

An exploration of the potential of creating a coaching culture in a primary school

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Clare Rees MA

Student number: M00558342

School of Health and Education

Middlesex University

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore the potential that coaching, as a leadership style and process of professional growth, could have in a school. As educationalists and policy makers in the United Kingdom (UK) debate the increasing challenges that schools face, organisations such as the Department for Education (DfE) and Office for standards in Education (Ofsted), are also questioning the contribution that stringent accountability measures, experienced in many UK mainstream schools, and often linked to the term 'school improvement', have had on schools. This study explores alternative approaches to leading, teaching and learning, that promote an integrated model of continuous professional growth, as part of the solution to the many problems that schools face.

The research findings suggest that building a culture of trust and resilience amongst practitioners is about getting the ethos right; something that starts with the style and tone of leadership. The findings show that it was through seemingly insignificant daily rituals between practitioners, identified by one participant as '*little conversations*', that deep and trusting professionalism began to build a momentum towards what is described as '*collective teacher efficacy*' (Goddard, et al., 2000). The research explores how deep trust can also lead to high levels of '*discretionary effort*' (Buck, 2017, p19), the vital component that can take a school from good to great.

The term '*little conversations*' used by one of the participants, was identified as a contributing factor to deeper practitioner reflection, in a culture of openness and professionalism. Throughout this study I explore the connections and parallels between effective teaching and the best approaches to professional growth, moving away from a more traditional command and control leadership style, holding practitioners to account through performance management largely based on data.

Ethical considerations were carefully researched before and throughout the project; particularly my role as both insider researcher and head teacher and the issue of power relations. Throughout the data collection and project write-up, due to the on-going nature of ethics, these considerations were returned to day by day,

considering each participant individually. The ethical considerations have been of paramount importance to me as a researcher, so that they would not affect the integrity of the research findings.

The data collection was a combination of 1-1 semi-structured interviews with senior leaders based on The Skilled Helper model (Egan, 2007) and focus groups of teachers using the Appreciative Inquiry model, (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) over a 15 month period. Senior leaders were invited to use reflective journals as a means of identifying key moments between coaching sessions, to explore in greater depth in future sessions. The data from the 1-1 coachees and focus group participants was transcribed and evaluated for emerging themes, culminating in an evaluation or 'convergence' of viewpoints from both groups.

The findings of this small scale ethnographic study have implications for leadership development, recruitment and retention of staff, and the workload, well-being and professional growth of practitioners. The study concludes with a detailed contribution to national practice. This includes the recommendation to move away from a focus on stringent accountability measures, linked with school improvement, towards a more humanistic, integrated model that invests in career-long professional growth. The research suggests that government investment in promoting a coaching culture of professional growth, across maintained schools in the UK, could transform relationships and outcomes, for the benefit of all.

Key words: leadership, followership, culture, trust, professional growth, coaching, change, reflection.

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This thesis is dedicated to John and Anthoula Gray.
Their example drives my ambition.

I hope they always knew the path that I would take.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

In this thesis I explore the potential of creating a coaching culture in a primary school context. The key question driving my research is:

To what extent can the development of a coaching culture transform outcomes in a school?

The following research sub- questions are explored throughout:

- To what extent can a coaching culture effectively support the professional growth of teachers?
- To what extent can coaching successfully build trust and resilience in a school?
- Is this a model that can be adopted as an alternative to whole school improvement?

The above research question and sub-questions will be explored in this project through the following overarching aim: to gain a practitioner understanding of the potential for a coaching culture. The following key words, aligned to the themes of leadership, followership and transformational change, are explored throughout; coaching, culture, professional growth, trust, change and reflection.

1.1 Unprecedented educational change

For over 30 years, since the introduction of the Education Act of 1988, maintained schools in the UK have embedded the many changes imposed on them. Change, it seems, is synonymous with education;

The more complex society gets, the more sophisticated leadership must become. Complexity means change, but specifically it means rapidly occurring, unpredictable, non-linear change.

(Fullan, 2001, p v)

It would be fair to assume that dealing with continual internal change in a school is commonplace. However, relentless political debate and policy change has created

an even greater level of challenge and complexity for schools. Some uncertainty and difficulty could be due to interpreting policy change. Linked to this, it is worth noting that there have been five Secretary of States for Education appointed by the UK government between 2015 and 2019, each one with their own educational philosophies, views and priorities (Department for Education, 2019).

I began my research during a time of unprecedented financial, curriculum and policy change in education. There had been mounting concerns that the UK's educational standards had dropped when compared with the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). An evaluation of the latest PISA tests, carried out on 510,00 fifteen year olds in 65 participating developed nations in 2012 (OECD, 2014), identified that the UK had failed, for the first time, to make the top 20 countries for standards in English, maths and science.

In response to this perceived drop in standards, following a review of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2011), the government published a new National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). This was followed by the introduction in 2015 of higher standards in the Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 (Primary phase). In secondary schools there was an overhaul of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), Advanced Subsidiary level (AS) and Advanced Level (A), in both content and assessment, with the aim of raising standards (DfE, 2019).

The accountability framework overseen by Ofsted, against which all UK maintained schools and academies are judged, has also undergone radical change between 2012-2019. This has resulted in a series of new frameworks, handbooks and guidelines. In September 2019, following a consultation with teaching unions and the teaching profession, a revised framework (Ofsted, 2019) reflected the changes in policy and practice based on extensive research into the science of learning and effective teaching (Black and Wiliam, 2009; Rosenshine, 2012; Deans for Impact, 2015; Hattie, 2008, 2012, 2018; Education Endowment Fund (EEF), 2017; Sweller, 2016). Alongside this was extensive research on the

importance of delivering a knowledge rich curriculum (Biesta, 2009; DfE, 2011; Sherrington, 2017; Myatt 2018).

These changes in curriculum, assessment and accountability followed a shift in educational policy away from local authority (LA) control. In March 2016 the DfE published a white paper, 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' (DfE, 2016), in which it set out a vision for a '*self-improving, school-led system*' (DfE, 2016, p15), involving all stakeholders: parents, governors, pupils and staff. This was suggested in part to deal with the demise of centralised school improvement services in local authorities across the country. It was the then government's ambition to convert every school into an academy, centrally rather than locally funded. Six months later this policy was abandoned (Adams, 2016: 'Education bill scrapped after series of reversals'), leaving a fractured assortment of academies, multi academy trusts (MATs), free-schools and maintained schools within LAs. During this period of uncertainty and diminished central support, the term 'self-improving' resonated, making me consider a model of an autonomous self-sustaining school, that could potentially develop into a model of system leadership across other schools. What I go on to describe next began to shape my thinking.

During the last decade, since the advent of austerity and diminishing council budgets, LA support has all but disappeared, alongside a year on year reduction in school budgets, which has been well documented in the press: 'Third of state schools in cash deficit' (Coughlan, 2017). A further concern is that education is facing a recruitment and retention crisis, increasingly linked to well-being and workload, 'Teacher pay: The long shadow of austerity' (Mulholland, 2018), 'Teachers are leaving the profession in their droves- and little wonder. Who would want to be one in modern Britain?' (Fearn, 2017). In my opinion, having had a career in education for 33 years, there is the desire amongst school leaders for a radical shift in mindset for policy makers, educationalists and school leaders, to review the core purpose of education. Biesta (2009), argues that education has lost its way, in a culture of accountability, driven by data;

We need to re-engage with the question as to what constitutes good education

(Biesta, 2009, p3)

It is set against this background that I decided to centre my research on an alternative approach to what is often called 'school improvement', with its links to local authority central control and accountability. It is in this quest for improved outcomes, directly linked with performance management, that we have '*lost sight*' (Biesta, 2009, p3) of the need for a real investment in our key resource; the teachers and leaders who run our schools. Using personal narratives, (Polkinghorne, 1988; Hannabuss, 2000; Brophy, 2009) as an evidence based approach of data collection, could be part of the solution, as suggested here;

Narrative is not a replacement for....data collection, analysis and synthesis. It deserves to be placed near the centre of organisational thinking, not least because it opens up possibilities which a purely analytical approach may neglect and better reflects the reality of complex environments.

(Brophy, 2009, p104)

My aim, through this research, is to explore an integrated model of professional growth that explores these '*possibilities*' (Brophy, 2009, p104) and places more emphasis on an evolution of professional growth over time.

1.3 Positionality

As the head teacher of an inner-city primary school I have a deep rooted interest in carrying out research to explore a lasting and effective approach to developing better outcomes for all in my school. This interest is in part due to my unconventional route to headship with a background as a LA adviser, which gave me the opportunity and appetite to research and write a number of LA publications based on underperforming minority groups and Action Research as a means of professional growth for teachers:

Rees, C. (2009) *Raising the Achievement of Somali Pupils* (Ealing Council)

Rees, C (2010) *2010 Lead Research Practitioner Programme* (Ealing Council)

Rees, C (2011) *2011 Lead Research Practitioner Programme* (Ealing Council)

An introduction to coaching and subsequent accreditation in 2007 as a mentor-coach from the London College of Leadership in Learning (LCLL), based at the Institute of Education (IoE), made me a firm advocate of coaching for professional growth, which I began to use in earnest as a school improvement adviser for an inner London LA. Coaching was the antithesis of my normal every day work as an adviser, which consisted of calling schools and head teachers to account, using data as a starting point and then set rigorous targets. Through coaching I began to see the challenges and barriers faced by leaders in a different light.

When I returned to mainstream education in 2012 as a head teacher, I decided to use coaching initially as a form of professional development for senior leaders. This led me to consider the tensions and contradictions of instilling a culture of resilience and trust in a school, set against the backdrop of relentless monitoring and accountability. On the surface, resilience and trust seemed incompatible with monitoring and accountability or the process of school improvement. I began to question how it was possible to develop effective relationships based on trust, when you were also calling people to account for their pupils' outcomes. My determination to develop a more personalised approach that invested in effective relationships, professional growth and wellbeing, led me to carry out further research, using an ethnographic approach and qualitative research methods, set out in this thesis.

In my opinion the overbearing accountability and monitoring systems in many schools needed a radical rethink and were creating some of the problems, outlined above, facing mainstream schools across the UK. Biesta concludes that;

...a culture of accountability makes it very difficult for the relations between parents/students and educators/institutions to develop into mutual, reciprocal, and democratic relationships, relationships that are based on a shared concern for the common educational good (or goods)- relationships, in other words, characterized by responsibility.

(Biesta, 2004, p 249)

Biesta argues that by losing sight of the professional relationships that we build with stakeholders, we have lost our way and this is now being reflected in the many challenges that we face. Although I suggest that there needs to be some form of accountability; one that can sit alongside a much more personalised approach to professional development. This taking responsibility for our professional responsibility is further explored in the use of narrative based practice;

The temporal, schematic linking of events as narrative is the kind of knowing that is used to understand personal action and autobiography. It is the format people use to organize their understandings of each other.

(Polkinghorne, 1988, p111)

I was beginning to see the potential merits of a blended, integrated approach to professional growth in which accountability could work alongside a more humanistic, personal approach; with accountability becoming an individual commitment to change.

An example of the contradiction and tension within a culture of accountability in a typical school like my own is performance related pay. At the beginning of the academic year targets are set for each teacher and used as a measure of success in end of year appraisals. The overall performance of each teacher is scrutinised by a pay panel of governors resulting in a possible incremental rise if targets have been successfully met. However, as educators we know that learning is not a linear process neatly taking you from A to B and then C. Yet this is poorly reflected in the 'flight paths' of aspirational targets set for individual pupils when they begin high school. These 'flight paths' are created from a student's starting points and estimate their trajectory in each subject based on a combination of prior data and current formative and summative assessments. Whilst some pupils reach or exceed their targets, others do not, often for a variety of reasons that is not illustrated by data alone. However, teacher performance is invariably measured by pupil outcomes, which has contributed to a culture of teaching to the test resulting

in a narrowing of the curriculum. Furthermore, I would argue that it cannot be the responsibility of one teacher, or subject leader to influence one group of pupils in one academic year. The responsibility lies collectively with all staff over time. This collaborative approach that links 'Direction, Alignment and Commitment' (DAC) is described by Drath et al as 'a more integrative ontology of leadership' (Drath et al, 2008, p635), that calls for a new approach to leadership in complex times, which I will expand on further in my Literature Review.

In a welcome review to a system driven by data, Ofsted is not only proposing to focus on the progress pupils make rather than their attainment, (Ofsted, 2019) but is also putting less emphasis on internal data, such as target setting or 'flight paths' for pupils. Perhaps, at last, there are signs that holding people to account in a highly regulated education system which has created an emphasis on teaching to the test and moved away from the core purpose of education, is changing. Biesta makes the point that;

It has become so much more difficult to develop relationships of responsibility under the accountability regime.

(Biesta, 2009, p3)

He presents an argument that suggests practitioners should take responsibility for their responsibility;

...as a starting point from which the democratic potential of accountability might be regained.

(Biesta, 2004, p 232)

Taking back control of professional development within schools and placing it in the hands of practitioners to develop an ethos of '*collective teacher efficacy*' (Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, 2006) could, in my view, be a turning point for whole school development and is further explored in this research.

Since I began this research in 2015 topics such as teacher workload and wellbeing, the difficulty in the recruitment and retention of teachers and a school system that values accountability and monitoring, are seldom out of the news; 'Schools staff crisis looms as austerity hits teachers' pay' (Savage, 2019). In

response to this growing crisis the DfE launched 'The Workload Challenge' (DfE, 2014) a month long survey asking for teachers' views on reducing unnecessary workload. 44,000 teachers responded with the survey concluding that marking, planning and data management were the key factors that created an unsustainable workload. As a result, Ofsted published a new 'School Inspection Handbook' (DfE, 2015) clarifying what inspectors did and did not expect to see regarding planning, feedback and marking. Five years on and the same problems are still evident and widely publicised in the press and on social media. In response to this the DfE (2018) published guidance to support school leaders to reduce workload and increase retention; Reducing Teacher Workload, (DfE, 2018) and the Workload Reduction Toolkit (DfE, 2018). This has been followed by another set of publications on recruitment and retention; (DfE, 2019), pointing to an on-going crisis that, in spite of various initiatives and publications, has now gained the attention of the media and policy makers.

Closely linked to the recruitment and retention of staff is the increasing issue of workload and well-being. In its annual survey on teacher wellbeing in 2018, the Education Support Partnership (ESP) found that 57% of teachers were experiencing mental health problems and considering leaving the profession. 72% of teachers cite workload as the main reason for considering leaving their job. The results conclude with a stark message from ESP's CEO, Julian Stanley;

Teaching is one of the most important jobs there is, a chance to shape the future of the next generation. But by turning it into an unmanageable task or failing to make wellbeing a priority in schools we risk alienating those with the passion and skill to succeed.

(Stanley, 2018, p3)

This seemed to add further validity to my ambition to carry out research calling for a new approach. An approach based on promoting a culture of trust to support effective professional growth, rather than a regime of overbearing monitoring and time-consuming marking and planning enshrined in a system that calls practitioners to account.

1.4 Context of the research

These issues were very real concerns in my school, Greenfields Primary School (pseudonym), when I was appointed the head teacher in 2015, following a four year headship in another London primary school. Greenfields is an inner-city, larger than average two form entry primary school in an area of high deprivation, measured on the 2015 Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2015), with a high percentage of overcrowded and temporary housing (such as bed and breakfast accommodation). 97% of the pupils are bilingual with 99% from a black or minority ethnic background. 50% of pupils are still in the early stages of learning English when measured against the English Language Proficiency Scale (GOV.UK, 2016). Most pupils who are new arrivals come from the Indian sub-continent with very little English. Mobility, a measure of how many pupils arrive at a school after the start of the academic year or leave before the end of it, is very high at 40%, compared with the national average of 20%. This reflects the transient and complex nature of the community the school serves.

At Greenfields over 60% of the teaching staff are early career teachers so creating an approach that supports them to take responsibility and develop professionally is of vital importance. By comparison, the large majority of support, administrative and ancillary staff have worked at the school for many years, live in the locality and are fluent in at least one of the school's most common community languages; Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati and Farsi. This is a huge asset to the school and supports the induction and on-going support for pupils and their families. In 2017 a new leadership team was created and included three internally appointed phase leaders. Two were promoted to Assistant Head teacher and one became the Assistant Head teacher for inclusion.

In addition to the contextual and socio-economic issues and recent changes in leadership, the school has faced a number of educational challenges that have been addressed through whole school priorities in recent years such as poor behaviour, low attendance and below average academic outcomes in every key stage. It was clear to me as a school leader that I needed to find a different

approach if my school was to thrive in the current educational climate. Did I have the courage, in this turbulent time of change, to trial an approach with a focus on professional growth that I felt had such potential but for which there was very little evidence-based research? Peacock (2016) argues that there is an alternative approach to leadership. Her words filled me with hope that I was now on a different path of 'school improvement' and school leadership;

Lead the way in finding a means to improve our accountability systems, informed and inspired by dispositions of trust, openness, generosity and professional courage.

(Peacock, 2016, p132)

In addition to my role as a head teacher I am contracted to work in my LA with a teaching school to deliver leadership training to senior leaders across the LA and act as a mentor-coach to new head teachers. Engaging with theories of leadership, change management and followership has presented an ideal platform to gauge the appetite for change amongst my peers. Their ongoing narratives have given me an insight into many different cultures and systems within schools and confirmed my belief that there was an alternative approach to leading a school that could be shared across my locality and networks.

This approach, which forms the central theme of my research, is how to develop a culture of trust and resilience amongst leaders by focusing on professional growth, which then impacts on the rest of the organisation or its 'followers' whose importance is described here by Kelley;

So followership dominates our lives and organisations, but not our thinking, because our preoccupation with leadership keeps us from considering the nature and importance of followers.

(Kelley, 1988, p142)

Kelley argues that we focus too much attention on the leaders and leadership development, to the detriment of the followers. Followers are often seen as requiring careful management (Kotter, 1990, Kubler Ross and Kessler, 2005). However, when the leadership style is collegiate, encouraging the reciprocal

process of leading and following, replicating the style of effective teaching and learning advocated by Hattie (2008, 2012) Rosenshine (2012) and Sweller, (2016), then I believe there is the potential for transformational change within a supportive, less hierarchical system.

In my opinion, trust, resilience and self-reflection need to be well established if the reciprocal nature of leadership and followership is to take root. We know from the work of Maslow (1954) and Berne (1964) how low self-esteem and a lack of self-belief impacts on the learner, so I was interested to explore how developing a culture of trust could create confident and reflective teachers who wanted to commit to teaching as a long term career. By using coaching and developing a coaching culture I hoped to create a culture of professionalism that also reflected the changing ideology of what constitutes effective teaching and learning.

The tension between accountability, relationships and trust is explored throughout this project. So too is my role as an insider-researcher, involved in carrying out research with teachers in my school and the need to act within an ethical framework. The power relations, my ability to present the findings objectively and the ethical considerations of the research were always at the forefront of my thinking; be this at the point of capturing data, ensuring the well-being of the participants or during the interpretation of it and the need for confidentiality. However, given all of the background set out above and the current unprecedented challenges felt in all sectors in education, I felt that this research, albeit on a small scale, is timely and that important lessons on a bigger scale could be learned from it. There is a growing interest in coaching in education (Barkley and Bianco, 2010; Burley and Pomphrey, 2011; Cheliotis and Reilly, 2010; Knight, 2007; Van Nieuwerburgh, 2012) but less research on its impact in a school setting.

For all these reasons, the emphasis on organisational culture and professional collaboration through coaching to effect change took shape in my mind as a doctoral project.

1.5 Summary and research structure

There are three main objectives to this research that are revisited through the subsequent chapters:

- To explore the impact of developing a coaching culture as a tool for professional growth and school development;
- to employ approaches such as Appreciative Inquiry (AI) (Cooperrider, and Whitney, 2005), The Skilled Helper (Egan, 2007) and GROW (Whitmore, 2009) and evaluate their potential as a means of building high levels of trust, resilience and motivation amongst staff;
- To explore the impact 1-1 coaching may have on the professional growth of senior leaders.

In Chapter 2, The Literature review, I explore definitions of coaching and mentoring and mentor-coaching, terms that are often interlinked and sometimes confused. I set out a brief history of coaching in the UK education system including the most up to date research in this area. I explore the tensions of creating a coaching culture within a rigorous accountability framework. I introduce the coaching frameworks that had an influence on my practice and were trialled at my school. In the Literature Review I explore the gaps in research of creating a coaching culture, which I hope to address within this project. The chapter includes a section on leadership, followership and transformational change and their link to coaching and creating a coaching culture. I will also explore the changing ideology of teaching and being a teacher in the UK compulsory education system and the implications this has on professional growth and leadership and the particular contribution that this thesis has on this body of research.

In Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design, I set out the design and methodology of this ethnographic study and expand on the theoretical framework that underpins this research. Within this chapter I also explore my ontological and epistemological stance, the ethical implications of being an insider-researcher, the role of reflexivity and the issue of power relations.

In Chapter 4: Project Activity, I set out the project activity and method of analysis for the research methodology described in Chapter 3: 1-1 coaching of three senior

leaders and two focus groups. I will also describe in more detail the selection of participants and the format for data collection. All the relevant documents related to the project activity are either described further in tables or set out in the appendices, which I will refer to individually throughout.

In Chapter 5: Findings, I evaluate the 1-1 coaching using a combination of The Skilled Helper (Egan, 2007) coaching model (figure 3) that sets out three coaching stages, alongside the GROW model (Whitmore, 2009) (figure 4). Then I evaluate the focus group feedback which was analysed by mapping it against the AI framework (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005). Finally I synthesise the two sets of data, identifying the convergence of themes identified between the two different groups of participants.

In Chapter 6: Discussion, I pull together the threads of the research carried out in this project in an attempt to interpret the results and their validity. In doing so I will highlight the limitations of the methods and any shortcomings linked to the findings described in Chapter 5. This chapter will explore the findings in relation to the cultural and socio-political environment both within the school community and more generally with relevance to teacher dynamics and practice.

