recommended C4E to me.					
4	Coaching would help me attain my career aspirations.					

4

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
5	I want to enhance my teaching practice.					
6	I want to work with coaches individually, seeking support on a full range of teaching aspects.					
7	I want to enhance my career and professional development.					

2. Read each item carefully and place an X in the response box which most closely describes your agreement or disagreement with your evaluation of your involvement with C4E.

	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	My participation in the C4E coaching program is a worthwhile investment of my time and energy.					
2	The coaching program (C4E) helps in my professional development.					
3	C4E improves teachers/educators' performance /outcomes.					
4	C4E improves my knowledge and skills.					
5	C4E makes me more aware of my teaching practices.					
6	C4E supports teachers/educators to reflect on their successes and failures, to learn from their past performance.					
7	C4E increases confidence in my ability to teach and deal with job related issues.					
8	I am more aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a result of the coaching program.					
9	I am more effective in dealing with students and issues related to my practice as a result of the coaching program.					
10	I am more reflective on my teaching practices as a result of the coaching program.					

If you are interested in participating in an interview to explore your experience / involvement with C4E, please provide your email address below: moh.azazamelki@gmail.com

The interview will also remain confidential and the responses will not be used for any purposes other than research for the project.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix 5

Educators/Coaches Interviews

Research Question 1:

To what extent does C4E contribute to the continuing professional development of teachers and school leaders?

- Has coaching helped you grow personally and professionally? Explain?
- Has your participation in the Coaching for Educators (C4E) program resulted in significant changes or developments to coaching practices that you have implemented in your work? If so, could you give examples of these changes and developments?
- Can you give me any examples of what worked well for you in your coaching experience?
- Do you think coaching encourages reflection? How?
- Do you think teachers change as result of being involved in a coaching program such C4E? Can you give examples from your experience with C4E?

Research Question 2:

How do school leaders, teachers and coaches perceive coaching as a tool for their professional learning and growth?

- What motivated you to join the Coaching for Educators (C4E) program?
- In your opinion, to what extent has the Coaching for Educators (C4E) program met your expectations?
- To what degree were you satisfied with the Coaching for Educators (C4E) program? Do you feel this was a worthwhile investment of your time and energy?
- What has been the most rewarding aspect so far of your involvement with the Coaching for Educators (C4E) program?
- Is there any opportunity to give feedback on your coaching experience? Is there any follow-up and support? Explain.
- Do you think coaching should be included in teacher training programs? Why?

Research Question 3:

3. What are the teachers, school leaders and coaches' perceptions of the challenges of the C4E online coaching programme?

- What were some of the challenges you encountered in the course of your involvement with the Coaching for Educators (C4E) program?
- Can you give me any examples of what did not work for you?
- What has been the most challenging aspect of the coaching experience?
- What are your suggestions on overcoming the challenges you have identified?
- In your opinion, what aspects of the Coaching for Educators (C4E) program can be
- improved and how