In Chapter 7: Conclusion, I address the contribution to practice of the research statement and questions set out in Chapter 1 and make recommendations aimed at local and national level including opportunities for wider dissemination of the findings and future research development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to the literature review

The aim of this research is to explore the potential of creating a coaching culture as a tool for school development during times of significant change and offer a unique contribution to the existing body of knowledge on this subject. In chapter 1 I set out the reasons, alongside mounting media evidence and my own 30 year career in education, why I felt compelled to do this research; schools face enormous challenges, budget cuts, the need to reach higher standards, difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff and national concerns about staff workload and well-being. I would argue that these inter-connected issues, the direct result of relentless change in policy, summative assessments, funding and accountability (referenced in chapter 1), need a radical rethink. Creating a culture of coaching by investing in a more humanistic approach that supports the 'Social Capital' (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2014) of schools has, I believe, the potential to address some of these challenges and transform educational outcomes.

Whilst researching for examples of evidence based practice using coaching in an educational setting, I came across a small, select number of research papers and publications, which led me to consider why it was not being used more widely in schools, particularly as it is not a new concept and had such a positive introduction into UK education almost 20 years ago. Therefore, throughout this chapter I identify the gaps in research that this project will identify alongside the possible reasons why coaching has not become embedded in school systems.

The many forms and uses of coaching in schools, described herein, point to some of the reasons why further research such as this is needed;

In this landscape coaching inevitably takes many forms and there is insufficient research relating to its efficacy.

(Lofthouse, 2018, p32)

Lofthouse makes the valid point that the lack of research to establish the impact of coaching in schools has led to a lack of trust in its effectiveness, and whether it is worthy of the considerable investment of time and money, at a time when school budgets are particularly stretched. When I started this research there were no nationally approved qualifications or standards for coaching in an educational context in the UK. However, in a positive move, a new Post Graduate Certificate (PGC) in mentor-coaching for educational practitioners is being launched at Leeds Beckett University in September 2019. This signals a growing interest in the real investment, through professional development, of coaching in schools, which might over time give it more credibility as a professional development tool.

It is my intention in this small scale research project to generate some professional reflection and discussion, not only for myself and my peers, but for other interested parties that might consider promoting or trialling some of the approaches set out in the subsequent chapters. Part of the discussion will explore not only the potential benefits, but also the difficulties and tensions in adopting the recommendations that are addressed in this thesis.

I begin the review by exploring the etymology of coaching and mentoring and how coaching differs from mentoring, a concept that is more familiar to educational practitioners and widely used in educational contexts in the UK. The issue of power relations in the mentoring model will also be explored, particularly in relation to mentor-coaching, a process that merges the two concepts. Mentoring is linked with professional development (DfE, 2018) and therefore, in the current educational climate, accountability, because often it is a form of support that enables a practitioner to move from one level to the next with clearly defined objectives that can be measured against a set of criteria, often linked to pupil outcomes. I will therefore explore whether mentor-coaching erodes the development of trust that is a central part of coaching and presents a contradiction in terms.

I feel it is helpful to give an overview of the history of coaching as a tool for professional and school development in the UK educational system. This is partly because my introduction to coaching in an educational context in 2004 came at a time when it was still a relatively new concept for schools in the UK. Since then it has had a huge impact on my own professional growth and journey, making me seek out and read new approaches to enrich my repertoire. This interest has supported me and afforded me professional insights throughout my career in a variety of roles; as an educational coach, school leader, consultant head teacher, and a head teacher mentor, coaching other school leaders in my locality. During this time, my own understanding of coaching has evolved and changed, but in my opinion this personal evolution is not echoed in the research and literature that I have read, or the development and commitment to coaching that I have seen in schools. This gap has given rise to my initial research question and my interest in exploring the potential of coaching and creating a coaching culture in a school.

I then evaluate some of the coaching approaches that I have used and that have influenced my approach to coaching, which are further discussed in Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology, and Chapter 4: Findings. One of these models, The Skilled Helper (Egan, 2007, Figure 3), is a framework that was introduced to me as part of the Institute of Education's (IoE) National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) course, through the work of another head teacher, Jo Lindon (2011), who had carried out research into developing a culture of coaching at his school.

The GROW model (Whitmore, 2009), which Lindon states is drawn from Egan's work (Figure 4) is well-known and widely used, particularly in school settings, as a short term development tool with the end goal shared from the outset. It appealed to me because of the links with Appreciative Inquiry (AI), (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005), a highly motivating process to envisage change, which I go onto explain in more detail in Chapter 3, as part of my research methodology. Both GROW (Whitmore, 2009) and AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) engage practitioners in the reflective process of looking at what could be achieved (the

goal or dream) and what their current reality actually is (reality or discovery), with the discussion on what the journey from one to the other will entail.

The London College of Leadership and Learning (LCLL) Mentor-coaching model (Figure 2) devised by Joy and Pask (2007) was the first model I used as a trainee coach in my role as a LA adviser, and requires a considerable investment of time, which in a school context is unrealistic; each coaching session lasting approximately two hours and 30 minutes. Van Nieuwerburgh's Introduction to coaching (2017) and Stanier's 'The Coaching Habit' (2016) offer a beginner's guide for new coaches in any organisation, both of which are a good starting point and represent the huge range of publications available on coaching. However, I would suggest that mastering coaching requires an investment of time to practice and hone the necessary skills and a ready supply of participants willing to be coached. Key coaching skills, such as the ability to react with empathy rather than sympathy, point to the need for coaches to be properly trained, highlighting another potential challenge for schools;

Sympathy and identification can each cause the mentoring-coaching relationship to be hijacked. If the purpose of that relationship is to facilitate dialogue...the focus has to be wholly on that person.

(Joy and Pask, 2007, p122)

I will also consider the trap that some schools have fallen into, where coaching has been seen as a tool for professional development in a similar way to mentoring, often used where there are concerns about the performance or practice of an individual. My vision for coaching is to create the right ethos in which all practitioners, not a select few, can flourish, by creating a coaching culture. Coaching, if it was to have transformational impact would need to be seen as a way of leading, teaching and development for all. It would need to be an integral part of the culture of the organisation, instead of a separate tool for improvement, often linked to performance management and accountability. What I call 'tick-box' coaching; taking an 'off the shelf' strategy and applying a 'one-type-fits-all'

approach, does not, in my opinion, build on a sustainable and personalised model that grows out of a genuine coaching culture.

Building on this point I unpick the notion of a coaching culture and what this implies in terms of the whole school ethos and continuing professional growth, including the benefits and potential limitations of adopting this approach. At this point the link between coaching and a coaching culture will also be explored. There could be implications here, touched on above, for schools that want to offer coaching as a separate initiative without the required skill base or depth of understanding. In my view creating a coaching culture is about creating professional trust which is linked to a particular style of leadership. Here I argue that investing in '*self-efficacy*' and '*collective teacher efficacy*' (Bandura, 1994, Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, 2000, Hattie, 2012, 2018 Donohoo, 2017) to build openness and trust has the potential to create a new approach to school development by investing in professional growth.

Finally I will explore the importance of leadership with a particular focus on the types of leadership that promote openness, trust and collegiality over more traditional command and control approaches. I will also explore the qualities that contribute to effective leadership such as 'Emotional Intelligence' (Goleman et al, 2002), creating the right ethical and professional culture (Heffernan, 2011, 2015) and how these contribute to an authentic and ethical leadership (Avolio and Gardner, 2005) that considers followers as a fundamental aspect of transformational change (Kelley, 1992). I also consider the advent of system leadership which is now more commonplace as the growth of MATs gather momentum across the UK (DfE, 2012). I consider how this presents leaders with a potential challenge in developing a culture of trust and openness.

2.2 Search Strategy

My search strategy focused on the theory and research of coaching in education as a process for professional growth, in developing a culture of trust, in leadership, followership and transformational change. I used a range of search engines available through Middlesex University's Library, databases including Taylor and

Francis online and Emerald, the Middlesex University Repository for research and theses, and the British Educational Research Association (BERA), by using the following key words: leadership, followership, coaching culture, mentoring, developing trust and educational coaching. I joined Twitter and used the same words to search for educationalists that were blogging and tweeting on educational coaching and professional growth. Another very useful tool was The Key for School Leaders, which alerted me regularly to the latest DfE publications, any notable educational policy developments, any educational articles in the media and any updates or changes to the Ofsted framework and guidance. Finally, as a fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching I had access to online blogs and articles by other fellows and educationalists, many highlighting the challenges that maintained schools face as outlined in Chapter 1.

Using the BERA search tool as an example I carried out a search using the following key words; leadership, followership, coaching culture, mentoring, developing trust, educational coaching. In August 2018 there were 160 blogs and articles on leadership, none on followership, 40 articles on mentoring, 33 on developing trust, 29 on educational coaching and none on a coaching culture. This began to fit a pattern where leadership seemed to generate a lot of responses but there was less written about educational coaching and very little about a coaching culture.

2.3 Mentoring, coaching or mentor-coaching? Is there a difference?

There seems to be a certain amount of confusion about the terms mentoring, coaching and mentor-coaching. Exploring the etymology is a useful way of defining the terms mentoring and coaching.

The etymology of the term mentoring originates from the mythological Greek character Mentor, in Homer's *Odyssey*, a trusted adviser to Telemachus and friend of Odysseus. The name means adviser and is linked to the Greek word *mentos*, meaning intent, purpose and passion. The current definition of a mentor is an experienced or trusted adviser (Oxford University Dictionary, 2019).

Mentoring is a well-established process in UK schools, particularly at key career transitions. School leaders will have had experience of being a mentee and a mentor at various stages throughout their careers. A good example of this is a newly qualified teacher (NQT) who is assigned an 'induction tutor' (DfE, 2018, p16) in their first year as a teacher who *'should be able to provide effective coaching and mentoring'* (DfE, 2018, p16). However, I am not sure it is helpful or accurate to suggest that an induction tutor could provide effective mentoring and coaching. An educational mentor is usually a more experienced teacher who offers support, advice and signposting to someone less experienced. In a school context a mentee will often be told how to develop or change their practice and given clear signposting to support them, which in my view is a very different process to coaching. In Ancient Greece, Socrates is cited as describing the key role of the mentor (and the impact on the mentee) to his friend Crito:

Socrates: When a man is taking (his training) seriously, does he pay attention to all praise and criticism and opinion indiscriminately, or only when it comes from the one qualified person, the actual doctor or trainer?

Crito: Only when it comes from the one qualified person.

Socrates: Then he should be afraid of the criticism and welcome the praise of the one qualified person, but not those of the general public.

(Socrates, cited by de Botton, 2014, p34)

This alludes to the power relations in mentoring where you are receiving praise and could perceive feedback as a *'criticism'* from a *'qualified person'*.

Coaching, on the other hand comes from the term 'coach' and is *'the process of training somebody to play a sport, to do a better job or to improve a skill'* (Oxford University Dictionary, 2019). There are also references to coaching dating back to the mid Fifteenth Century where the Hungarian village Kocs revolutionised the effectiveness of the horse drawn coach, making it much lighter and as a result considerably faster (online Etymology Dictionary, 2019). The word has since become synonymous with supporting someone to reach a goal in a quicker, more efficient manner by helping them to reflect on current practice. In my view,

coaching is not signposting; it is helping someone to find their own solutions through skilful questioning that provokes reflection and professional growth.

Mentoring and coaching are therefore different processes, both extremely useful and important in professional educational contexts, but with very different starting points and goals as described below:

Coaches listen, ask questions, and enable coachees to discover for themselves what is right for them. Mentors give advice and expert recommendations.

(Rosinski, 2003, p5)

I agree with Rosinski who is suggesting that coaching is about listening and supporting someone through deep questioning to arrive at their own answers, whilst mentoring is about telling and describing a goal based on the mentor's expertise, which could, for example, be part of a performance management conversation. Although there is not one universally agreed definition of educational coaching, this one is often cited (Van Neubergh 2017, Clutterbuck and Megginson 2006, Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck 2014) The quote from Rosinski (2003) has particular resonance here because of its focus on personal growth and supporting others to find their own solutions rather than mentoring; telling them what their next steps are;

Unlocking people's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.

(Whitmore, 2009, p 11)

The coach is seen as a facilitator, supporting the coachee to find their own solutions. As previously stated, schools are well-placed and trained in mentoring and there could be a tendency from an inexperienced coach to slip into mentoring as a default style in one-to-one sessions. Coaching on the other hand is described as '*non-directive*' Downey (2003, p 24). Moreover;

Mentoring invents a future based on the expertise and wisdom of another, whereas coaching is about inventing a future from the individual's own possibilities.

(Zeus and Skiffington, 2002, p4)

Power relations are also implied in mentoring that are less evident in coaching. This is an important point to emphasise in this study, as the potential for creating a coaching culture is based on building a culture of trust which might be compromised in a mentoring relationship, because of its links with *'fulfilling standards'* described in the following blog:

Mentoring is often structured around fulfilling standards in order to progress further. Coaching is the opposite of mentoring as the coach does not evaluate, judge or set targets, and the person being coached is in full control of the discussion. Unlike mentoring, coaching gives the recipient more say over the direction of professional development.

(Jones, 2014, n.p.)

The terms mentor-coaching can be used together to signal a joint process, which can confuse the issue for both mentor/ coach and mentee/coachee because of the dual process of switching from questioning and raising awareness (coaching) to telling and directing (mentoring) based on the mentor-coach's expertise. The impact of what Lofthouse describes as the *'collaborative dualism of coaching'* (Lofthouse, 2018 p34) with coach and coachee understanding their respective roles, can be seen *'through dialogue based on curiosity, listening, creating spaces in conversations'* (Lofthouse, 2018, p34) which could be compromised in a mentoring role, where the mentor might have fixed goals in mind for the mentee. This is further borne out in research on the effectiveness of peer-coaching (Lofthouse and Thomas, 2017) where practitioners were more likely to co-construct meaning because they were working with peers, such as their parallel teacher, without the power relations of a hierarchical scenario, as is often implied with mentoring. By adopting the term 'mentor-coaching' I interpret this as implying that an expert is involved to fulfil the mentoring aspect and that there will also be deep questioning to support reflection from the coachee, as advocated by Pask and Joy (2007).

The literature indicates that to create an authentic culture of growth you need to create not only the 'spaces' within a coaching conversation, described by Lofthouse (2018, p34), but regular, non-threatening opportunities for discussion or '*little conversations*' as described by one of the participants in this research. This moves away from the need for formal, pre-arranged 1-1 coaching sessions, toward a coaching culture to support professional growth.

In my experience, the processes of mentoring and coaching, although very different, are part of a continuum that can both support professional growth. To an expert coach, coaching and mentoring can both be skillfully deployed. However, I would argue, based on the literature, that very few schools have an expert mentor-coach to support professional development, and herein lies part of the problem; the lack of expertise of the coach (Lofthouse et al, 2010).

This could be perceived as surprising, given that coaching is not a new concept. With over 50 thousand books currently in publication (source: Amazon, August 2019), it has become a universally used, popular, modern-day management tool. Coaching has links to many forms of therapy and personal and professional development, such as; psychotherapy, neuro-linguistic programming, counselling, mentoring, executive coaching, sports and life coaching. It has been used as an executive management tool in business for many years and has generated a huge amount of literature, articles, web based learning, resources and courses on every form of coaching. This diverse range of coaching approaches is comprehensively brought together in 'The Complete Handbook of Coaching' edited by Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck (2014). In the introduction the editors acknowledge that whilst the range of strategies provides an exciting opportunity, they can also lead to confusion, particularly for someone new to the field. With such universal popularity, it is concerning that it is still not embedded in the UK education system. This is echoed in a two-year research project commissioned by The National College and the CfBT (Confederation for British Teachers) Educational Trust, and carried out by Newcastle University who conclude that coaching cannot take root unless it is seen as a central part of the school culture;

In short coaching must be seen as an integral part of school improvement planning and as a key process in developing school culture

(Lofthouse et al, 2010, p49)

I agree with Lofthouse et al that we need to see coaching as *'integral'* and as a *'key process in developing school culture.'* However, as something that is seemingly straightforward, coaching is extremely complex. In theory, a one-to-one conversation with a colleague seems straightforward, but in practice it is much more complicated to establish effectively in a school. Van Nieuwerburgh concurs with this and describes coaching as *'both complex and simple'* (2017,p xiii) in that what appears on the surface as a conversation between two people, has the potential to be the catalyst for significant change in an atmosphere of mutual trust with an emphasis on the professional growth of both coachee and coach. He implies that the simplicity lies in the skills of an experienced and confident coach. I would add that the conditions and factors leading to two individuals engaging in a coaching conversation in a school, prompts further reflection for both coach and coachee, which adds to this notion of complexity for schools hoping to set up coaching as part of professional development. Coaching requires a carefully considered investment of time, funding and resources. I am often asked by schools that I support how to set up coaching in a school context. I always begin with an evaluation of the current reality by exploring the intent of a coaching strategy with senior leaders, as illustrated by the types of questions that are an appendix to my Professional Growth Policy, set out below:

- *Is coaching written into your professional development policy?*
- *Who is doing the coaching? Are they trained? How much experience do they have? Are they internal or external coaches? Are there cost implications?*
- *Will the conversation be in a coaching style or will it have elements of mentoring and be mentor-coaching?*
- *Has everyone been offered coaching or are some (such as students and newly qualified teachers offered mentoring? Is it optional?*
- *Is coaching being used as a performance management tool?*
- *How will confidentiality be maintained?*

- *Is this a one off strategy or part of a suite of professional development tools that are offered by the school?*
- *Has enough time been allocated for reflection after the session has ended? Is a follow-up session offered?*
- *Has relevant support been planned for and factored in for the coachee?*

(C. Rees 2019, p 6)

This is not an exhaustive list but serves to show that even before we have looked at the steps within the coaching conversation itself, there are many other factors that could significantly influence it, pointing to its complexity and another possible reason why it has not been easy to establish in schools. I will describe this further in Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design, where I discuss the process of how these questions were developed and piloted.

Another area that I believe is a fundamental barrier to coaching being used successfully in schools is the link to accountability, described here in the following blog:

Educational leadership has become a very managerial process- one through which a priority is holding colleagues to account. The language of exploration and development which might be developed through coaching and mentoring does not always translate easily in accountability regimes.

(Lofthouse, 2015, n.p.)

Whereas there is no question that school leaders will have to be accountable in some way, I believe there should be a balance between accountability and trust that is context-dependent, will need to be carefully constructed and build on the existing culture of the school. Teachers need to be viewed as professionals who can be trusted, making them feel valued and supported within a culture of high expectations and outcomes for all. As already outlined in Chapter 1, the mounting pressure on school leaders and teachers has created an accountability model that is in need of a rethink.

Coaching as a tool for school development and professional growth, given the pressures on schools, has great potential and in my view could provide some of

the solution. However, much of this relies on the vision and leadership qualities of the head teacher or CEO of each separate organisation, an area which I will go onto explore later in this chapter.

2.4 The emergence of coaching in UK Education

As I have already stated, a huge amount has been written over the last 30 years about executive coaching (Egan, 2007, Clutterbuck and Megginson 2006, Passmore 2015, Hawkins 2012, Stanier, 2016) but coaching in an educational context is a newer concept. In 2003 the then Department for Education and Science (DfES) published a Key Stage 3 booklet 'Sustaining Improvement: A Suite of Modules on Coaching, Running Networks and Building Capacity'. As the title suggests, three strategies were introduced in one document. Described in this publication, coaching started out as a prescriptive three part process based on teaching observations and giving feedback, which in my view, has more in common with mentoring than coaching. Van Nieuwerburgh observes that;

Coaching in education then was an activity with classroom observation at its centre and professional development as its aim.

(Van Nieuwerburgh, 2012, p7)

Notions of trust, confidentiality and having the correct mindset are all mentioned as key factors in this '*specific interpretation of coaching and its use in an educational setting.*' Van Neuwerburgh (2012, p8). In this context coaching was described as a hierarchical process based on the skills or experience of an expert, more in line with mentoring, that I have described above.

It was the following year, in 2004 as a LA adviser supporting school improvement across a number of schools, that I was introduced to coaching as a tool to support sustainable change. In this case the emphasis was on leadership rather than the professional development of teachers. I began a four day accredited mentor-coaching course run by the then London Centre of Leadership and Learning (LCLL) which was based at the Institute of Education (IoE). The course used the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE) National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching (2005) as an introduction to the course

(see Figure 1 below). It is from this point that my interest in educational coaching and being a more reflective practitioner began.

The CUREE National Framework (2005) is a comprehensive guide covering everything you needed to know to distinguish between and introduce mentoring and coaching in your school:

- Principles of mentoring and coaching
- Mentoring and coaching: core concepts
- Skills for mentoring and coaching
- Mentoring and coaching: a comparison

It also introduced different types of coaching depending on the context; mentoring, specialist coaching and co-coaching, comparing the skills required to use each one and any overlaps. This framework, based on research, was, in my view, ahead of its time and is still relevant and useful today. It seemed to offer a somewhat daunting range of approaches that could be used to suit a wide range of coaching or mentoring models. In my view this model and approach assumed that schools had created a coaching culture of professional growth with skilled and experienced practitioners ready to deliver the model. However, in reality it set out a change in culture and approach that while both thought-provoking and aspirational, would need very careful strategic planning to implement successfully. What it did not address to support a culture of trust was advice on confidentiality, the ethics of trust and compassion. Whilst it listed strategies such as 'asking good questions' it does not go on to describe these in any depth. However, as a starting point it was helpful in distinguishing between mentoring and coaching, something noted by Van Nieuwerburgh as a reason why the CUREE framework was timely as it set out the similarities and differences in these two processes clearly. (see figure 1 below).

Part of the course requirement was to critically reflect on the whole process from both the coachee and the coach perspective. Delegates were given a framework based on the London Centre of Leadership and Learning (LCLL) guidelines, to support the process (Appendix 1), devised by Pask and Joy and explored in

greater depth in their publication 'Mentoring-Coaching, A guide for educational professionals' (2007). Pask and Joy's guide was one of the first books that focussed solely on educational coaching. Alongside mentor coaching, they acknowledge another school development tool, AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005), used in this research as part of my methodology, as a powerful process because of its '*profound commitment to think in positive growth forms.*' Pask and Joy (2007, p95).

The CUREE guidelines are a more detailed version of the framework put forward by Creasey and Paterson in which they identify 5 key skills for coaching to succeed in an educational context aligned to an approach that aims to guide (coach) rather than tell (mentor):

1. *Establish rapport and trust*
2. *Listening for meaning*
3. *Questioning for understanding*
4. *Prompting action, reflection and learning*
5. *Developing confidence and celebrating success*

(Creasey and Paterson, 2005, p14)

Mentoring & Coaching: a comparison

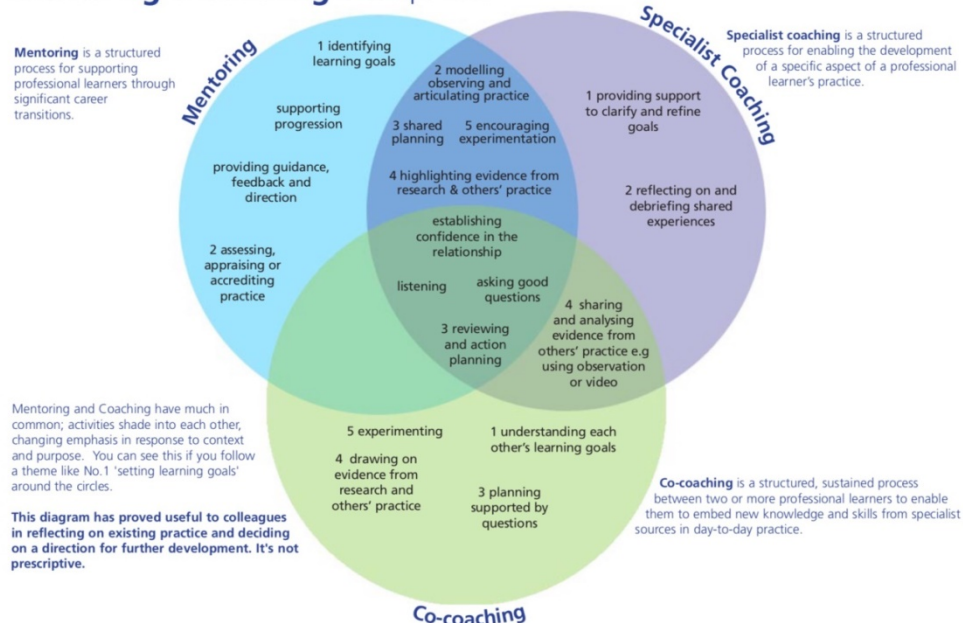


Figure 1: **The National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching**, (Ref CUREE, 2005, p 5)

Creasey and Paterson identify the far reaching potential of coaching, beyond the professional growth of the coachee, with the argument that if it is to succeed, coaching needs to be seen as an integral part of leadership:

high-quality coaching in schools supports professional development, leadership sustainability and school improvement.

(Creasey and Paterson, 2005, p5)

This potential link to '*high-quality coaching*' does not in my opinion simply 'exist', but is in a constant process of construction, which in turn requires commitment and trust to establish successfully.

At the time I felt that the LCLL guidelines were over complicated. Looking back I can see that it was my own inexperience and lack of confidence that made the process challenging. As a coach you need the skills to approach each session with the tacit ability to ask deep and meaningful questions. During what is best described as an induction period as a new coach, I made three important links; firstly the link between AI, (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) and the GROW model of coaching, (Whitmore, 2009), described in further detail later in this review, secondly the powerful role of informal learning in the workplace (Eraut, 2004) and thirdly the link between coaching and effective teaching.

AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) and GROW (Whitmore, 2009) require the coachee to begin by envisaging their goal. This process is slightly different from the model Creasey and Paterson set out above because it identifies what success looks like from the outset and designs a plan towards accomplishing it. To establish coaching as a school-wide process, I saw the merits of using an approach based on what was working well, rather than a deficit model that highlights the issues from the outset and does not necessarily create the motivation to change.

Through coaching I could see an opportunity to support the coachee to use informal learning and view themselves in a *'reflexive manner'* (Eraut, 2004) looking backwards in order to make sense of the present and justify choices in the future.

When we talk about what we have learned from 'experience in general' we are probably referring to our accumulated learning from a series of episodes.

(Eraut, 2004, p251)

Van Manen also puts forward a strong argument for reflective thinking in education;

...not only as a tool for teaching, but also as an aim of education.

(Van Manen, 1995, p1)

What was of particular interest to me during the mentor- coaching course was the feedback I received from the coachee following a coaching session. This echoes the benefits of coaching for coach and coachee, described in 'Sustaining Improvement: A Suite of Modules on Coaching, Running Networks and Building Capacity' (DfES 2003). During the course I found the experience transformational, particularly the reciprocal nature of the learning process captured in a reflective journal as a tool for professional development. The process of writing helped me to review my current professional reality in more depth and with more clarity than before, and it was a useful measure of my learning over time. It also made me further consider the place of *'informal learning'* (Eraut, 2004) and the impact it could have on teachers. This links to chapter 4 in this thesis, where I describe the use of a reflective journal as part of the data collection (Appendix 9). Capturing the impact of coaching over time in a reflective journal would also be a means of measuring professional development, moving away from the accountability measures that most schools use as part of performance management.

The link between coaching and effective teaching were evident in teaching strategies known as 'Assessment for Learning' (Black and William, 1990) and widely used in UK schools. I would argue that here too was a link with the *'little*

conversations' identified in Chapter 5; a daily non-threatening ritual, that allows for steady, continual professional reflection and growth.

In 2008 the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) to undertake further research on the evidence base for coaching and to investigate how mentor-coaching was being used in schools. I agree with Van Nieuwerburgh who describes this as a backward step, clouding the issue of clarity and terminology, particularly in the use of the terms mentoring and coaching (2012). However, I feel that it also demonstrated a frustration that coaching had not gained the expected momentum following the CUREE framework and the lack of measureable impact in spite of considerable investment, described above. The NFER executive summary breaks down what needed to be done across the UK education system, by whom, which in turn seemed to expose the huge task of raising the profile of coaching in schools. It also called for a simpler framework, echoing my concerns about the LCLL model and the CUREE framework (2005) and the confusing terminology, something already explored in this review. It suggests that there should be more emphasis on the impact of the staff and organisation as a whole, rather than a focus on outcomes for learners, thus alluding to the importance of professional development. However, the report is somewhat contradictory as there is a tendency to link the processes of mentoring and coaching, which in my opinion dilutes their validity;

The overall ingredients of mentoring and coaching are reasonably similar. This applies to the effective features, the overall skill-set required for mentoring and coaching, and indeed, the types of outcomes that can be gained.

(Lord et al, 2008, p ix)

Reflecting on these points it is clear to me that it is less about favouring one process over another and more about a whole school approach that supports all stakeholders and is personalised to the particular requirements of the individual and their setting. How would it be possible to invest in coaching and not see the benefit for the learners? I know from my own exploration into developing coaching

that once your mindset changes, it has implications for the way you relate to others and the impact is potentially far-reaching.

The focus on pupil outcomes was highlighted again in a National Strategies report for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in 2008 called 'Practice and Progression through Lesson Study.' In the forward, Pete Dudley boldly states, contrary to Van Nieuwerburgh (2017) that;

Coaching is becoming increasingly well embedded within the work of LAs and schools, and through the work of National Strategies leading teachers and consultants.

(Dudley, 2008, p1)

The report links Lesson Study (DCSF, 2008) to coaching as part of 'Collaborative Classroom Professional Learning' (CCPL) models (2008, p1). Lesson Study is now widely used in the UK as a means of making learning visible (Lofthouse et al, 2017) and as a professional development tool. It requires you to observe what learning is taking place and work collaboratively with the teacher to discuss how to make the most impact on learning and the range of learners in an average class. In the CUREE framework it can be placed in the co-coaching domain. This implies that trust and resilience have already been established, which from my experience as a head teacher, is not necessarily the case. Before it can be trialled, a considerable amount of time and planning needs to go into setting up the process and building the relationships and protocols between those involved in the lesson study group.

Lesson Study (DCSF, 2008) can be a very powerful professional development tool but given that in one cycle (which is repeated for each teacher) four teachers are involved, it also requires, in my view, a considerable investment of time, resources and funding. It goes back to the point made earlier, that if it is to have any impact it needs to be viewed as a whole-school priority and given high status. If the right culture is in place this approach is transformational but in the wrong hands it could be seen as a means of exposing weak practice without the means of improving it.

It was at this time that I decided to take a change in direction, leave my role as an adviser and return to school as a head teacher. In 2010 under the new coalition government following the 2007 recession, school services across the country were facing huge cutbacks. With half my department under threat of redundancy, I enrolled on the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) at the IoE with the intention of returning to school as a head teacher. At the time it was mandatory to complete this before applying for headship in the maintained sector. I would argue that without NPQH I would not have considered changing career, so I am surprised and disappointed that it is no longer a compulsory qualification for headship (BBC, 2011).

For the duration of the course I was given a mentor (a serving head teacher) and a coach (a National Leader of Education). Being a Coachee here reminded me of an article '*Why would anyone want to be led by you?*' Goffee and Jones (2000). It was less about my gaps and limitations and more about my vision of headship and whether I measured up to the responsibilities that lay ahead. These leadership attributes were described as the ability to be vulnerable, intuitive and a '*situation sensor*' (Goffee and Jones, 2000, p4), with links to 'Emotional Intelligence' (Goleman et al, 2002) to manage others with '*tough empathy*' (Goffee and Jones, 2000, p1) with the skill to give people what they needed rather than what they wanted. It highlighted the leader's ability to create a '*social distance*' and '*signal separateness*' (Goffee and Jones, 2000, p 6). According to their article and subsequent book of the same title, these qualities, if used together, led to an increase of success and authenticity as a leader, which I will go onto to explore in 2.8: Leadership and followership.

Whilst offering me an exciting opportunity, NPQH was also a huge risk; I had been out of a school environment for seven years and had not been a deputy head before. I describe the course to others as a process of becoming vulnerable, unravelling my learning in order to rebuild and relearn before moving forward. It was also a time of mixed emotions and uncertainty because I did not have the full blessing of my peers who felt I was making a mistake. In retrospect I can see why they were concerned. Although NPQH as a course gave me an understanding of

the theory and pedagogies involved in becoming a school leader, nothing prepared me for the role itself, which tested my physical and emotional resilience. However, I quickly learned from each new situation and grew in confidence. I noticed that when a situation was dealt with well it was my judgement that was key and my ability to develop what Hargreaves and Fullan (2012, p8) term '*decisional capital*' in what they summarise as a leader's role in;

*..exercis[ing] their judgements and decisions with collective responsibility.
Openness to feedback and willing transparency.*

(Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012, p8)

An aspect of NPQH is a peer review carried out at the beginning and end of the programme by ten colleagues who you work closely with in a professional capacity. The feedback I received suggested that I needed to develop more self-awareness through emotional intelligence. The trust I had in those who had completed the review made me consider these blind spots. As a result I began to read and attend webinars to support my development and understanding of leadership and systems thinking in areas such as 'Emotional Intelligence' (Goleman et al, 2002), and 'The Fifth Discipline' (Senge,1990), which sets out a vision to rethink leadership in humanistic terms within a culture of openness and trust. I also read and attended seminars on Transactional Analysis, Berne (1964) which was to further develop my ability to use Berne's PAC model (Parent, Adult, Child) with coaching as part of what is commonly known in educational leadership as having 'difficult conversations' (Gill, 2018). As a result I also started taking more notice of people's reaction to me. The impact was almost immediate. I had always felt that to be in charge was more about command and control, that outwardly you needed to be stern, seen to be in control of your emotions and offer feedback that focussed on what was wrong; adopting the authoritative critical parent approach described by Berne (1964). Suddenly, showing a softer, more human side, giving feedback that focussed on the positives and giving helpful strategies was not only more enjoyable, it provoked a more positive reaction. I felt more confident that as a leader I did not have to use a formulaic approach formed from theories of leadership but instead I could be myself. I also learned that using this approach helped me to separate the personal from the professional. I have included here my

own personal reflections as I was in a unique position of becoming a head teacher without the traditional career progression of a head teacher, which might explain in part why I was prepared to invest in coaching as a style of leadership because I had used it extensively as an adviser.

John's model on reflection (2000) asks how an experience has changed learning. By unlearning I allowed myself to trust others, make mistakes and develop a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). I also increased my understanding of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994) which helped me to give and take feedback and move forward without seeing it as a criticism. It also confirmed that the attributes I needed to be successful as an adviser transferred well into the school environment; coaching, public speaking, strategic thinking and an interest in research and pedagogies. These have helped me create the culture for a 'self-improving school', a concept discussed in Chapter 1, which in the absence of government funding and LA support, has become an increasingly useful and powerful commodity (Hargreaves, 2010). It is this school culture that brings together the aspects of coaching I have alluded to already, that I explore in this study.

2.5 Models of coaching

There are many different models of coaching, so for the purposes of this study I have identified the ones that have had the most influence on my leadership and coaching style over time and can be used in an educational context. These models have considerable merits and support the notion of coaching not only as '*a way of being*' Nieuwerburgh (2017, p14) but also as a way of becoming linked to the shared ideals and values of the school with an emphasis on developing self-awareness to support professional growth. Having read a wide range of books and research papers on coaching, I feel it is your own style that you need to feel comfortable with, remembering that a conversation takes different twists and turns and you need to be an active listener, with the confidence and sensitivity to be able to craft your next question, rather than using a more prescriptive approach, although these are undoubtedly useful at the outset when you are a novice coach.

2.5.1 The LCLL mentor-coaching model

Figure 2 shows an outline of the first coaching model I used as a coach and experienced as a coachee, echoing the AI process towards a solution-focused outcome, which I explain in more detail in Chapter 3, Research Design and Methodology. It was introduced to me by Barry Joy from the LCLL who wrote a book on educational mentor-coaching with Roger Pask which describes the LCLL model in greater depth.

In my opinion, the key difference in this model is that the envisaging stage (phase 4) follows a deep analysis of what is not working well, which in my opinion, in a school setting, a coachee might find a difficult starting point and become defensive. With the GROW model the starting point is the goal they are aiming for, a more aspirational starting point. Throughout the LCLL process the mentor-coach decides when to coach and when to mentor in a process that is;

Heuristic- designed to help the client learn and progress through inquiry and discovery, and with increasing self-confidence and autonomy through both the mentoring and coaching phases of the process.

(Pask and Joy, 2007, p247)

Having trialled this approach from both sides as a coachee and coach, I know from experience that the point at which I was mentored or began mentoring was usually the most critical point of the process; when instead of creating a space for quiet reflection, this was the point that the coach became a mentor and felt that more direction was required. However, Pask and Joy argue throughout that mentoring and coaching can be used effectively together;

..as symbiotically linked, mutually indispensable, complimentary parts of a continuous, holistic and integrated process.

(Pask and Joy, 2007, p248)

Their model was a starting point for my development as a coach, but in reality it was never going to be sustainable as it required a huge investment of time and was focussed on development through 1-1 coaching rather than a culture of growth for all. It also linked coaching and mentoring, which as I have already

argued, does not readily build trust, as there is the temptation from the coach to become the mentor, taking the control away from the coachee.

2.5.2 The Skilled Helper model (Egan, 2007)

Egan's model (2007) advocates a three stage spiral approach to coaching, each session encouraging a reflexive process for both the coach and coachee:

Stage 1: The current picture-What's going on?

Stage 2: Preferred Picture- What do I need or want?

Stage 3: The Way forward- How do I get what I need or want?

(Egan, 2007, p 254)

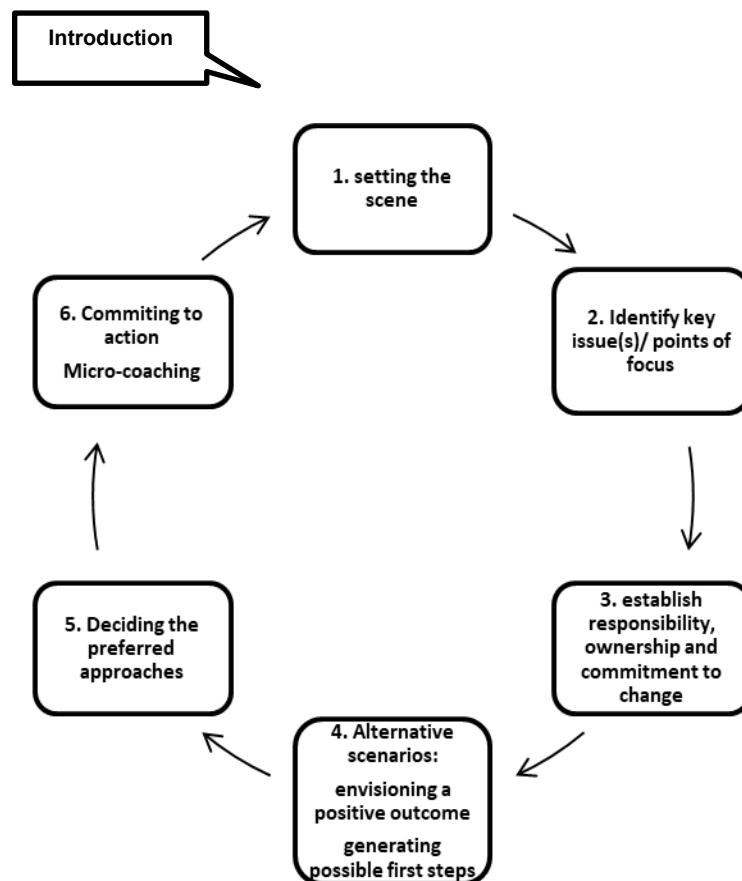


Figure 2: Based on Pask and Joy's mentor-coaching model (2007)

The coachee is taken through the cycle during each session reflecting on the main question, in a highly reflective manner that builds on the identified points over time.

This in turn supports the development of the coaching relationship and the degree to which it becomes a more trusting and open discussion over time, allowing for deeper probing and greater reflection. Reflective journals could be used as part of this process to capture the *'informal learning'* (Eraut, 2004) between sessions.

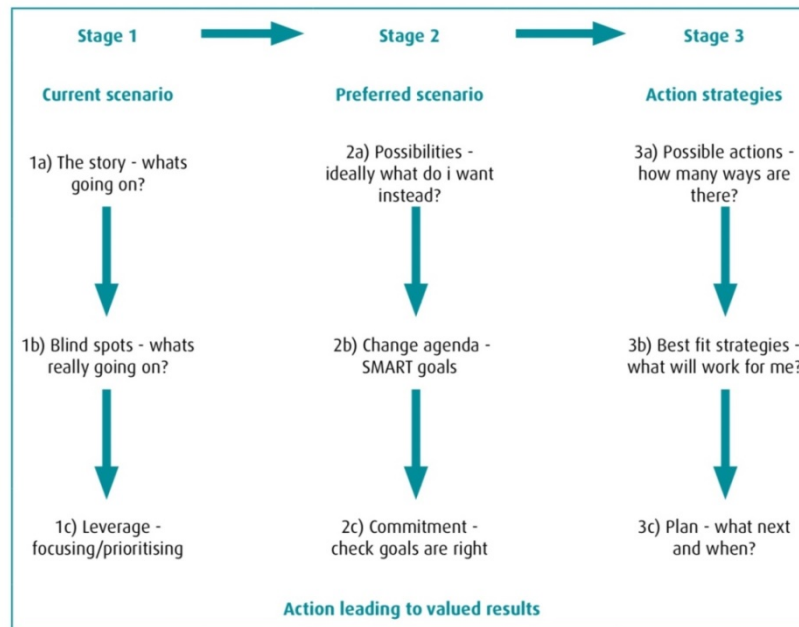


Figure 3: (Ref Lindon, 2011) Taken from Egan’s The Skilled Helper model 2007

Egan’s model appeals to me because the process was more straightforward than the LCLL model (figure 2) and the emphasis was on how to ask better questions and provoke deeper reflection within each cycle. Used flexibly, each session can start with stage 1 and build towards stage 2 and 3. However, it still requires an investment of time on a regular basis with a skilled coach, something that is not easy or always possible to fulfill in a school. The model lacks any reference to time as a variable and does not show the iterative nature of the learning cycle.

2.5.3 The GROW model (Whitmore, 2009)

GROW (Figure 4) is an acronym for grow, reality, options and will. It is a well-known model, created by Whitmore (2009) and used in organisations and schools in the UK and worldwide. At Greenfields this model was introduced to senior leaders at their initial coaching training. In my view it was important that they could

concentrate on the depth of questioning rather than a cumbersome framework. GROW echoes the AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) process, but comes to the action stage more quickly than stage 4 of the LCLL model. The first part of the process, 'Grow' is similar to 'discovery' in the AI process, and requires the coachee to envisage an aspirational future. This appealed to me for the same reasons that I was interested in AI; as a motivational lever rather than an initial focus on what is not going well, with close links to Assessment for Learning (William and Black, 1990) which teachers are familiar with.



Figure 4: The GROW model based on Whitmore, 2009

There are direct links between Egan's Skilled Helper model (2007), Stanier's approach (2016) and the Whitmore's GROW categories (2009). For example; the reality stage of GROW links with Stanier's Focus question '*what's the challenge for you here?*' (Stanier, 2016, p199), and Stage 1 of the Skilled Helper '*what's going on?*' (Egan, 2007, p254). My passion and interest in coaching supported my understanding of it and the links between the different approaches. I realised that as a whole school approach not everyone would have the same interest as I did and that this could be a reason why 1-1 coaching was not necessarily an easy model to adopt or sustain in other schools.

2.5.4 Stanier's model (Stanier, 2016)

As an accredited facilitator on the IoE's NPQSL programme I deliver a module on change management. The Coaching Habit (Stanier, 2016) has recently been

added to the list of recommended reading. It is based on the key questions that will trigger deeper thinking from the coachee, in a step by step approach, that might appeal to a new coach. No book on coaching today would be complete without additional links to an online platform of videos on how to coach, and this no book is exception.

Stanier advocates an approach using these seven questions:

1. *The Kickstart Question*
What's on your mind?
2. *The AWE Question*
And what else?
3. *The Focus Question*
What's the challenge here for you?
4. *The Foundation Question*
What do you want?
5. *The Lazy Question*
How can I help?
6. *The strategic Question*
If you're saying Yes to this, what are you saying No to?
7. *The Learning Question*
What was most useful for you?

(Stanier, 2016, p199)

Stanier's model arms the coach with a series of powerful questions to ask the coachee, such as 'what's on your mind?' This supports the coach to explore their thinking and see coaching as 'a way of being' (Van Nieuwerburgh 2017p 14). Stanier sets out a powerful case for using coaching more widely in organisations, making the point, that in spite of Goleman's attempts to promote coaching as a highly effective leadership approach, (Goleman et al, 2002) it is still the least used leadership style:

Many leaders told us they don't have the time in this high-pressure economy for the slow and tedious work of teaching people and helping them grow.

(Goleman, 2000, p12)

Goleman suggests that although the impact of coaching is not immediately felt, the benefit in helping others to grow has to be seen as central to the sustainable growth of any organisation, and this investment of time should not be seen by leaders as a *'tedious'* endeavour (Goleman, 2000, p12).

These models are a small sample of the many different approaches to coaching that all have the same end goal (Clutterbuck, 2007; Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2005; Berg and Szabo, 2005; Ellinger, Beattie and Hamlin, 2010; Van Nieuwerburgh, 2014), to support the professional development and growth of the coachee. This, requires leadership (Lofthouse, 2010), a certain amount of skill and an enormous investment of time (Van Nieuwerburgh, 2014), so that 1-1 coaching can have lasting and transformational change. 1-1 coaching however, although linked, is a different process from creating a coaching culture, which I go onto to describe in 2.6.

2.5.5 Links between coaching and teaching

More recently there has been a growing interest, on the impact of coaching on teachers and students:

At its essence coaching is a conversation, and conversations are at the heart of learning, school life and work.

(Campbell, J, 2016, p132)

Assessment for learning strategies (Black and Wiliam, 1990), such as questioning, that teachers use daily with pupils, is a useful analogy when considering how to conduct an effective coaching conversation with pupils. Another example of the link between coaching and teaching is evident at Greenfields in our 1-1 teacher/pupil conferencing in a coaching style. This was developed in parallel with this research, but not directly as part of this study, as part of teachers' professional development through Action Research (see Table 5: The Developing Coaching

Culture and its Impact on CPD, and Appendix 13: Article for Impact Magazine: Action Research: Developing a reflective community of practice). The questioning in a 1-1 conferencing session allows the pupil to reflect on and articulate what they do well and what their next steps are. This is echoed in approaches to professional development such as Action Research (McNiff, 2002), as an approach to professional development, which supports the teacher to trial different strategies in an experimental manner, using evidence based approaches. The benefit of using Action Research to support professional growth is that it echoes the action planning model that many schools, including Greenfields, use. Furthermore, using it as a model for professional development and linking it to class based projects encourages the collaborative professionalism promoted by Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018):

A useful way to think about action research is that it is a strategy to help you live in a way that you feel is a good way. It helps you live out the things you believe in, and it enables you to give reasons every step of the way.

(McNiff, 2002, p 4)

Linked to this is the ambition that part of a teacher's career path should be to develop '*phronesis*' a term loosely translated as practical wisdom or;

'The ability to see the right thing to do in the circumstances'

(Thomas, 2011, p 21)

Phronesis originates from Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics (Aristotle, 2002) on how to lead a good or virtuous life. Aristotle put forward three types of knowledge; episteme, techne and phronesis. Flyvbjerg (2001) has created a modern interpretation of these terms to show the continuum and corresponding attributes from novice to master to expert. Although this is useful, I suggest that any model of learning needs to consider the interrelatedness and development of all three types of knowledge. In an educational leadership context, Halveston (2004) argues that developing phronesis can be used effectively to support collective and distributed solution-focused leadership. The link between this and my research is coaching, which I have already described as an approach that is under a constant

process of construction and refinement. Using evidence based approaches that support the development of phronesis and build on collective teacher-efficacy is further explored in 2.8.5.

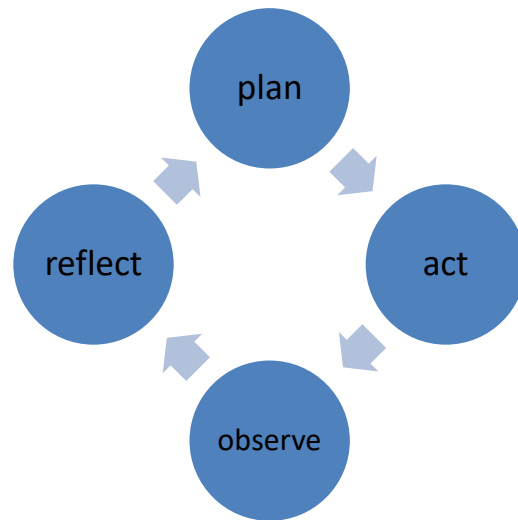


Figure 5: Action Research cycle, based on McNiff, 2002 (n.p.)

The whole school community at Greenfields is familiar with Dweck’s growth mindset model (2006) which is part of the school’s assessment policy and evident in posters in every classroom. Pupils have also been introduced to Nottingham’s ‘Learning Pit’ (2017) as a visual, evident in classrooms and discussed regularly, where learning is seen as something challenging that you have to work at. Pupils understand that they are responsible for their learning journey and how to identify gaps in their learning, using the meta language of learning to support them. We use our version of Guy Claxton’s ‘Building Learning Power’ (2002) as part of our own approach to learning dispositions to support a continuing journey and language around self-improvement with an emphasis on metacognition (Education Endowment Foundation, 2016). The teacher is seen as a facilitator, asking challenging questions to support the pupil to identify their gaps and what their next steps are. Throughout the process learning is made more ‘visible’ Hattie (2009, 2012) in an attempt to support pupils to be able to identify what they can do well now and what they will be able to do in the future.

I illustrate our approach to teaching and learning because there are close comparisons between highly effective teachers and coaches. Both coachees and pupils need to be open to change and trust their coach or teacher. With a fixed mindset and lack of trust and openness, I suggest the process will falter at the outset. There are also links with a pupil's identified gaps and the self-assessment of a teacher, and the extent to which either pupil or teacher can reflect on their performance. Again having a fixed mindset, avoiding feedback (or seeing it as criticism) will, in my view, limit the process of successful coaching or effective teaching. Providing challenge through the use of higher order questions that provoke deeper thinking, and a culture of inquiry and improvement, are also required if coaching is to be successful. Coaches who do not provide enough challenge were identified by Lofthouse et al (2010) in their study on coaching in schools as an area for development. Their study identified that only 2 out of 23 coaches in their study did this on a regular basis which in turn limited its impact. The links between good coaching and good teaching provide some further reflection on how coaching could be based more on what many school leaders and practitioners identify as effective teaching. In this way it could also be seen as distinct and different from mentoring.

I have set out some of the reasons why leading and managing coaching in a school is much harder than it might first appear which is one of the reasons it seems to have had limited success as a whole school development tool. I believe that the main tensions are derived from using it as a performance management process based on target setting and accountability measures that leads to what Lofthouse et al describe as '*clash of cultures*' (Lofthouse et al, 2010, p5). Coaching, if it is to become embedded needs to be seen as a confidential process built on trust and openness. Coaching is like any other whole school strategic priority; it needs careful planning that begins with reflection, is rooted in pedagogy, allows for whole school buy-in, involves appropriate training, support and evaluation. It is a long term investment in a school's main asset; its staff, not a quick-fix, *tick-box* short term initiative. The case for using coaching as a 'human development' strategy is made below;

Coaching is a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders.

(Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck, 2014, p1)

In this project I have explored the benefits and potential deficits of using coaching in an approach that is less about accountability and more about finding solutions to whole-school priorities through professional growth.

2.6 Rationale for adopting a coaching culture

If I could identify one key approach that threads through my everyday practice, it is creating a coaching culture. Whilst I am in favour of this style of leading, I am aware of the arguments against using it. Coaching's apparent lack of popularity as a leadership approach could be in part because it takes a huge investment of time and commitment to become established in an organisation, often when there are many competing priorities such as safeguarding, standards, recruitment and behaviour. There could also be the perception from some leaders who favour command and control leadership, of a loss of power that comes with coaching because as a leader you are not in control of the coaching process. Coaching is supporting people to find their own answers so in a busy school it could be seen as a slow process that is difficult to track over time. There could also be concerns about confidentiality and power relations when using coaching to establish a coaching culture, concerns that have been part of this study. However, the research from this study points to the need to revisit the goals that have become central tenets of professionalism and maintain ideals that are different to 'school improvement' and 'performance management'. For these reasons I would argue that creating a coaching culture and using coaching bring many benefits including a real investment in people that can positively affect every relationship across a school (Duggan, 2019).

As a school leader, my rationale for choosing to explore a coaching culture rather than using 1-1 coaching for professional growth was the wider impact that a

coaching culture could have on the whole organisation. I view a coaching culture as the overarching ethos with 1-1 coaching as a strategy that can be within it. I was interested in the work of Bandura (1994) on self-efficacy and the link to Dweck's work on Mindsets (2006) and Hattie's work on Visible Learning (2012, 2018), that I had already introduced to Greenfields. The genesis of the term 'collective teacher efficacy', defined as '*the belief that together we can make a difference to the students we teach*' (Hargreaves and O'Connor, 2018, p111) and more recently researched by Donohoo (2017) and Hattie (2012, 2018), can be seen in the work of Bandura, on teacher agency and self-efficacy;

Self-efficacy is defined as people's belief about their capability to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives.

(Bandura, 1994, p1)

This approach is further developed by Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) in their ten tenets of collaborative professionalism. In particular these include: collective efficacy, collaborative inquiry, collective responsibility, joint work and mutual dialogue, which resonate with a coaching culture.

Looking back at CUREE's framework of mentoring, specialist coaching and co-coaching (2005), I could see possibilities linked with the above tenets, aligned to professional growth and pupil development, some of which I have already described; Action Research for teachers and teacher- pupil conferencing.

I have already highlighted the difficulty over time that schools have had with a 1-1 coaching model; it is expensive, requires expertise and training, takes time to embed and is not easy to timetable or sustain. Furthermore;

It has not been part of a whole school approach.

(Duggan, 2019)

If coaching is going to become an approach to leading a school it needs to develop and become a viable, evidence based approach available for all schools to use.

In addition, a coach needs to possess certain attributes; the tacit ability to not only actively listen but also to ask deep, searching, non-judgemental and often challenging questions that prompt reflection from the coachee. Van Nieuwerburgh suggests that being a coach is a '*way of being*' (2017, p 14) an intuitive set of skills that a coach already possesses. Coaching, he argues, is made up of three elements; the process, the skills and the way of being. The first two, he argues, can be taught but to be effective all three need to work together.

My research indicates that coaching in a school setting, if it is to be a sustainable model, has to be established from within by school leaders. If we take Van Nieuwerburgh's three elements, then I argue that it would be difficult to create a model with all three elements in isolation from the culture of the organisation. This would suggest that the best way to support this development of process, skills and way of being, is by promoting a style of leadership that promotes a coaching culture; an authentic leadership approach that incorporates qualities such as vulnerability and integrity described by Goffee and Jones (2006).

2.7 Creating a Coaching culture

If one-to-one coaching is a process that supports an individual to grow, creating a coaching culture is the ability to do this effectively across an organisation;

...it has the potential to set the tone for the way relationships are managed throughout an organisation.

(Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2005, p5)

What I have developed in Greenfields is a culture that has become the ethos that permeates throughout my organisation; a collegiate approach where openness, trust and risk taking are encouraged within a highly supportive environment for the benefit of all; staff, pupils and parents. This approach is summarised as follows;

A coaching culture exists in an organisation when a coaching approach is a key aspect of how the leaders, managers, and staff engage and develop all their people and engage their stakeholders, in ways that create increased individual, team, and organisational performance and shared value for all stakeholders.

(Hawkins, 2012, p 21)

I have already described what a coaching 'approach' could involve in a school context through various frameworks (CUREE, LCLL, Creasy and Paterson) and models to support the coaching conversation such as the Egan's Skilled Helper (2007), Whitmore's GROW model (2009) and Stanier's model (2016).

I have set out in Chapter 1, the reasons why the current climate in education is calling out for new sustainable models of leadership that will support schools at a time of great challenge in education. Rather than quick fixes, or 'surgeons' as Hill et al (2016) argue in their recent article 'The one type of leader who can turn around a failing school', the system needs 'architects' (Hill et al, p 5, 2016) whose impact will be longer-term because they are investing in relationships to drive and sustain improvement and transformational change.

2.8 Leadership and followership

Leadership, followership and transformational change are central themes in this literature review and particularly relevant to this research. My role in this research as a leader and insider-researcher merits further exploration into leadership styles, the impact of leadership on followers and ultimately on how these factors contribute to a change in culture that results in transformational change.

2.8.1 The move towards a new approach to leadership

What is characterised as effective leadership? Much has been written about the role of the leader and their impact on their followers. 20 years ago Bennis (1999) saw the need for new leadership as a response to our global and fast changing technical world that requires:

Structures build of energy and ideas, led by people who find their joy in the task at hand, while embracing each other- and not worrying about leaving monuments behind.

(Bennis, 1999, p 77)

Grint and Holt suggest that leadership is:

The art of engaging a community in facing up to complex collective problems.

(Grint and Holt, 2011, p11)

This definition points to the complex nature of leadership that is different from more traditional styles of leading. This new approach is the opposite of the 'shadow-side' of narcissistic (Maccoby, 2000, McCabe, 2005) and charismatic leadership (Alimo-Metcalf and Alban-Metcalf, 2005) particularly in relation to transformational change. The 'dark side' of the charismatic leader has been written about at length and has been described as leading to a dependency culture which could be seen as a way of exploiting others (Alimo-Metcalf and Alban-Metcalf, 2005). Yukl (1999) however, sees similarities between the charismatic leader and the transformational leader, concluding that there has not been enough research into the effect of these leadership styles.

The need for a new style of leadership has been explored at length over the past 20 years (Rosenbach and Taylor, 2006, Goleman et al, 2002, Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012, Heffernan, 2011, 2015, Buck, 2017). An important factor, which seems to be reflected in the extensive literature on leadership, is the transformational impact of an authentic relationship between leaders and followers which may go some way to limiting the effects of the 'shadow' side of leadership; often linked to narcissistic and charismatic leaders (McCabe, p17, 2005).

There are several theories about how to limit this 'shadow' side; McCabe suggests that all leaders, from time to time, need to address this because:

[our] shadow...when we are unaware, can seriously compromise people's engagement in work and their...effectiveness.

(McCabe, 2005, p17)

Some of the solution, according to McCabe is to build *'fierce self-awareness of the way you behave around people'* (McCabe, 2005, p17). This includes processes such as coaching, asking for feedback and 360 degree evaluations, (used extensively for leadership development courses). These tools are used to reduce *'blind spots'* (Luft and Ingham, 1955) and build 'Emotional Intelligence' (Goleman et al, 2002). Maccoby (2000) sets out the history of narcissistic leaders, taken from a term that Freud gave to one of three main personality types; narcissistic, erotic and obsessive. Freud developed the opinion that we all inhabit personality traits, including narcissism, on occasion. The difficulty for the narcissist leader, according to Maccoby is that;

...because of their independence and aggressiveness, they are constantly looking for enemies, sometimes degenerating into paranoia when they are under extreme stress.

(Maccoby, 2000, p72)

Using double and triple loop learning (Argyris and Schon 1978), is another method of challenging deeply held convictions and beliefs.. They are useful mental models, encouraging you to rethink habits, whilst challenging deeply held assumptions, in order to transform the future. Double loop thinking is a powerful tool that creates opportunities for leaders to reflect on why and how they lead:

Good dialogue is not a matter of smoothness of operation or elimination of error. On the contrary, its goodness is inherent in the ways in which error is continually interpreted and corrected, incompatibility and incongruity are continually engaged, and conflict is continually confronted and resolved.

(Argyris and Schon, 1978, p146)

This leads on to triple loop learning (Argyris and Schon, 1978), which in turn links to coaching, as it involves learning about learning and reflecting on the impact of double loop learning. Using this approach has supported me to introduce deeper inquiry and reflection amongst senior leaders, so that they see this as a positive, rather than negative, aspect of change management. Questioning the status quo,

to find the very best approach, should not be a cause for conflict, and can be seen as part of the leadership process.

Furthermore, within in a coaching culture there are methods that contribute to the development of highly effective relationships that are a vital part of transforming pupil outcomes. The impact and importance of relationships are described in 'Changing Conversations in Organizations: A complexity approach to change' (Shaw, 2002). Having a more open and honest style of leadership is also the central theme in 'The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization' (Senge, 2002), which goes on to describe a mental model known as the 'Ladder of Inference' (Argyris and Schon, 1978). It is suggested that creating a ladder of inference often leads to misguided beliefs, so being aware of it and limiting it helps you to draw better conclusions, and to challenge other people's assertions based on reflection, reasoning and inquiry. This step-by-step reasoning process could be used within a senior leadership team to remain objective and, when working or challenging each other, to reach a shared conclusion without conflict. I later go on to describe this term within our Professional Growth model as '*pushing and pulling*'. When used alongside AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) the key here for me has been trying to support my followers to become more comfortable with conflict (Senge, 2002; Argyris, 1977; Heffernan, 2015) and see it as a necessary, rather than critical, process in change management.

Believing in the people who work with you proves effective because it gives them the confidence to persevere in the face of difficulties. In doing so, they develop a sense of self-efficacy. The experience shows that they can succeed. Being trusted, they learn to trust themselves.

(Heffernan, 2015, p 81)

Another facet of leadership is the ability of the leader to create an effective followership, outlined below:

- 1. The new leader understands and practices the power of appreciation and is a connoisseur of talent, more a curator than a creator.*
- 2. The new leader keeps reminding people of what's important*
- 3. The new leader generates and sustains trust*

4. *The new leader and the led are intimate allies*

(Bennis, 1999, p77)

Here there is a convincing argument for the attributes of what is termed '*the new leader*'; the '*curator*' of trust, humility, vision and a deep conviction that a central part of the role of a leader and a measure of their success is their ability to bring out the best in their team and all stakeholders; pupils, parents, governors and the wider community.

'Emotional Intelligence' (Goleman, 1996), 'Leadership that Gets Results' (Goleman, 2000) and 'What Makes a Leader' (Goleman, 2004), signalled a change in approach and contributed to the argument for a new type of leader. These publications highlighted the importance of leading others with empathy and humility, and are set out in 'Primal Leadership' (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002) and further developed in 'Resonant Leadership' (Boyatzis and McKee, 2005).

Six categories of leadership were identified from research carried out by the consulting group Hay/ McBer (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002) which are set out in Table 1 below. The research used a random sample of 3,871 executives from a database of 20,000 executives world-wide, noticing specific behaviours and their impact on their organisations (Goleman, 2000, p78). The different styles and corresponding behaviours are described, giving them an effect size of impact, with visionary style seen as the one that has the most impact and directive the least.

Table 1: Goleman's Leadership styles summarised by Buck (2017, p 177)

style	description	When useful	Effect-size
Visionary	Communicating the goal; Expectations on delivery	Pretty much anytime; set pieces and 1:1 dialogue	0.54
Affiliative	Building and sustaining relationships	Again, always useful but especially if morale poor	0.46
Directive	Telling people what to do, often in detail	Low capacity or competence; No time	-0.26
Democratic	Sharing decision-making; Delegating power	Confidence in the team; more time available	0.43
Pacesetting	Copy me and keep up with me	When need fast change; show what's possible	-0.25

Coaching	Asking questions; focus on Developing others	When you have time to build capacity in others	0.42
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These leadership styles have been widely used as a means of describing effective leadership in any organisation, including educational establishments. According to Goleman, it is important to find the balance, using intuition and judgement, to know which style to use depending on the situation. As he suggests, creating a coaching culture puts relationships at the heart of improvement. The effect sizes and ranking in table 1 show the benefits in the long term of using a visionary, affiliative, democratic or coaching style over a pacesetter or directive one. As a school leader, I would suggest that there are situations that require you to direct and tell others what to do, but these are short-term objectives that have limited long term gains or transformational impact. It could be argued that creating a culture of coaching incorporates being a visionary leader with an affiliative, democratic approach, so it is surprising that of all the styles, it has been identified as the least popular (Goleman, 2000, Stanier, 2016).

The style's implicit message is "I believe in you, I'm investing in you, and I expect your best efforts." Employees very often rise to the challenge.

(Goleman 2000, p87)

This suggests the need for further research in coaching as a leadership approach; not only into its effectiveness but also in how to successfully implement it, that this research could contribute to.

In 'The Deep Blue Sea: Rethinking the source of Leadership (Drath, 2001), there is a distinction between leadership styles and what are identified as '*leadership principles*' (Drath 2001, p8) which calls for a '*third principle*' in leadership that follows personal and interpersonal leadership. This is called '*relational leadership*' (2001, p8) which links to the idea of '*discretionary effort*' (Buck, 2017, p19) and '*Collective teacher efficacy*' (Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, 2000) as the products of effective relational leadership; the ability of the leader or leaders to create positive relationships within an organisation.

...the input from individuals over and above that which they need to contribute in order to keep their jobs.

(Buck, 2017, p19)

'Collective teacher efficacy' (Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, 2000) is a term increasingly used by educational researchers (Hattie, 2018; Eells ,2011; and Donohoo, 2017) and defined in the following blog as;

The collective belief of teachers in their ability to positively affect students.

(Hattie, 2018 n.p.)

Furthermore, the move away from a top down approach of leading, to a more distributed model of collective responsibility, where *'leadership is meaning making in communities of practice'* Drath (2001, p153) adds weight to the move away from directive leadership. This approach resonated with my aim to create a coaching culture, with an emphasis on collective professional development and is described as an approach advocated in 'Collaborative Professionalism' (Hargreaves and O'Connor, 2018).

Authentic leadership (Avolio et al, 2004, Duigan and Bhindi 1997, Goffee and Jones, 2006) is often linked to transformational leadership and based on the premise that a leader could reveal their vulnerable side whilst showing resilience and strength and still be highly effective (Brown, 2012). A useful definition of the authentic transformational leader is given here:

...those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' value/ moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character.

(Avolio et al, 2005, p 4)

The exposure to these and other theories throughout the doctoral programme has helped me to unpack and refine what I already knew experientially from personal experience as a follower and a leader. They also confirmed my belief, as a trainer on the Institute of Education's National Professional Qualification for Senior

Leaders, (NPQSL) that to a large extent, if there is the will and firm commitment to change, leadership qualities can be taught and shaped.

2.8.2 Followership

Bennis (1999) highlights the crucial relationship between effective leaders and their followers:

If there is one generalization we can make about leadership and change, it is this: no change can occur without willing and committed followers.

(Bennis, 1999, p75)

Fullan and Hargreaves (2012) argue that judgement is described as one of three key essential leadership attributes in an educational setting, alongside human and social capital. Although Fullan and Hargreaves do not use the term 'followership', their focus in terms of transformational leadership in their book 'Professional Capital' (2012) is a heavy investment on those being led; in this case the classroom practitioner. I suggest that the terms 'leader' and 'follower' are not always helpful as they suggest binaries, leading to structural inequality and shades of the command and control or charismatic leadership style. However, this study is not about inequality; it is about responding to the professional challenge of developing leadership in a school.

In their article and subsequent book 'Why would anyone want to be led by you?' (Goffee and Jones, 2000, 2006) Goffee and Jones argue that authentic leadership is considered in terms of the attributes needed to create an effective following. The difference between this and a charismatic or narcissistic leadership style is that for an authentic leader, followers are seen as a fundamental part of a leader's effectiveness; not afraid to present their views and opinions aligned to the vision. This is in direct opposition to passive followers, or those coerced into following, which could be as a result of the charismatic or narcissistic leader. As a transactional style of leadership, the authentic approach can be highly effective, according to Goffee and Jones, especially when leadership is;

...seen for what it is: part of a duality or a relationship. There can be no leaders without followers.

(Goffee and Jones, 2001, p 148)

They conclude that this can only be established if the leader creates

..feelings of significance...community...excitement.

(Goffee and Jones, 2001, p148)

The table below, adapted by Lundy, (2013) shows the connection between the two; Hersey and Blanchard's (1969) leadership styles on the left and the behaviours and type of followership that naturally flowed from these styles, culminating with Kelley's (1988) followership attributes on the right.

Table 2: Hersey and Blanchard Situational Model and Kelley's Followership Model

Leadership Quadrant	Ideal Leader Behaviour	Ideal Follower Behaviour	Followership Quadrant
Participating	Includes followers in decision making to encourage ownership.	Get involved through participation. Moving from outsider to insider mindset.	Alienated
Selling	Enthusiastic (authentic) explanation of decisions and clarifying expectations to engage followers.	Doing as requested.	Passive
Telling	Detailing expectations and monitoring performance to direct followers.	Doing as requested and demonstrating that results are important.	Conformist
Delegating	Moving decision-making, responsibility and implementation to the follower.	Demonstrating success with increased responsibility	Exemplary

Ref: Lundy, 2013 (based on Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Model (1969) and Kelley's Followership model (1988))

I suggest that it is not as easy as categorising leadership attributes with followership traits because leaders shift between leadership styles depending on the context. In a school context I have already established the importance of using a range of styles depending on the context. I would argue that it is not necessarily the case that the participatory nature of leading creates an alienated following. There are situations where participating and delegating in my own organisation have brought about effective buy-in from staff. However, it is useful to see the two

features side by side and to consider the corresponding behaviours within the coaching culture that I am researching.

My conclusion based on the research, is that although it is not always helpful to use binary terms such as 'leaders' and 'followers' it at least reminds us of the complexity of leadership. I suggest that we are all leaders and followers or novices and experts to a greater or lesser extent. Perhaps using notions of the novice to expert is more helpful. As a follower I have moved through Kelley's (1992) stages of followership during the course of my career, although not necessarily in a linear fashion. As I have engaged more with the key theories and put these into practice, I have developed an understanding of the importance of balancing the needs and voices of the followers. Where I see my followership style now lies between pragmatic and effective (Kelley, 1992), depending on the context.

2.8.3 System leadership

Part of the reason that schools need to adopt a different approach to leadership is what Senge et al discuss as 'The Dawn of the System Leader' (Senge et al, 2015). As I have set out in Chapter 1, there has been a change in policy in mainstream schools in the UK, creating free schools and academies, increasingly within multi academy trusts. This has led to a rise in the system leader, who typically leads across several organisations. A system leader differs from a manager or department lead, involved in small scale change and service improvement. Timmin's study (2015) defines system leadership as;

Seeking to make change across organisations where people did not have a direct, line management responsibility.

(Timmins, 2015, p15)

Senge et al argue that the strength of a system leader comes from;

The strength of their ignorance, which gives them permission to ask obvious questions and to embody an openness and commitment to their own ongoing learning and growth.

(Senge et al, 2015, p28)

The complexity of system leadership can be viewed within the Cynefin Framework (Snowden and Boone, 2007), which is a theory of the change management required in leadership when moving from simple cause and effect systems to more complicated and complex systems, reminiscent of the double and triple loop learning (Argyris and Schon, 1978) described above. Tweed et al (2018) suggest that experts or system leaders are required, when faced with complex situations, to convert the complex into the complicated. The leadership qualities that bring about successful change within complex systems require subjective interpretation, intuition and risk taking. Tweed et al (2018) argue the need to develop trusting relationships if system leadership is to be successful. Although I would strongly agree with this, in an educational context a system leader has often been brought in to manage a complex (and often failing) school system where there has not been time to do either.

Tweed et al (2018) argue that system leadership requires a new type of leadership, not the command and control model but the authentic leader with the ability to be 'Emotionally Intelligent' (Goleman et al, 2002). Senge et al (2015) describe this type of system leader as having three core capabilities. First they need to see the larger system not just pay attention to the component parts and they need to help others to step back and see this too. Secondly they need to use reflection or '*thinking about thinking*' (Senge et al, 2015, p 33) and carry out the double and triple loop learning advocated by Argyris and Schon (1978) so that deeply held beliefs and assumptions can be challenged. Thirdly they need to move away from solving problems to envisaging the future.

Tweed et al (2018) suggest that building trust is at the heart of effective system leadership. This in turn highlights the importance of the relationships across system leadership; persuasion, nudging and influence are all attributes of the successful system leader. Perhaps one crucial aspect that sets it apart from other leadership styles is the ability to build capacity through distributed leadership (Welbourn et al, 2013).

Tweed et al (2018) state that the vision is the 'magnet' that holds an organisation together. In system leadership this is of vital importance. She states that system leadership is not easy and requires a particular strength of character. In addition to trusting relationships Tweed et al identify the following as vital factors in successful system leadership; recognising that every organisation is highly complex, that it is important to quickly gain the coalition of the willing, to have the stability of a core team and that it will be important to give credit to others (Tweed et al, 2018).

On considering the important traits of system leadership I am left wondering if this is anything new. This echoes the authentic leadership style (Avolio and Gardner, 2005) and the resonant leader (Boyatzis and McKee, 2005) with vast reserves of emotional intelligence (Goleman et al, 2002);

Leaders who can create resonance are people who either intuitively understand or worked hard to develop emotional intelligence- namely, the competences of self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, and relationship management.

(Boyatzis and McKee, 2005, p4)

What has changed is the context; all public services are now operating in times of huge economic challenge. I believe that adapting to the attributes of a system leader is a means of surviving this challenge. Tweed et al (2018) argue that being a successful system leader is about having a particular mindset, which is something that Welbourn et al (2013) also conclude. The following list of attributes set them apart from someone who has a firm control of a single organisation. The system leader will need the ability to encompass all of the following (Welbourn et al, 2013): ambiguity, power relations, an authorising environment, paradox, managing conflict, reflexivity and distributed leadership. I would argue that at times all leaders, not just system leaders, will need to use these approaches, to a greater or lesser degree.

In my view a system leader will not only need these skills but a range of capabilities that sets them apart from other leaders. To develop a vision and

sustain it will require building the culture and distributed leadership across multiple complex organisations. To ensure high ethical standards will also require what Senge terms '*collective leadership.*' (2015, p 33). On reflection, is system leadership, whether it is operating across multiple organisations or not, the dawn of new transformational leadership in a far more complex era? I am not convinced that in a school setting system leaders can have long term impact because as I have already argued, if leadership is about building successful relationships with a sense of authenticity and humility, the visionary system leader is too remote from their followers, including the pupils, for this to be sustained in the long term.

I would suggest that trust, authenticity and a compelling vision are the hallmarks of a coaching culture. Set in a clear vision of collective commitment and distributed leadership, they would have the power to transform any school, be it a MAT or a stand-alone school.

2.8.4 Leadership and culture

Heffernan's work (2011, 2015) on the right culture being at the heart of effective leadership in order to support the best output from the followers, is an area that I had not, until now, given enough thought to. Engaging with literature such as Kelley's work on effective followership has made me rethink professional growth and development and the appraisal process in my own organisation. It has also allowed me to see myself as both a follower and a leader, depending on the context. This was particularly evident whilst researching for my project, when I was collecting data from focus groups. I was able to see that their ideas and responses had so much merit that as an organisation we needed to change some of our approaches, particularly to monitoring and professional growth. This is what I term the continual '*pushing and pulling*' of effective organisations that I will expand on in Chapter 5, Findings, where it is '*collective leadership*' (Senge, 2015, p33) rooted in a memorable vision, built on high levels of trust, that moves the thinking forward. This new learning has challenged me to reshape my own thinking about leadership.

Heffernan's most recent book 'Beyond Measure; the big impact of small changes' (2015) was published following her TED talk on the same subject (2015). This is essentially a book about developing the right culture to enable people to flourish. Heffernan explores a new kind of leadership, moving away from command and control models, that she observes are still favoured in large organisations, towards a distributed open style of leadership based on developing high levels of trust to build what she terms a '*just culture*' (Heffernan, 2015 p2). She describes the challenges she faced as a woman working in a male dominated culture. Although Heffernan does not describe her approach to leadership as feminist, it links to a series of questions that Chin et al (2008) ask about what constitutes feminist leadership, leading to the conclusion that:

We needed to deconstruct existing theories and principles of feminism and leadership to understand effective leadership styles among women, and their intersection with feminist principles.

(Chin et al, 2008, p4)

Chin evaluates the difference between this and the '*Great man approach*' (Chin et al, 2008 p4) that defines charismatic leaders and is associated with masculinity. Furthermore, female leaders according to Bass and Avolio (1994) are more attentive than men to the human side which fits well with Heffernan's attention to getting the culture right. She argues that it is when we;

...stop and think that we rediscover the courage, wit, compassion, imagination...that work can provoke. All the things that do count, beyond measure.

(Heffernan, 2015, p 5)

Here I am reminded of triple loop learning (Argyris and Schon, 1978), of being that vulnerable and authentic leader, and how this links not only to ethical leadership but to building capacity across organisations as a system leader. Building on these ideas in education is what this study begins to address.

In her research, carried out throughout the world in Hungary, Singapore, Holland, South America, America and England, Heffernan found that 85% of employees

responding to her questionnaires in large organisations felt unable to tell the truth or be honest for two reasons;

From these and many more places, I've concluded that conflict aversion and a desire to please are universal, eviscerating our energy, initiative, and our courage.

(Heffernan, 2015, p5)

What Heffernan goes on to advocate is a style of leading where questioning and the aforementioned term '*pushing and pulling*', identified in this research, is the norm because there are high levels of trust and everyone wants to do the right thing.

This not only links to notions of feminist leadership as a more humanistic style of leading others and developing an effective followership but also of ethical leadership. I would argue that being '*wilfully blind*' is something we are all capable of (Heffernan, TED talk, 2013) and is reminiscent of the article 'The shadow side of leadership' (McCabe, 2005). If system leaders are to be successful they will need to build a culture which allows fierce self-awareness on a systemic level, with the right checks and balances in place to counter '*wilful blindness*' or unethical practice.

Heffernan describes culture as a '*secret sauce*';

Beyond measure and sometimes apparently beyond comprehension, culture has become the secret sauce of organizational life: the thing that makes the difference but for which no one has the recipe.

(Heffernan, 2015, p1)

Heffernan uses extreme examples, such as lessons learned from a tragic airplane accident in 1972, in which deaths could have been prevented. This links with her earlier work 'Wilful Blindness' (2011) in which she sets out an argument for change. She argues that conflict creates change; which echoes Kelley's stages of followership (1992) and Bennis's theory on the attributes of leadership as '*more a curator than a creator.*' (Bennis, 1999, p77) and links with double and triple loop learning (Argyris and Schon, 1978). Heffernan, with feminist leadership attributes,

was operating within a business culture where the masculine, charismatic style was the norm. She observed that the followers fell in line and turned a blind eye because no one was engaged in double or triple loop learning and values were not built into the vision. This has clearly had a catastrophic impact evidenced in the examples she gives, all of which are ultimately linked to culture, managing change, leadership and followership.

Heffernan's solutions are less to do with adopting a legal framework and more to do with general approaches and solutions. For example, the final chapter in *Wilful Blindness* is called 'See Better' and calls on leaders to;

Listen to the quiet voices at the back of our minds begging for attention...develop new habits to keep us more aware

(Heffernan, 2011, p300)

Heffernan's model has parallels with the viewpoints outlined in 2.8.1. Her approach advocates authentic leadership by creating an environment where employees or followers are not afraid of asking questions, in a safe, open culture. This aspect of her work resonates with this research on creating a coaching culture; building trust by valuing the opinions and views of all builds capacity and enables everyone to feel actively involved in an organisation.

These theories point to a new kind of leadership required in schools that this research, albeit on a small scale, hopes to contribute to.

2.8.5 The changing ideology of teaching in UK mainstream education

There have been concerns since the implementation of 1988 Education Act and the emergence of the new 2000 National Curriculum, that linking accountability with school effectiveness and therefore what some educationalists call 'school improvement', needs a rethink (Biesta, 2004). In an accountability model driven by data and pupil outcomes, the term 'teaching to the test' has become common practice and has not necessarily provided the depth of understanding required to support pupils throughout their school career. (Cambridge Assessment Review Group, 2011). The research suggests that school leaders have focussed on core subjects to the detriment of the wider curriculum because this is what they were being measured against (Ofsted 2018).

In 2011, Tim Oates, the then chair of the Cambridge Assessment Review Group, recognised that there was a culture of teachers focussing on tests and exams, leading to a narrowing of the curriculum to the detriment of the acquisition of pupil knowledge. This was leading to growing concern, outlined within my introduction and this Literature Review, that schools were being driven by the wrong drivers; assessment and accountability, rather than the curriculum and creation of knowledge. The New National Curriculum (DfE, 2014) was a response to this concern, giving schools the autonomy to create their own curriculum and assessment model. This was a shift away from prioritising test and exam results towards a greater emphasis on the quality and depth of curriculum. Recently, with the launch of the new Ofsted framework (2019), Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Executive, has put renewed emphasis on the curriculum with a move away from the focus on data. In addition, Ofsted have taken some of the latest evidence based research and promoted this as guidance (Ofsted, 2019) linking knowledge building and the development of schemas with curriculum delivery.

At the same time that the concerns of a narrowing of the curriculum were being raised, an increasing body of research was being published into how pupils learn effectively. This evidence based research includes extensive meta analyses into what really has an impact on pupil outcomes (Hattie, 2009, 2012, 2018), the latest neurological research on how teachers can effectively support pupils' to retain information (Rosenshine, 2012), and theories such as 'Cognitive Load Theory' (Sweller, 2016), that describe an approach to learning that builds the capacity of the long term memory to make learning stick, whilst freeing up the working memory to learn new concepts. These theories have generated numerous publications, blogs and articles that appear to support a change in approach into effective teaching and learning (Sherrington, 2019).

This research into the science of learning has also been explored by the Chartered College of Teachers (CCT) through their website, courses, publications and 'Chartered Teacher' programme, all with an emphasis on evidence based approaches, which I have contributed to (see Appendix 13: Article for Impact

Magazine: Action Research: Developing a reflective community of practice). Another example is The Education Endowment Fund (EEF) which has collated effective evidence based practice (EFF Toolkit, 2011). This sharp focus on evidence based approaches is beginning to influence policy makers, and is enshrined in the new Ofsted consultation document (Ofsted, 2019) and DfE publications such as the recently published Early Career Framework (2019).

Although I welcome these changes, there are considerable implications for schools and school leaders, linked to the development of phronesis (Kinsella and Pitman, 2012) and collective teacher efficacy (Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, 2000). This is brought together by Biesta who makes a powerful case for creating 'democratic accountability' by supporting teachers' *'responsibility for responsibility'* (Biesta, 2004, p232), as an important ideological change within schools. Here the emphasis is on encouraging teachers to adopt a reflective and self-directed approach to professional growth. At Greenfields we have made a start on this approach, by using Action Research (McNiff, 2002) and Lesson Study (DCSF, 2008) to support practitioner reflection and professional growth. I will expand further on this in Chapter 4: Project Activity.

2.9 Summary

I have set out in this literature review a definition of coaching, as opposed to mentoring, and its important role at the heart of a self-improving school system:

From being regarded as a minor subset of mentoring, coaching is increasingly seen as the transformational relationship to enhance all aspects and all sectors of education. However, it is crucial not to be swept up in an evangelical rush to proclaim coaching as the solution to every ill in educational practice. Coaching is neither a quick fix nor a cheaper, shorter-term version of mentoring.

(Fletcher and Mullen, 2012, p 38)

I have described the emergence in coaching in UK education, with my own learning mapped out against the key research and examples of different models of

coaching. Within this literature review I have argued that a coaching culture can build trust and resilience in schools, and that a direct parallel can be seen in leading through coaching when compared with teaching and learning. I have suggested that to create a successful and effective coaching culture you need the passion, time and the commitment to understand what a coaching culture is, what coaching model or models might work in your setting and how the two could work in tandem to transform the approach to leading and following others.

Peacock, who carried out research in her school, suggests that there is an alternative approach to leading schools. Her own experiences and career as a head teacher and insider-researcher is one I have followed with interest. She asks the following question;

What if school development were to be driven by a commitment on the part of a whole-school community to creating better ways for everyone to live, work and learn together, in an environment free from limiting beliefs about fixed ability and fixed futures?

(Peacock, 2012, p4)

This particularly resonates with my research because although Peacock does not use the word leadership or improvement, her approach aligns with a whole-school development philosophy, possibly a new leadership ontology, which could be understood as the beginning of a long overdue approach to developing our schools. Leadership approaches, as I have discussed in this chapter, are hugely varied but there are signs that we need a radical approach to deal with the many challenges and complexities we face in schools.

This might seem simple enough in theory; to ensure that everyone is working together towards a common goal, but as I have argued in this chapter, in practice it is not straightforward. Where Peacock puts forward a passionate argument for change, I would suggest that there need to be more practical examples of how this could be achieved, some of which I go on to describe as products of this research

and are further evidenced in Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations, and also in the appendices.

The literature review points towards three principles that together offer a deep commitment to the professional growth of all practitioners. The 'collective efficacy' of teachers, the 'discretionary effort' of teachers, and the ambition to create a trusting culture that is not afraid to challenge or question. It is my belief that this vision of school development '*free from limiting beliefs*' (Peacock, 2012, p4) can be achieved in part by creating a coaching culture, as described in this study.

In Chapter 3 I will set out the theoretical framework for the research, the methodology and design of the research.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design.

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to explore the potential impact of a coaching culture on leadership and followership within a school setting. In this chapter I set out my research philosophy, how this relates to my ontological and epistemological viewpoints, and my chosen research methodology. I then set out the method and design of the data collection, the reasons for using them, alongside their possible limitations. This lays the foundation for further detailed exploration and discussion in chapter 4: Project Activity, and Chapter 5: Findings.

As part of the ethical considerations, I explore the inevitable tensions involved in doing qualitative research, using an ethnographic methodology, not only as an insider-researcher, but also as an outsider, and the lengths I went to minimise, as far as possible, the potential impact this would have on the research findings. A strategy that supported me throughout this process was the use of reflexivity and '*reflexive bracketing*' (Ahern, 1999, p 408), to understand and consider potential bias as an insider-researcher. This will be explored in this chapter because '*These issues are present in all research involving people.*' (Robson, 2002, p172).

This chapter has been reviewed and rewritten more than any other in this thesis and to a large extent demonstrates the development of my understanding over time. It also highlights the complexity of the research as the project unfolded. To capture some of the challenge involved, I set out my unique position within this research, before describing the reasons for choosing the particular philosophical approach and all its associated components, described in Table 3.

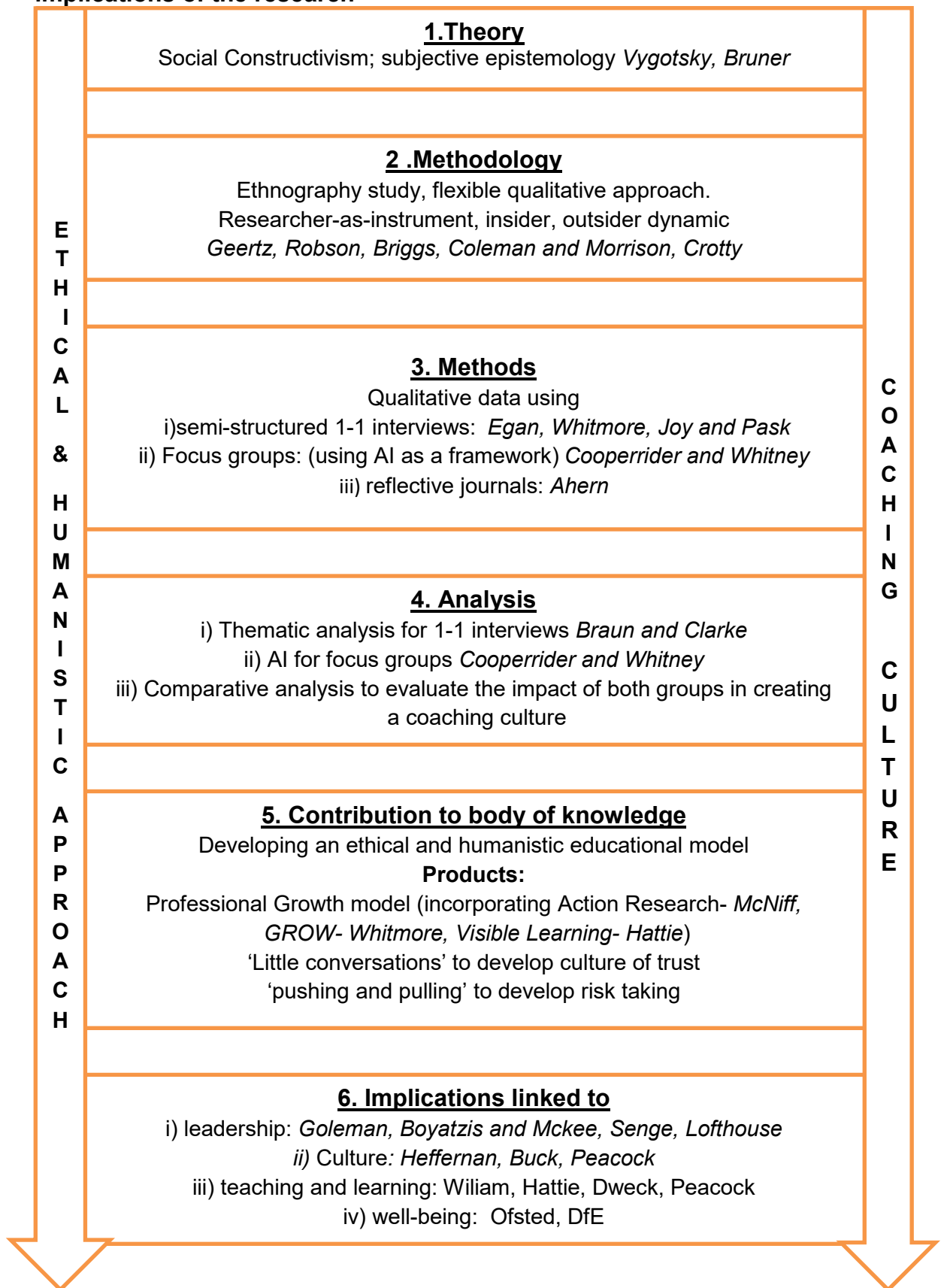
3.2 My own narrative

Throughout the process of carrying out qualitative research, I am aware of my unique role and presence within it;

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations.

(Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p3

Table 3: Conceptual diagram to illustrate the theories, themes and implications of the research



These '*representations*' form the basis for an approach that I believe has the potential to transform outcomes for schools. As the headteacher my role can be seen as an outsider, because of the power relationship I have with all the research participants. Alongside this I also accept that my insider-researcher status calls into question my ability to be objective, something I have reflected on at length. Although I am also aware that being an insider-researcher can also be seen as advantage in the research process;

Valuable work can be undertaken 'from the inside'...like Jonah in the whale, whatever the problems of objectivity and independence, there is a unique perspective and closeness to knowledge in the organisation.

(Hannabuss, 2000, p404)

Linked to this approach of looking at something '*from the inside*', Hannabuss recognised that an insider-researcher could also find themselves as one of the subjects of their own research in a process he terms '*being inside Jonah inside the whale*'. (Hannabuss, 2000, p404). This resonates with me, as my role as an insider-researcher also brought to the research process a heightened awareness of my values and ethics as a headteacher. A certain amount of soul-searching throughout the project left me with the realisation that my own professional story (set out in the Literature Review) and ontological position, was central to this project. This unique position is also noted in the work of Ellis and Bochner (2000) who identify the work of the insider-researcher as something to celebrate. Coffey (1997) adds to this by highlighting the importance of relationships when carrying out qualitative research:

To a large extent, the quality of the research experience (for all involved) and the quality of the research data is dependent upon the formation of relationships and the development of an emotional connection to the field.

(Coffey, 1997, p57)

This builds on the theories I set out in the Literature Review on resonant and authentic leadership, building professional trust and resilience, towards a culture of collective teacher efficacy and collaborative professionalism. At the heart of all these approaches is the importance of relationships, which as a head teacher and

an insider-research, carrying out an ethnographic study, could be seen as both an advantage and a disadvantage. I realise that, to a certain extent, I have been naïve, placing myself as a central player in the research because I know that I am not a neutral actor. Power relations, the potential for bias, my own values, identity and prejudices and how these affect the research, are all important considerations that I have required extensive and continuous '*reflexive bracketing*' (Ahern, 1999, p408).

I hope to demonstrate that on balance, this exploration, the findings and usefulness of the research, albeit on a small scale, benefit from my insights and insider knowledge in a way that would not have otherwise been possible, had I been an outsider looking in.

3.3. Ontology and epistemology

The conceptual diagram in Table 3 illustrates the inter-connectedness and complexity of this research; starting with the theory, how this links to the methodology, the methods used and how the data was analysed. This then leads onto the contribution to the body of knowledge and implications of this research. Running through every aspect of the research is the ethical and humanistic focus and a desire to create a coaching culture with high levels of professional trust.

Ontology and epistemology are closely linked and influence my choice of research philosophy and all the connected components of the theoretical framework that I have chosen. As a researcher, I understand the importance of articulating and exploring beliefs about the nature of reality; how the world operates and the influence this has on society and everything around us;

Ontology and epistemology are to research what 'footings' are to a house: they form the foundations of the whole edifice.

(Grix, 2004, p59)

As a researcher I know that ontology refers to the nature of being, existence and reality, how this exists and how this can be known. My ontology is influenced by my perceptions of reality and how this leads me to ask what type of reality exists;

A singular, verifiable reality...or socially constructed multiple realities.

(Patton, 2002, p134)

I know that epistemology is concerned with the nature and forms of knowledge, how knowledge is created or acquired and then passed on to others. It brings into question objectivity or subjectivity as a researcher, whether knowledge can be validated, or whether there are generalisations that can be made from knowledge. Epistemology can be defined as;

the nature of knowledge and the process by which knowledge is acquired and validated.

(Gall, et al 2003, p13)

I understand the importance of my ontological and epistemological viewpoints in the research process, because they will determine my choice of methodology and the methods used, which are such a crucial aspect of the research findings.

Crotty sets out four main elements of a theoretical framework which he describes in a series of questions:

- What *methods* do we propose to use?
- What *methodology* governs our choice and use of methods?
- What *theoretical* perspective lies behind the methodology in question?
- What *epistemology* informs the theoretical perspective?

(Crotty, 1998 p2)

He explains the interrelatedness of these '*four elements*' (Crotty, 1998, p2) and how fundamental they are to the research process, which I will explore below.

3.4 Research Philosophy

Closely linked to my understanding of ontology and epistemology is the research philosophy that influenced my choice of methodologies and the methods of data collection that I used in this study. I have used theories of social constructivism (also known as constructivism, interpretivist and naturalism) throughout my career, as a student teacher, a teacher, an adviser and now as a headteacher. In choosing social constructivism, I could be accused of staying within my comfort zone. However, on reflection, and for the reasons set out below, I believe it is because social constructivism is rooted in a subjective epistemology, which supports my chosen methodology, that it provides a clear and logical foundation

for the research process.

The work of Lev Vygotsky (1978) has influenced me as an educationalist and supports my view that social phenomena are constructed by social actors. I can plot my use of Vygotskian theories of social constructivism to inform my practice throughout my career. From my undergraduate days in the 1980s, where I also studied Piaget (1926) Bruner (1978), and Donaldson (1978), to using Vygotsky's theories as a teacher in the 1990s, and more recently as a LA adviser and a headteacher.

An important theory taken from Vygotsky and adapted by Bruner is the notion of the teacher as an expert facilitator, guiding the pupil to more challenging concepts through a series of scaffolds that supports them to create their own learning constructs. Vygotsky devised the term Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), an approach I believe mirrors coaching (supporting), rather than mentoring (signposting) which I have compared and discussed at length in the Literature Review. The expert (teacher) uses ZPD to support a pupil, through dialogue, to do something beyond their reach, with just enough support so that they can do it on their own in the future. Bruner called this approach '*scaffolding*' defined as;

The steps taken to reduce the degrees of freedom in carrying out some task so that the child can concentrate on the difficult skill she is in the process of acquiring.

(Bruner, 1978, p19)

A scaffolding analogy was used by Gibbons in her work on supporting bilingual pupils to learn a second language (1993), was learning to ride a bicycle with stabilisers. The stabilisers or scaffolds are slowly removed as the pupil becomes able to move forward independently. There are links here to Rosenshine's 'Principles of Learning' (2012), Sweller's 'Cognitive Load Theory' (2016), and current approaches to teaching, introduced in Chapter 1 and 2, that have recently gained in popularity.

Piaget was another psychologist that I studied as an undergraduate and who later

deepened my understanding of child development as an infant school teacher. Some of his approaches have contributed to the pedagogical approach of the early years curriculum in many countries, including the UK, particularly his use of 'schemas' and the importance of practitioner observations of young children to track developmental steps. Both Vygotsky and Piaget believed that social interactions contribute to the cognitive development of an individual. Piaget observed children, (including his own) over time, to track the development of their language and thinking. Piaget is observing and creating a theory of stages in learning based on observations, whereas Vygotsky is putting forward the notion of an intervention in the form of a facilitator to effect change, which links to this research study on creating a coaching culture. Coaching can be seen within this context as both a form of intervention and a method of observation. This led me to consider ethnography as a possible methodology, which I go on to describe in the next section.

Donaldson (1978) in her book 'Children's Minds' argues that there is a solution to the problem of education;

The problem then is to understand how something that begins so well can often end so badly....whether schooling really does begin as well as it seems to do or whether the brightness of the early years carries within itself the shadow of darkness that is to come.

(Donaldson, 1978, p14)

The solution, she suggests, lies in part with her theory of the nature of human thought and in particular the role of schools and teachers to develop this in young children. Her work is important not only in the context of 'scaffolding' language and thought, but in her vision of what education should provide all children with. Here she alludes to the collective responsibility of society as a whole;

When we make laws which compel our children to go to school we assume collectively an awesome responsibility.

(Donaldson, 1978, p13)

I was reintroduced to the two strategies ZPD (Vygotsky) and scaffolding (Bruner)

as an adviser when I worked on the National Strategies English as an additional Language (EAL) Programme in 2004. Gibbons draws on this in her book 'Scaffolding language, Scaffolding Learning' (2002) where she describes the importance of scaffolding for bilingual pupils. This approach has recently been applied more generally to teaching approaches in the UK, particularly in the form of individual support or small group interventions. Every Child a Reader (DfE, 2011), for example, takes on Donaldson's recommendations, regarding early intervention and securing reading in young children, as a means of securing future success. ZPD and scaffolding are teaching approaches that have links with coaching; they are approaches that support pupils on a 1-1 basis to make rapid improvements.

The theory of social constructivism has supported me in my belief that knowledge is co-created and developed through social interaction. Central to Vygotsky's theory, aligned with my ontological viewpoint, is that language and culture are frameworks through which we understand reality;

Learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function.

(Vygotsky, 1978, p90)

3.5 Research methodology

Traditionally ethnography was a methodology used by anthropologists in the nineteenth century as a means of studying the structure of a particular social group. Ethnographers would try to interpret events from their participants' perspectives, rather than their own viewpoint. The emphasis here was on the researcher becoming an accepted member of the group and conducting research from the inside. Traditionally, an ethnographic study also involved carrying out research over long periods of time, alongside the culture being studied. Researchers at Chicago University adapted the approach to use within urban settings (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). More recently it has been adapted and is linked with naturalism and an interpretative analysis, both aligned to social constructivism. Its usefulness in my research study is summarised here;

The importance of situated meaning and contextualised experience as the basis for understanding social behaviour.

(Pole and Morrison, 2003, p5)

Robson suggests that it is particularly useful;

When you are seeking insight into an area or field which is new or different.

(Robson, 2002, p190)

The *'new or different'* resonated with me. I was embarking on research into the impact of creating a coaching culture, which I had found very little research on, as I have already set out in the Literature Review. This led me to consider whether using an ethnographic approach, where the researcher is able to observe the culture from the inside, was something that would work well as a methodology aligned with my research epistemology and philosophy. I was aware, however, that an ethnographic approach in this instance was not straightforward, and would uncover another challenge; the insider/ outsider dilemma, which I explore below.

The goal of an ethnographic study is to produce *'thick description'* (Geertz, 1973) which helps to describe the culture from the inside. Robson describes an ethnographic methodology as a *'flexible'* qualitative methodology which involves *'the researcher-as-instrument'* (Robson, 2002, p167). This seemed to link well with my role as an insider-researcher described above. Moreover, ethnographers have been described as *'the essential research instrument'* (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, pp91-92). However, I am also aware that there are criticisms of using an ethnographic methodology. Briggs et al (2012) argue that there are three challenges for the researcher to consider and be ready to counter;

The first concerns 'pretend' ethnography; the second and third relate to issues of representation and generalisability.

(Briggs, Coleman and Morrison, 2012 p209)

Pretend ethnography is described as an approach that lacks depth and does not represent the views of the different levels of an organisation, so would therefore have limited impact. In this research I am using data from both senior leaders and

class teachers to put forward a range of perspectives on a coaching culture. I hope to be able to demonstrate that this will give the research findings the necessary depth, countering criticisms of pretend ethnography. However, pretend ethnography cannot be seen in isolation from representation and generalisability, which are all linked to the claims I make as a researcher.

Representation in an ethnographic study can be viewed as the role of the researcher-ethnographer and how their central role impacts on the research process, which could affect the interpretation of the research findings. In this research this is also heightened by the power-relations related to my role as both researcher and head teacher. However, Briggs et al (2012) suggest that an ethnographic study requires the researcher to be 'central' to the research. Furthermore;

This sets it apart from....approaches which see the unearthing of knowledge about [educational] life untainted by the researcher as achievable, or something to be striven for.

(Pole and Morrison, 2003 p 131)

Generalisability requires a researcher to ask what could be learned from their research and could the 'knowledge' generated from it be applied elsewhere. However, generalisability is often linked with quantitative research using a positivist framework, which assumes that what can be generalised stays the same. So, for this study using an ethnographic approach 'generalisability' is problematic. This is because it depends who and where, and from what perspective one 'generalises'. Although my role as an insider-researcher is central to the research, I am gathering information to shed light on a group of practitioners. Even though I fit the criteria of an 'insider', because I am part of the organisation, I still had to build trust and confidence in order to work as an 'outsider' and this was always going to be further compromised because of power relations and my role as a head teacher.

For this reason, I am also acutely aware of the interconnectedness of my role as an ethnographer, linked to my central role in the workplace I am researching, as

an insider-researcher who could also be perceived as an outsider. However, in this research, my connectedness is an important factor, giving me situated and contextualised knowledge as an insider researcher, with a deep understanding of the structures, ethos and relationships within the organisation. I view the insider/outsider dilemma as not necessarily to be viewed as binaries; two poles of a continuum and easily separable. They are combined, inexplicably intertwined and present in my headteacher-researcher perspective.

The claims I make for generalisation in the research conclusions are my own, from my headteacher-researcher perspective, and these have been developed from the participants' combined experiences and thought processes. As a researcher, using approaches developed from ethnography, I am not suggesting that the claims I make are identical to the participants' own claims.

As a consultant head teacher I am supporting other schools in my locality and partnership to create a coaching culture, as set out in table 10, so I hope to be able to demonstrate that the research findings, although they are seen through my perspective, as an insider and outsider, can be applied to other settings.

3.6 Research methods

The methods that I have chosen generate qualitative data, linked to an ethnographic methodology, that link to a social constructivist philosophy. Early on in the research I had considered using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect the data. I explored the possibility of using questionnaires with the focus groups whilst using 1-1 coaching with the senior leaders. However, I felt that because the central focus is to create a coaching culture, which is based on conversations and relationships, questionnaires would not capture the essence of the culture I was trying to explore. In addition, I decided that the close analysis of qualitative data would be an important aspect of the research story and findings, and link closely to my research aims, set out in Chapter 1.

Developing a coaching culture is supporting others to find their own answers by facilitating a semi-structured conversation that helps them to find and construct their own solutions. As I have set out in the literature review, there are many

models of coaching but two that have supported my understanding, and resonate with the approach that I use in this project, are The Skilled Helper (Egan, 2007) (Figure 3) and the GROW model (Whitmore, 2009) (Figure 4).

In addition to coaching models, I used AI, introduced in Chapter 2, a methodology created by Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) to which they give a sub-title 'A Positive Revolution in Change'. AI is a change management tool that provokes deep analysis by starting with what is already working, rather than a deficit model of what needs to be fixed. It has links with Action Research (McNiff 2002) (Figure 5), which I mention here as it is another form of professional growth that all teachers use at my school. There are four distinct stages to explore when using AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005, p8) summarised here:

- Discovery- (the best of what is) articulating what is the best of what has been and what is, known as the positive core The emphasis here that there is always something working well that can be maintained.
- Dream- (what is the world calling for?) Here the group envisages possible scenarios or results that would result in the best example or outcome for that area. This is often based on what they know works well and want to trial.
- Design-(what should be the ideal?) From all the ideas generated at the dream stage you begin to construct what would work, and what is worth pursuing.
- Destiny- (how to empower, learn and adjust) Sustaining momentum, reviewing results in order to move forward.

The NFER (2009) commissioned Shuayb et al to write a report on the use and effectiveness of AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) in educational research. They identified two main limitations; that you needed to be experienced in using it to make it successful and that it was not a good means of evaluating social phenomena, such as racism. However, they also found several reasons why it could be a successful tool in research:

- *providing a new outlook on a particular topic*
- *avoiding stereotypical answers*
- *empowering participants*
- *Identifying good practice.*

(Shuayb et al, 2009, p14)

Both AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) and the GROW coaching model (Whitmore, 2009) are based on the premise that the learner is co-constructing their own solutions to particular scenarios with external scaffolding from an expert; all mirroring Vygotsky, Bruner's and Donaldson's theories described above.

By using these approaches I hope to construct an empowering vision of leadership and culture during challenging times, described by Peacock (2012) in the Literature Review and summarised here by Myatt;

It [leadership] is not promoting a blind optimistic view of the world, but an account of how being hopeful in the face of such difficulties, we release energy and can lift ourselves to a higher standard.

(Myatt, 2016, p 9)

3.7 Data Collection and analysis

The data collection was based on using an AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) methodology (described above) by evaluating the feedback from the focus group participants compared with the 1-1 coaching sessions with the three senior leaders. In Chapter 1 I set out the aims and objectives of the research in relation to leadership, followership and transformational change. In order to put forward an argument to develop a coaching culture I wanted to compare the data from the 1-1 coaching sessions with the perspective of the 'leaders,' alongside the ideas and views of those involved in the focus groups; the 'followers.' The terms 'leaders' and 'followers' were not used to distinguish between the status and hierarchy of these roles. Instead they were used to show parallels with the reciprocal nature of the school's approach to 'Visible Learning'. This term, used by John Hattie (2012), was introduced in chapter 2, and is a concept that Hattie uses to explore the benefits of teachers seeing learning through the eyes of pupils, to help them become reflective teachers, and pupils seeing themselves in the eyes of their teachers to become reflective learners. (Hattie 2012).

I decided to choose a similar reciprocal approach that Hattie (2012) advocated, to compare perspectives in my organisation. On the one hand the senior leaders were describing their leadership style and how they build trust and lead others through change. The followers, on the other hand, are describing the experience of being involved in or being led through change, based on their experiences to date.

I chose AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) as a method of engaging the focus groups in discussion on the subject of creating a coaching culture, and how this might look from their perspective. AI is a tool for whole school improvement which echoes the GROW model of coaching (Whitmore, 2009) introduced in chapter 2, which my school has already been developing as a framework for appraisal discussions, and is therefore not a completely unfamiliar approach to staff. GROW is similar to AI, described above, because the first stage looks at what could be achieved rather than what is not being achieved. The key difference is that it is generally used in 1-1 coaching as a framework for deep analysis and reflection and to support staff to commit and take responsibility for the change they want to see.

As Kvale (2009) suggests, it is crucial to find an appropriate method to analyse research transcripts before embarking on the data collection. In using AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) to collect the focus group data, I was mindful of one of his questions;

How shall I conduct my interviews so that their meaning can be analysed in a coherent and creative way?

(Kvale, 2009, p 191)

Using the four AI quadrants to map the ideas and thoughts of the focus group participants helped to document the emerging themes over time, showing emerging viewpoints from one session to the next.

3.8 Recruitment strategy

It was important as an insider researcher that my recruitment strategy was a transparent process, in order to limit any suggestion of bias and any perceived hidden agenda as head teacher and insider-researcher. Ethically I decided it was

not appropriate to involve anyone who was directly line managed by me to be involved in the data collection; ruling out the deputy head teacher, the inclusion assistant headteacher and the school business manager. That left three other senior teachers who had all recently been appointed as phase leaders. I invited them by email, giving them the option of taking part in the 1-1 coaching sessions (see Appendix 3: Participant information sheet). Although they already knew I was carrying out research, I decided not to ask them face-to-face, as their head teacher, because it might pressurise them into taking part.

I made a decision to create gender neutral pseudonyms for the three senior leaders as part of my commitment to confidentiality. As there were only three of them, I did not want them to be identified. Gender is not a focus of this research but I feel using names helps to personalise the research process, which is why I gave gender-neutral names to the 1-1 participants rather than abstract codes such as X, Y, Z.

The focus groups were made up of all the rest of the teachers in the school, except for any agency, part-time staff and students, whose positions were not contractual and meant they would not be able to guarantee full commitment to the process. I give further details of the reasons for this in Chapter 4 (See Table 3: Demographic details of participants involved in data collection). Those invited to the focus groups were given an outline of AI so that they were aware of the process that we would be using throughout the sessions. In addition the whole of the leadership team were given training from an external consultant prior to recruitment on the pedagogy and process of coaching. I hoped that this engagement with some of the strategies would not only build trust, but also support their professional growth, and help them to make an informed choice about taking part in the process. To protect their anonymity, I gave the participant teachers pseudonyms, set out in Table 3. As there were more of them than in the 1-1 coaching, I decided that it was not necessary for these to be gender neutral.

3.9 1-1 Semi- structured coaching interviews

The 1-1 coaching sessions focussed on the experiences of three senior leaders in my school by using the coaching model over three terms within an academic year. Here I will explain why I decided to use semi-structured interviews in a coaching

style over other methods. In the next chapter I will explain the recruitment process in more detail, the timeline of activity and further details of the structure of the coaching sessions.

Coaching, as described in Chapter 2, is essentially a means of *'helping others and unlocking their potential.'* (Stanier, 2016, p7). Through a series of open questions the coach *'helps individuals access what they already know.'* (Zeus and Skiffington, 2002, p3) The nature of coaching is that while it is not highly structured because of the personalised and customised nature of the process, it should adhere to a strict ethical code which I explain below.

The remit of this project is described by Robson as *'In the real world'* (Robson 2002, p4). It took place with people with multiple variables leading to an inductive approach to data collection. Robson sums up the advantages of using interviews in qualitative research as follows;

Face-to-face interviews offer the possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and other self-administered questionnaires cannot.

(Robson, 2002, p273)

These interviews generated a large amount of qualitative data, linked with an ethnographic approach, which were coded and analysed for common themes and patterns. Semi-structured interviews in the form of coaching are an appropriate method because they are easily adaptable and personalised to the individual, making their world increasingly visible to them. This in turn mirrors the school's 'Visible Learning' approach described in Chapter 2 (Hattie 2012) and above, which is used to support pupils and teachers to become reflective learners.

In choosing 1-1 coaching I had to balance the considerable benefits of using this type of qualitative data with the inevitable disadvantages, which are put forward by those who feel it has less validity than quantitative methods. The first consideration is approaching my research as an insider-researcher from a social constructivist perspective. I am creating knowledge through social interaction using an ethnographic approach, because I am interested in people's professional

narratives and the reflection and understanding they bring to dynamic situations. Using coaching is part of my vision to support practitioners in my school to become more reflective as professionals. The solution-focussed approach to coaching described by Cavanagh and Grant (2014) summarises this approach as supporting the coachee to see that they are '*fundamentally capable of solving their problems.*' This identifies the coachee as '*whole and resourceful, rather than dysfunctional and needy.*' (Cavanagh and Grant 2014, p52). This links to the performance management of teachers that is often bound up in accountability measures and target setting. The education system, as I have already argued in Chapter 1, is calling for an approach that builds on the AI notion of the '*positive core*' (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005, p8) rather than the far less motivating process of identifying gaps in practice that need to be improved on.

In describing the disadvantages of semi-structured interviews as a chosen method Robson states that;

The lack of standardization that it implies inevitably raises concerns about reliability.

(Robson, 2002, p273)

Robson is referring to the aforementioned issue of inevitable subjectivity in qualitative data analysis. The argument that qualitative data lacks credibility because it is not scientific and cannot be presented objectively and empirically has been widely debated. However, I hope to demonstrate in this project that the benefits of the methods that I have used to collect and analyse the data have outweighed the disadvantages. There is, after all, an interpretation in any data set, even a scientific one. As someone who works daily with data and statistics at a school, local and national level, I am well aware of how it is possible to interpret a data set in many different ways. It seems that the key to successful qualitative analysis is to be aware of all the limiting factors from the start, for example in the section on ethnography above, and to factor this into the analysis. Ahern argues that;

The ability to put aside personal feelings and preconceptions is more a function of how reflexive one is rather than how objective one is.

(Ahern, 1999, p407)

Reflexive bracketing is discussed in more detail below in 3.11 I would add that carrying out work based research enables you to make '*fuzzy generalisations*' Bassey (1999 p12) implying that what has been learned in one context could, to a certain extent, be transferred into another similar context.

Robson (2002) suggests that the terms validity and reliability are avoided by those who promote qualitative research design and criticised by those who argue that it is an unreliable and therefore invalid approach. The importance of the '*transferability*' of qualitative findings, which I have already discussed, is what matters, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p 294). However, what is important is the use researchers made of ethnographies, in what Stake defines as;

Naturalistic generalisations [that] develop within a person as a product of experience.

(Stake, 1978, p 6)

The research findings set out in Chapter 5 suggest that the '*transferability*' Lincoln and Guba (1985, p 294), of these '*fuzzy generalisations*' Bassey (1999 p12), do have validity and could form the basis of transformational change in a school.

3.10 Focus groups

The focus group discussions for two groups of teachers were based on using the AI methodology (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005), described above and in chapter 2, as a framework to collect ideas and solutions. AI is a highly motivating and reflective tool that opens up multiple options and possibilities, encouraging group discussion. It does this by celebrating what works well which is identified as '*the positive core*' (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, p8) rather than a deficit model of problem solving which involves identifying what needs to improve from the outset. I felt that AI would build trust as it envisages a positive future which would also engage the focus group discussions, leaving the participants feeling empowered and inspired to be solution focussed.

My aim has been to design an approach that I felt would complement and support whole school development, whilst motivating those involved to commit to change.

To bring about this change in culture, I wanted to involve as many teachers as possible, so that there was a common goal, language and set of strategies that would start to change the professional culture within the school.

I decided that creating two focus groups would be the best way of doing this. Robson (2002) suggests that the size of a focus group needs to be carefully considered. In this research I decided that it would have been impossible to take all the teachers out of class together as they would need to be covered, which was not practical. Instead, I created two groups made up of four and five teachers. Although it would have been better to have groups with even numbers, this was not possible as I only had nine teachers to include. I was aware that by creating homogenous groups of practitioners with common experiences who knew each other, there could be a possibility of slipping into '*groupthink*' (Brown, 1999, p115). This is described as a dynamic where individual views go unchallenged to maintain the status quo. It would be up to me, as the facilitator, to ensure that my questioning had enough depth to unpick individual views, and limit this from happening from the outset.

Linked with the ethnographic methodology, I decided to use focus groups as a method of data collection because they are;

A group interview on a specific topic; which is where the focus comes from. It is an open-ended group discussion guided by the researcher.

(Robson, 2002 p284-285)

Robinson (1999) sets out the many advantages and disadvantages of using focus groups. Focus groups are an efficient, often enjoyable, flexible and inexpensive way of collecting data, where the group dynamic can help to focus on the topic in hand. '*Natural quality controls operate*' (Robinson, 1999, p 909) when there is a group of people involved in discussion. In particular;

Participants are empowered and able to make comments in their own words, while being stimulated by thoughts and comments of others on the group.

(Robinson, 1999, p909)

Kitzinger (1995) sets out in her short paper 'Introducing Focus Groups' good practice and points to consider when using focus groups. She presents a comprehensive case in favour of focus groups, compared with interviews;

...to illuminate the research participants' perspectives through the debate within the group.

(Kitzinger, 1995, p 302)

Kitzinger suggests that the powerful dynamic of a focus group is the catalyst for lively discussion that is not always the case in a 1-1 interview.

However, for every point above there are as many disadvantages. Focus groups can be hard to manage, arguments could arise between participants. The role and in particular the expertise of the facilitator, described below seems to be at the heart of most of these disadvantages. Briggs et al (2012) suggest:

...that the larger the number of people the more difficult it becomes for one individual to manage the experience.

(Briggs et al, 2012, p256)

This was another reason for creating two smaller groups, rather than one large one. As the facilitator I was not only asking probing questions, but was also summarising their responses onto the AI posters to support their understanding in each session (Appendices 5 and 6).

Kitzinger suggests that the facilitator needs to strike a balance between a structured approach (in this case using the AI framework), and allowing participants the freedom to openly discuss their views as a group.

Cresswell puts forward eight characteristics of a flexible qualitative research approach, concluding that to be successful;

The writing is clear, engaging, and helps the reader to experience 'being there.' The story and findings become believable and realistic, accurately reflecting the complexities of real life.

(Cresswell, 1998, p20)

The individual 1-1 interviews with senior leaders and the focus groups made up of the remaining class teachers are a powerful research story, set out in Chapter 5, notwithstanding the disadvantages set out above.

3.11 Ethical considerations

There are ethical considerations in using 1-1 coaching in semi- structured interviews and focus groups as a method of data collection which I have alluded to above. What is identified as '*the researcher's presence and interpretive work in qualitative research*' (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009, p7) is further complicated by my distinct role as an insider- researcher, and still further by the fact that I am also the head teacher of the school in which I am carrying out the research and could be seen as an outsider in terms of power-relations.

However, I would agree with the view that the nature of an ethnographic study makes it distinctive because the role of the researcher is central to the study, as emphasised here;

It recognises the importance of ethnographers' skills as inscribers, transcribers and, ultimately, as participants and interpreters.

(Briggs et al, 2012, p210)

To ensure that I have carefully considered, as far as possible, the ethical and power relations, I successfully completed the ethical application before starting my research. In doing so I was mindful that it is not humanly possible to be totally objective;

...we are after objective, valid and generalisable conclusions as the outcome of our research. Human knowledge is not like that.

(Crotty, 1998, p13)

Therefore I have had to establish the bearing my unique role has on the interpretation of the data. For this I have drawn upon;

Bracketing...a means of demonstrating the validity of the data collection and analytical processes. Thus a growing body of knowledge is developed

that is faithful to the phenomenon, regardless of the idiosyncrasies of researchers.

(Ahern, 1999, p 407)

Ahern's research on the links between reflexivity and bracketing have been a useful framework to try to limit any potential bias when undertaking this form of qualitative research as an insider researcher. Ahern advocates ten 'tips' for effective 'reflexive bracketing'. Which start before the data collection, which I found myself revisiting throughout the process. An example of one of these is the use of a reflective journal;

...in which you can write down the issues that will enhance your reflexivity and your ability to bracket.

(Ahern, 1999, p408)

Keeping a reflective journal throughout the process helped me to capture my emerging ideas as a researcher. At first I thought it would simply act like a research diary, where I could jot down field notes during or after coaching sessions. Then I found that I was carrying the journal around with me to lectures, conferences and talks, which was when I realised its significance. There was something tangible that I could continually reflect on, annotate and mull over. This turned into a ritual of distilling ideas, having little epiphanies that needed to be logged and dealt with later. In addition it made me consider the possible effects of bias in my role as an insider- researcher with a central role using an ethnographic methodology.

Researching is an ever evolving process that requires you to question and view theories from new perspectives on a continual basis. I look at it as a form of distilling ideas in a funnel. The reflective journal is the widest part of the funnel in this process. It has also made me see my interest in evidence-based research develop overtime. The coaching culture approach has been supported by my staff, illustrated in the 2018 staff survey (see Appendix 2) where 100% of the respondents felt that the school is well led and that they know the direction the school is going in. Securing a coaching culture, based on openness and reflection, needed a firm foundation of trust within the organisation, so the positive results of

the staff survey gave me the mandate to continue with this approach. Browning (2014) echoes this, emphasising the importance of trust, in his educational research on leadership and trust.

There are many contributing factors that create a highly effective school, one of which is the effectiveness of relationships between all stakeholders. In my experience, investing in these relationships, at all levels, creates a secure foundation for a healthy, effective organisation, with high levels of trust;

It is probably difficult to envisage any aspect of leadership work that is not profoundly dependent on trust: indeed it could be argued that it would be impossible for leaders to work without trust.

(West-Burnham, 2010, p1)

Browning (2014) and West-Burnham (2010) both argue that trust brings hope and supports openness within a workforce, which have a positive impact on pupil outcomes. Browning goes on to argue that in a more toxic environment you might expect to see the exact opposite.

The appendices illustrate my understanding of ethics in regard to Middlesex University Ethics Approval. For example, part of this involved setting out my commitment to maintaining confidentiality (Appendix 3), gaining consent (Appendix 4) and giving participants the ability to opt out at any point (Appendix 3). Coaching is reflective by nature and can evoke emotions because you are discussing issues surrounding relationships or perceived personal limitations, which can weigh heavily on your mind. Pask and Joy (2007) suggest that a way around this is to clearly define the coach's responsibility to the coachee throughout the coaching cycle. They describe these as '*prerequisites*' (Pask, Joy, 2007 p55) of coaching (Appendix 1) that need to be made clear or visible from the start of the process. These '*prerequisites*' also support the coach as a checklist of best practice in coaching.

I am aware that my position brings status and power to my role as a researcher and I have already described how I have tried to minimise this as an insider researcher. Being a head teacher and work based researcher with insider

knowledge has presented both challenges and opportunities. There is the subjective nature of researching my own organisation and my inevitable lack of impartiality. I am also aware of the unique reality and experiences of myself and the individuals I am working with. To counter this, the unique position and merits of an insider researcher are set out by Costley et al (2010);

Not only do you have your own insider knowledge, but you have easy access to people and information that can further enhance that knowledge...You have an advantage when dealing with the complexity of work situations because you have in-depth knowledge of many of the complex issues.

(Costley et al, 2010, p3)

The '*advantage*' is that you also know the big picture, the priorities, the direction you want the organisation to take, and the complexity of the relationships. As I am aware of the intricacies of the organisation, I have brought empathy and flexibility to the role that a true outsider would not necessarily have been able to. For example, if a session needed to be postponed for any reason this could easily be accommodated by me at the last minute, whereas it would be more difficult for an external coach to do this.

There is a duty of care bound up with carrying out research in the workplace, because those who are involved in supporting your research have entrusted their vulnerability to you and this puts you in a position of power.

It is about how researchers can best meet their caring responsibilities.

(Costley et al, 2010, p57)

In trying to put forward a model of openness and trust through coaching, I have demonstrated the importance as a head teacher that I place on staff well-being. This impact of this can be seen in chapter 5, where the participants describe how the impact of coaching and the culture of the school have had a positive effect on them.

In gaining ethics approval for this project, I have given careful consideration to the confidentiality of the participants. Confidentiality agreements were drawn up beforehand for all those taking part in the research. It was also made clear that, as far as possible, the research participants would not be identifiable in any way, although this could not be completely guaranteed.

The power relations of being in charge and leading research have also needed careful researching and planning. I am confident that I have created as safe an environment as possible, described throughout this chapter, to enable them to say what they felt without fear of reprisals. McCabe (2006 p239) suggests that the best way to do this is *'to build fierce self-awareness of the way you behave around people.'* This has been done by using a reflective journal, showing I am human, by being vulnerable, and by asking for continual feedback on my performance and the direction the school is going in.

3.12 Summary

Throughout this chapter I have set out the rationale for my theoretical approach and the interconnected components of the research process. To conclude, I have used Yardley's core principles for evaluating qualitative research (2000) to evaluate the effectiveness and validity of my chosen methodology. These centre around four areas;

...sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, impact and importance.

(Yardley, 2000, p 219)

I have presented the ethical and power relations arising from my role as insider-researcher, carrying out an ethnographic study as a head teacher, and have described the steps I have taken to design and carry out the research in a rigorous manner.

I believe I have shown sensitivity throughout the process but particularly in the coaching sessions, in which I actively listened to the coachees in order to ask them probing and searching questions, whilst at the same time being sensitive and mindful of any emotional triggers. The use of a reflective journal to take notes and engage continually with the research process and issues of power-relations,

engaged me with the context of each individual; seeing things from different perspectives and angles overtime.

Have I shown commitment and rigour as a researcher? This chapter has been reviewed many times, particularly the ethical aspect of the research, and my role as an insider -researcher and the headteacher of the organisation. I have given considerable thought to ensure that the whole process was rigorous and kept within the ethical framework and the agreed timeframe.

Has the process been coherent and transparent? The research journey has been a hugely complex but coherent process, from ethical approval, to theoretical frame and research design. This process and complexity has been set out in Table 3 and discussed throughout this chapter. As a researcher I have worked within an ethical framework and been as transparent as possible, without breaching confidentiality. In the participant information (Appendix 3) I set out the outline and expectations for the 1-1 coaching and the focus groups, adhering to good practice for both and working within an ethical framework. Confidentiality from all sides was reiterated before each session. I sought governor approval before starting the research and have given regular updates to the chair of governors at each stage of my research. All participants have been allowed access to their transcriptions at each stage of the research journey.

Do I foresee that the research will have impact and importance? This research is a small scale ethnographic study that supports an exploration into creating a humanistic culture within a mainstream school setting. This is a shift in approach and the impact and usefulness will be explored further in the research findings in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Project Activity

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I set out the project activity and method of analysis for the research methods described in Chapter 3. The data was captured through 1-1 coaching of three senior leaders in the form of semi-structured interviews, and two focus groups of teachers. I will also describe in more detail the selection of participants and the format for data collection. All the relevant documents related to the project activity are either described further in tables or set out in the appendices, which I will refer to individually throughout.

The evolving nature and wider impact of creating a coaching culture across the school is explored. In particular, the use of Action Research as a professional development process. Action Research developed during the research period, informing the research into the impact of a coaching culture, which is at the heart of this research. Any shortcomings will be considered in each section. I will conclude by evaluating the methods of data collection and how effectively they link back to the objectives of the research. The data will then be further analysed in Chapter 5, where I explain the findings in more detail.

4.2 Selection of participants

In Chapter 3 section 3.8 I set out the recruitment strategy of the participants involved in this study. In table 3 below, there are further details about the participants, which put the study into context.

As an insider researcher and practitioner I am fortunate to have had ready access to practitioners for the focus groups and individual coaching. In this project I wanted to show two sides of the coaching culture; how coaching could support individual growth overtime through 1-1 coaching sessions, and how a coaching culture could set the tone for professional growth across the school. For the 1-1 coaching I invited three newly appointed senior leaders who were due to start their new roles the following term. Two other members of the senior leadership team were not invited to take part in 1-1 coaching with me; the Inclusion lead who was retiring before the end of the project, and the deputy head. The latter had been in position for four years and had been away on parental leave during the start of the

project. On their return we discussed the possibility of using a coach, so that they had access to the same professional growth as the three new senior leaders. I felt it was not appropriate for me, as their direct line manager, with the inherent power implications, to coach them, something I have discussed in Chapter 3.

I had not considered that the three senior leaders might not agree to be involved and with hindsight that was an oversight. For the reasons I have introduced in 3.2, my collegiate approach might have something to do with this oversight. I could not discount power relations at play, as they might have felt compelled to take part as I am their headteacher and they had been newly appointed by me. I took for granted that I had already developed a culture with high levels of trust across the organisation, which had set the culture within which we work as a team. What I had not considered was that by not being involved, the senior leaders could be seen as holding the power and this would have put me in a difficult position. Indeed at the beginning of each session I gave them the option to opt out, as could the focus group participants. It was a mistake to assume they would agree, and I can see that if they had not, then my research would have faltered before it had even begun.

I also invited all the full time teachers (nine in total) who were not senior leaders in the school to be involved in one of two focus groups. The reason for not including part time teachers was because they have specific roles that are difficult to cover. This also gave me greater flexibility with timetabling, as I could identify any day of the week, rather than only the days that the part time staff worked. Agency staff were also not included as they were employed on a daily basis without permanent contracts, putting the data collection at risk were they to suddenly leave. However, even though not all staff were involved, what is evident and described in 4.6 is that every practitioner in the school became involved in creating a coaching culture.

Table 3: Demographic details of participants involved in data collection

Participant (pseudonyms)	Type of data	Age range	Length of employment at the school in years	responsibility
Alex	1-1 coaching	30-35	8	TLR/ SLT
Chris	1-1 coaching	30-35	7	TLR/ SLT

Sam	1-1 coaching	30-35	4	TLR/ SLT
Anwen	Focus group 1	25-30	3	UNQ
Clariss	Focus group 1	35-40	2	RQT
Evan	Focus group 1	25-30	3	MPS
Geraint	Focus group 1	25-30	5	UNQ
Idris	Focus group 1	25-30	3	MPS
Lloyd	Focus group 2	35-40	4	SL
Myrddyn	Focus group 2	20-25	1	NQT
Sian	Focus group 2	30-35	2	RQT
Bethan	Focus group 2	35-40	3	SL

Key:

TLR/ SLT	Teaching and Learning Responsibility/ Senior Leadership Team
SL	Subject Leader
MPS	Main professional scale
UNQ	Unqualified teacher (with 2 years' experience in another country)
NQT	Newly qualified teacher 1 st year
RQT	Recently qualified teacher 2 nd year

Table 3 gives an overview of the 12 participants; Chris, Alex and Sam (gender-neutral pseudonyms) who were also part of the senior leadership team who took part in the 1-1 coaching and the nine full time teachers (whose names are pseudonyms) who were involved in the two focus groups.

Although the participants were invited to take part, I realised that it would have been difficult for them not to, as I am not only an insider-researcher but also their headteacher. I have discussed this in Chapter 3 under ethical considerations and evaluate this further in Chapter 6: Discussion. At the start of my research this has been the area that most concerned me and required the most reflection from me at every stage in the capture, analysis and interpretation of the data, so that my research could be seen as credible and have validity.

4.2.1 Coaching sessions

Table 4 below is the project activity timeline setting out the recruitment of participants, coaching sessions, focus groups and the evaluation and comparison of data at each of the three stages of the research.

Table 4: Chronology of data collection and analysis

Activity/ Stage	Date
Stage 1	
Recruited 3 senior Leaders for 1-1 coaching	March 2017
Recruited 9 teachers to join 2 focus groups	March 2017
Invited 3 senior leaders a reflective journal to use throughout process- invited them to collate areas for discussion before stage 1 interview	April 2017
Carried out 3 x 1-1 semi- structured coaching interviews (audio taped)	April 2017
Took brief notes throughout the interviews in my reflective journal	April 2017
3 senior leaders invited to use reflective journal to log key moments	April-June 2017
Carried out 2 x focus group meetings (audio taped)	April 2017
In the focus group meetings used a flip chart through the meeting to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a shared definition of coaching 2. Plot thoughts/ ideas onto AI grid (Appendices 7,8) 	April 2017
Listened to 1-1 interviews	May 2017
Transcribed the interviews	July 2017
Made notes of emerging themes	August 2017
Listened to focus group sessions	May 2017
Transcribed the emerging themes using the AI discovery/ dream process to collate	August 2017
Stage 2	
Invited 3 senior leaders to stage 2 1-1 coaching bringing their reflective journals with them	July 2017
Invited 9 teachers to stage 2 focus group meetings	July 2017
Carried out 3 x 1-1 semi- structured coaching interviews (audio taped)	July 2017
Took brief notes throughout the interviews in my reflective journal	July 2017
Carried out 2 x focus group meetings (audio taped)	July 2017
In the focus group meetings used the original flip chart through the meeting to:	July 2017

1. Revisit the shared definition of coaching 2. Plot thoughts/ ideas onto AI grid	
Listened to 1-1 interviews	August 2017
Transcribed the interviews	August 2017
Made notes of emerging themes	September-December 2017
Identified the most common themes across all sessions	September-December 2017
Created a map showing any observable change from one session to the next for all participants	September-December 2017
Listened to focus group sessions	September- October 2017
Transcribed Focus Group sessions: the emerging themes using the AI discovery/ dream/ design process to collate	September-December 2017
Stage 3	
Invited 3 senior leaders to stage 3 1-1 coaching bringing their reflective journals with them	June 2018
Invited remaining 6 teachers to stage 3 focus group meeting	June 2018
Carried out 3 x 1-1 semi- structured coaching interviews (audio taped)	June 2018
Took brief notes throughout the interviews in my reflective journal	June 2018
Carried out 1 x focus group meetings (audio taped)	June 2018
In the focus group meetings used the original flip chart of coaching as a focus to discuss the 'destiny' stage.	June 2018
Listened to 1-1 interviews	July 2018
Transcribed the interviews	July 2018
Used the final interview to plot growth and change against the main themes for all participants	July 2018
Listened to focus group sessions	July 2018
Transcribed the emerging themes using the AI destiny stage to collate	July 2018

The 1-1 coaching sessions were an ideal opportunity to introduce the senior leaders to coaching and a coaching culture, something that I hoped would have a lasting impact on the organisation and their future leadership skills. All three had already had experience of leadership at middle leader level, were subject leaders, with considerable experience as class teachers. Two of them had over 10 years' experience as teachers.

4.2.2 Focus Groups

For the focus groups I invited all the remaining fulltime class-based teachers on permanent contracts (nine in total) to join one of two groups. At the time the school was employing a number of agency staff who were not invited to take part, due to the temporary nature of their roles. In designing the methods, I felt that focus groups would support an evaluation, referred to in Chapter 3, of themes from the leaders and their followers. I divided the groups up so that each year group was represented and teachers who worked in the same year group were not in the same focus group. This was also to encourage discussion between the sessions amongst parallel staff, in the hope that it would promote rich conversations from different perspectives. Focus Group 1 looks as if it has less experience, but more participants, than Focus Group 2. Two teachers in Focus Group 2 were subject leaders, with more experience of monitoring their subjects and working with senior leaders than the other teachers. However, two teachers in Focus Group 1 were overseas trained with experience of teaching abroad. The overseas trained teachers both had two years' experience in other countries, so I felt that the experience across the groups was a good balance. The teacher with the most experience was in their fourth year of teaching.

Organising the two groups was determined by separating the parallel teachers. This contributed to the notion of a group of 'followers' who were in the early stages of their careers and whose views could be compared with the leaders involved in the 1-1 coaching sessions.

4.3 Coaching sessions- format

Before the start of the sessions I sent the prospective participants a letter outlining the research and their potential role in it, (Appendix 3) giving them 10 days to consider whether they wanted to take part in the research and inviting them to ask any questions. The questions were operational (dates, location and time of the sessions and how their classes would be covered). They all gave consent and the initial sessions were set up.

The coaching sessions took place between March 2017 and July 2018 in a training room familiar to the participants at one end of the school site, away from any distractions and disturbances of the main school building, but still in a familiar

environment where we had previously held staff training sessions. I decided not to hold these sessions in my own office, with the connotations of power that this might bring, as their headteacher. It was important for the success of the sessions that I positioned myself as an insider researcher, so that as far as possible they perceived me as a coach for these sessions.

Each coaching session lasted between 60 and 75 minutes. Internal cover had been set up for the senior leaders (they were all class teachers) with additional time at the end of the session so that they could reflect on the session. This was made clear to them at the start, as it was important to give them time to reflect at the end of the session, with the option of completing their reflective journal.

All recordings were held on a secure memory stick, password protected and for my sole use. All nine coaching sessions were later transcribed, generating a large amount of data, in addition to the data collected from the focus groups, with further evaluation and analysis described in more detail in Chapter 5. The thesis was shared with my academic supervisors using my Middlesex University OneDrive account.

I had some difficulties with the recording device I used to record the sessions, inadvertently taping over a few minutes of the first coaching session, which I then had to start again. I do not think anything of importance was lost in the process, if anything this helped to 'break the ice' as the coachee helped me to work out how to use the device.

Each participant was invited to agree to their continuing participation in the research using the consent form, which was reissued at the beginning of each session (appendix 3). I also emphasised that they were able to leave the research at any point (appendix 3) making them aware that data could only be withdrawn up to one month after data collection.

The framework and protocols for coaching sessions, set out at the beginning of the first session, are based on guidelines for co-coaching, developed as part of the approach I use to train senior leaders in the coaching process. (Appendix 1). In the Middlesex University Ethics Review form, in addition to the right to anonymity, I emphasised that I would be using gender-neutral pseudonyms, avoid his/ her

pronouns and I would not use highly personal narratives or quotes that would identify the coachees. In some situations generalisations were made to ensure their anonymity, such as not referring to the name of the class or subject that they take/lead.

At the start of the first session I set out the structure as follows:

- Summarising the project and why the participant has been selected, asking if they were willing to carry on with the session but giving them the option to withdraw at any point. Referred to The Participation Letter (Appendix 3), The Consent form (Appendix 4) and confirmed that I had gained ethical approval for this research.
- Confirming that the coaching conversation would engage the participant in some reflection about their own practice. This would require me as their coach to take notes which I would refer to through the session and again the following session.
- Emphasising that they could halt the session at any point. At this point I explained that sometimes reflecting on the past brought out uncomfortable feelings and thoughts.
- Confirming that any scenarios were to be described in a manner that protected anonymity.
- Confirming the approximate length of the session.
- Stating that the session would be taped for my sole use, and stored on a password protected memory stick.
- Reiterating that all conversations held were confidential and the details of the sessions would not be divulged to a third party.
- That the participant would have access to a summary of the research when transcribed and again when the project was completed.

The questions for session 1 fell into these broad categories:

- Setting the scene- I invited them to describe their career path to date, identifying any 'key points' along the way. Time was then spent on these

key moments to decide whether they had any impact on their journey to leadership.

- Identifying key points of focus- the next stage was to focus on key areas from the 'key points' – what was going well and why? Were there any patterns emerging? What did they want to discuss that might be a barrier to moving forward?
- Establishing ownership of the issue- what different options could they use to lift these barriers and move forward professionally? During this stage identifying how to deal with difficult situations, in particular reflecting and connecting patterns of behaviour in themselves as a response to others, so they could establish how to deal effectively with similar situations in the future.
- Finally, they were each invited to use their reflective journal to jot down key moments, anything that resonated with what we had discussed during the session, including anything that they might want to discuss in the next session.

By the end of the first session each of the participants left with a clear idea of what they wanted to commit to, how they were going to do this, and what the potential benefits could be if they were successful. They were able to use their recent coaching training, so that they had a developing understanding of what coaching involves; deep-questioning to arrive at possible solutions. Their sessions with me could be viewed as a peer coaching model modelling of how to run a coaching session in their teams.

The second session for each participant was held 8 weeks later and was similar in structure to the first except for the questioning. I had written down four broad areas for discussion that would be generic to all three participants:

- What had happened since the last session? Had anything changed? Why? What had they done differently? What was the impact of coaching on this outcome?

- Did they manage to capture any thoughts/ reflections in their reflective journal? Could these be a focus today? Had the journal been useful to review what had changed?
- Is there anything else they wanted to explore further today?
- Towards the end of the session there was time to identify what they wanted to focus on next and move forward with.

At the end of the second session they were invited to carry on with the reflective journals. In addition I offered them informal coaching as part of their professional development, as and when they needed it. I put the onus on them to bring forward scenarios that they would benefit from talking through. What has happened since then has been a less formal approach involving unscheduled meetings or conversations in their classrooms that contributed to the coaching culture. This ongoing development of a coaching culture was not formally captured as part of the data for this project, but has become a weekly and sometimes daily part of professional development. It is what is termed '*little conversations*' by Alex, one of the participants, in Chapter 5.

The coachees were invited to a final coaching session a year later (Appendix 8) as a means of evaluating the impact of coaching on their practice and the wider school community. In a similar way to the first two sessions, they were invited to bring reflections in their reflective journals, based on the following:

- Reflecting on 2017-2018 can you describe how you have changed as a school leader?
- What impact has your leadership had on those you line manage and other stakeholders at school?
- What do you want to develop next as a school leader?
- What next for the school to continue to grow and develop as an organisation?

I have discussed the ethical issues of my role as insider-researcher and the head teacher of all participants in chapter 3, but I raise it again here as it could be seen as a possible limitation of the research. The fact that I knew them professionally

beforehand, and the lengths I had gone to build trust with them as a team, gave me the confidence to answer any criticism or ethical issues surrounding my role as an insider-researcher and their headteacher. I am researching, as an experienced coach within an ethical framework, with several checks and balances to guide and support me.

The transcriptions from these sessions provided a rich source of data which is further evaluated in Chapter 5: Findings.

4.4 Reflective journals

The three participants were invited to use reflective journals before and after the coaching sessions as part of their experience of the impact of the process. However, there was no obligation to do so and it was left to the individual as to how much to write, should they wish to. As part of my duty of care as their head teacher, I did not want to make this obligatory, because they would need to do this in their own time, as often or as little as required, and I did not want to add to their workload.

The space to reflect is an important part of the coaching process (Ahern, 1999) and often continues long after the coaching session itself. Its impact can be seen in much the same way that McNiff describes Action Research in Chapter 2 (Figure 5) as a strategy that *'helps you to live out the things you believe in.'* McNiff, (2002 p4), and echoes the importance of phronesis, already explored in Chapter 2, described in a blog by Lofthouse as *'practical wisdom wisely used in context'* (Lofthouse, 2015, n.p.). I also hoped that these reflections would give the coachees ownership of their personal narratives, illustrating the progress they had made over time.

McNiff's Action Research (2002) (Figure 5) mirrors an approach that many schools use in their action planning where they commit to change, so this is not unfamiliar to me or any of the participants. In a similar way that coaching has become part of my repertoire over time, Action Research is the way many teachers approach and commit to change. The use of reflective journals would support the coaching conversations because they could be used as a reference to illustrate the impact of the coaching and what had changed or altered over time as a result. Of the three, only Chris used the reflective journal between sessions, an example of this

is in appendix 9 and discussed below. I will look at the effectiveness of this in Chapter 5: Findings. With the benefit of hindsight I would have timetabled additional cover for the coachees, so that they could collect their thoughts and have time to add to their journals. Using the journal was optional, resulting in all three using them to varying degrees to collate evidence, thoughts and ideas in between the coaching sessions, which was a missed opportunity and further discussed in Chapter 6: Discussion.

4.5 Focus groups- format

There were a few key differences for conducting the focus group sessions compared with the coaching sessions. With the participant information sheet (Appendix 3) the participants were also given an outline of AI as a methodology. This was to support their understanding of the framework that I was going to refer to throughout the sessions. I hoped that it would give them an insight into how the session would be organised and the sort of questions that would be asked.

At the start of the first session I set out the structure of the session as follows:

- Summarised the project and why the participants had been selected, asking if they were willing to carry on with the session.
- Confirmed that the focus group session would engage the participant in some reflection about their own practice.
- Explained that they would be able to leave the process at any point.
- That any scenarios were to be described in a manner that protected anonymity.
- Explained the approximate length of the session.
- Stated that the session would be recorded for future transcription and evaluation, that all conversations held were confidential and that the participant would have access to the research when it is completed.

The questions for session 1 fell into these broad categories:

- Setting the scene – can we come to a consensus about what coaching and a coaching culture mean?

- Introducing the AI 4D framework; Discovery, Destiny, Design and Delivery, which was also drawn as a grid on a flipchart. I explained that as the session commenced I would add to or refer back to the flipchart. (Appendix 5 & 6)

The second session for both groups was held eight weeks later and was similar in structure to the first except for the questioning which was as follows:

- What had happened since we last met? Had anything changed? Could they describe the change and give a reason for it?
- Now that they had time to reflect on developing a coaching culture, could they add anything to the 4D AI grid?

The third and final session took place a year later, allowing time for the coaching culture to take root, and was made up of the remaining six teachers from the two original groups, as some had left. Here the emphasis was on the final D: destiny; what did we want to see more of and build on as a school. The teachers were sent a copy of the coaching posters they had been involved in creating (appendices 5 and 6) and the following questions to consider before the beginning of the session:

- Openness/ transparency and trust- are these more evident now?
If yes, how? What is different? If not- why not?
- What could happen next to further embed a coaching culture? What would they like to see, hear, be involved in etc...

Throughout the focus group sessions I used AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) to evaluate the development of the coaching culture under each of the four sections outlined in Chapter 2 and at the beginning of this section. The points raised by the participants were collated by me during the session onto a flip chart (Appendices 5 and 6) which were reviewed at subsequent meetings. I chose AI as a methodology to minimise the effects of my role as insider researcher and overall manager of all the participants, because having used it before it quickly focussed the group into problem-solving within each area, rather than just an emphasis on problem finding.

AI appealed to me because it helped to give structure to the responses over time, by mapping them onto the AI 4 stage framework during the sessions in front of the participants. It seemed logical to present the data using the grid that represented the 4 stages of AI, because essentially I was trying to capture their thoughts on creating a coaching culture. Within each area themes were emerging which were the subject of Chapter 5, findings. In addition, using this approach made it easier to plot change over time, as more was added to the 4 areas (see an example of this in Table 7).

Whereas I took my own notes throughout the 1-1 coaching sessions, during the focus groups this was not an option. I decided that the best approach was to focus my attention to encourage and generate discussion that was being recorded, whilst summarising key points on a flip chart, using the AI framework as a guide. This enabled me to do two things; use the flipchart as an aide memoire when I came to code the interviews, and use it as a visual resource to engage the whole group at the start of the next focus group session. This 'visual' became a powerful resource for on-going in-depth discussions with the group during the subsequent sessions.

The focus group sessions were successful in capturing the experience of the 'followers' and comparing these with the 'leaders', which I go on to explain in greater depth in Chapter 5. However, if I were to rerun the research, or advise others doing similar school-based research, I would start with a presentation about using AI as a methodology to all participants, then invite those who wanted to take part to sign up. This would give an entry level of knowledge to potential participants so that they knew something about the methodology and the focus of discussion during the recorded meetings. Although I had sent this to them before the first session, I was not sure how many had taken the time to read and engage in the participant pack in any detail. This might account for the marked difference in their responses from session one to session two, from hesitant to much more engaged, and led me to assume that part of the issue was that some of them had not been able to fully engage with the paper.

By the third session, with the apparent change in culture across the school and a greater understanding of a coaching culture, this hesitation was less evident. Part of the reason for their renewed engagement could have been due to the emphasis on developing a coaching culture across the school.

4.6 The impact on CPD over the year

Over the course of the year, when the data was collected, I had not realised the full implication or scale of the change that was going to take place. As part of AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) this sits within the 'destiny' section; what you hope to sustain and build on in the future. At the outset I did not have a fixed outcome, more an idea of what I hoped might happen. Transformational change has been a by-product of this research and is worth noting here as part of the findings which will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

4.6.1 Action Research Linked to Coaching

An example of this is Action Research. I have mentioned it throughout this thesis and its importance is linked to coaching and professional growth. In an article for the Chartered College of Teachers (Rees, 2019) I set out the rationale and impact of using Action Research (Appendix 13), with the aim of linking appraisals with professional development.

I wanted teachers to have the chance to create their own research projects within a professional learning community (PLC) using coaching as an approach so that we could

'..establish a culture where all teachers improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better'

(William, 2018, p. 218)

We used Action Research to support professional development, linking effective feedback to a whole-school priority: writing. The individual research projects would support wider discussions about improving outcomes in writing across the school, and would be the focus of staff meetings throughout the year. Teachers worked in pairs as 'impact coaches' so that they could share their research and coach each other in developing it further. They were initially supported with a series of

question prompts to develop a research proposal. The visual I gave them was that of a funnel. Their initial idea was at the wide end of a funnel and the coaching from a parallel teacher would distil their ideas into a clear model of an 'intervention', from which they would form the research proposal. The initial session was spent looking at the area of focus and formulate a 'big question'.

A Year 6 teacher created an Action Research project to explore how to improve outcomes for underperforming boys in her class. She identified the pupils for the research, and developed regular 10-minute pupil-teacher conferencing sessions as her 'intervention'. She identified a baseline for her pupils as a starting point to track progress over time and feedback on their progress to the PLC. The pupil-teacher conferencing sessions were used to 'coach' pupils and agree targets for improvement with each pupil.

Professional development sessions were used throughout the year to support the process and share best practice. Teachers were increasingly forthcoming and enthusiastic about their research and how this had changed their approach to teaching. The impact of this pilot across the school was not only in numerical outcomes for pupils, who on average made much better than expected progress in writing, but also on their engagement across the wider curriculum and their general attitudes to learning, evidenced through better attendance, improved behaviour and improved test results.

The Year 6 example above helped us as a school to consider what really makes a difference to our pupils – written marking or building confident pupils by giving them time for meaningful 1:1 feedback? Using Action Research has helped teachers to see the impact that small, meaningful changes to their practice can have on their pupils. It has encouraged teachers to engage in the craft of teaching, which can be lost in an abundance of data, monitoring, assessments and feedback. It has given them the freedom to focus on an area of their choice and come up with their own solutions. Using pupil-teacher conferencing has been adopted as a 'visible feedback' (Hattie and Clarke, 2018) approach in Year 6 and is now one of several new approaches adopted by teachers. It also helped me to understand the wider role that a coaching culture could have across the school.

Table 5 gives a description of the activity that began to evolve as the result of a continuing focus on professional development and growth across the school, including the Action Research outlined above. What I had initially seen as a small research project has rapidly become the blue print for a whole school holistic approach to professional growth. I have set this out in table 5 into three broad categories to illustrate the transformational change that took place during the period of the research. This links with the 'swing in momentum' that is described in more detail in Chapter 5, Findings.

Taking the senior leaders as a group, the extent of coaching training can be seen; leadership training with another school, external training on coaching. What I have added as part of the impact on their learning is their use of coaching to support those they line manage. It was important to capture the impact a school-wide coaching culture was having on the followers which is set out in the final column. This is an evolving picture that is continuing to change and develop at Greenfields which is building the sustainability or 'destiny' described in the AI process and discussed in more depth in chapter 6, Discussion.

The discussion from the three focus group sessions had been very powerful in understanding what the school could now implement that could empower staff to be more reflective and resilient in an environment of openness, collaboration and trust.

The items captured below in Table 5: The developing coaching culture and its impact on CPD, are not an exhaustive list, as this is very much an ongoing and evolving process, but they illustrate some of the by-products of a change in culture seen across the school that are further discussed in Chapter 7. The table demonstrates the cumulative impact that coaching was having on professional development at Greenfields and across my LA. It gives examples of the how coaching has impacted in three main areas; 1-1 coaching at school level to support individual growth, leadership training at school and wider partnership level, and our innovative approach to appraisals with an emphasis on professional growth of all practitioners.

For example, the third column explains different systems and processes that we use as a school to monitor standards and appraise staff. The beginning of the year

starts with an appraisal using the GROW model (Whitmore, 2009) to focus on three priorities for the year ahead. From this two spirals of enquiry replace performance related objectives, with the emphasis on individual growth. These are often linked to areas of the curriculum or particular strategies and mapped onto outcomes for pupils. The third priority is in the form of Action Research. This requires group and individual coaching to put together a research plan. Each term the spirals of enquiry and the Action Research are revisited at professional growth meetings. Supporting the professional growth model are ‘learning walks’ rather than ‘formal observations’, which I will expand on in Chapter 5: Findings.

Table 5: The developing coaching culture and its impact on CPD

Timeline	1-1 coaching to support individual growth (Implications for school’s School development plan)	Leadership development (strategic)	Professional Growth for Teachers/ support staff (Policy development-systems)
September 2017-July 2018	Individual Action research projects led by DHTs (with impact coaches to support reflection and maintain momentum at key stages) involving all teachers. Posted onto school website as a resource for other schools.	Empowering Middle leaders – e.g. visits to other schools to share best practice, collaborative projects such as Ealing Reading Learning Community (Action Research focus) 5 meeting 2018-2019	Policy changes in 2018-2019: Professional Growth Policy replaces Appraisal Policy- whole staff training to share new policy. Teaching and Learning Policy linked to new approach- whole staff training x 2.
September 2018	DHTs coaching sessions with external coach 1 per term x 3 SLT, ongoing	Leadership training with neighbouring schools 2 days	Appraisals using GROW coaching model for all staff: Ongoing
September 2018	Drop in coaching sessions for all practitioners Weekly for all SLT – ongoing	HT coaching other senior leaders: 2 headteachers and 2 deputy headteachers ongoing	Team teaching to build expertise: Ongoing as required
October 2018	HT coaching supervision of the 1-1 coaching sessions 1per term	Training on appraisals using GROW model: 1 session every year before appraisals to refine process.	Action Research projects across the school with support from Impact partner: Annual cycle, ongoing
October 2018	Reading and sharing research on evidence based approaches to teaching- through Twitter, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams Weekly/ ongoing	External training on creating a coaching culture for DHTs: 1 session with consultant	Reflection time based on Professional Growth instead of CPD. Termly.
January 2019	Subject leaders, co-coaching with SLT to monitor standards.	Co-coaching- Learning walks in a coaching style followed up with a positive	Learning Walk format in a coaching style replaces observations:

	On-going during planning, Professional growth sessions and inset days	solution focussed plan of action involving the teacher: Ongoing SLT and year-group teams	1 per term (on-going)
September 2019	NQTs, mentoring and coaching approach from DHT Annual cycle with termly evaluative reviews	Researching through social media, websites and reading related to whole school priorities and to share innovative practice: Using this during CPD. Ongoing	Lesson Study cycle as a tool for professional growth: NQTs, RQTs involved in one cycle a year. Pre-planning meeting involves coaching to develop the lesson study proposal linked to pitch and pace.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter I have described the project activity that took place over 18 months at Greenfields, in order to meet the research aims and objectives posed in Chapter 2. Although I am aware of the limitations and question of validity of this small scale project, what became evident, as a coaching culture took root, were new ideas and momentum from within, about how this could contribute to professional development. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5: Findings, and Chapter 6: Discussion.

Chapter 5 –Findings

5.1 Introduction

I have struggled to write this chapter. I think it was partly due to the enormous amount of data generated from the nine 1-1 coaching sessions and five focus group sessions. The task of transcribing and evaluating it left me feeling unsure about how to present it in a coherent manner that did it the justice I felt it deserved. This was partly because since the data was captured, the impact of the research over time had created a positive swing in momentum across the school. I was intrigued by the measure of change I was witnessing, but knew that instead of being distracted by this I needed to focus on evaluating the data I had already captured.

As an insider-researcher there was a tension between my responsibility to make processes fair and transparent for the purpose of the study, whilst also remaining responsible for developing the school's practice. I used reflexivity, explored within chapter 3, through my reflective journal, and tools such as the Johari Window (Figure 6) described below, to ensure I remained faithful to the original objectives, set out in Chapter 2.

Rather than collecting more data or looking too far ahead at outcomes, I recognised that I needed to use what I had and consider the impact this 'momentum' was having later on in my discussion in chapter 6 and conclusion in chapter 7. I resolved to find an approach, outlined below, that made the responses speak for themselves and make the *'findings become believable and realistic.'* (Cresswell, 1998, p20)

Having immersed myself in the data, I decided to use the AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) four Ds methodology, described in chapter 3 (Table 7 for an example of the analysis), as a framework to illustrate the emerging themes from the focus groups and compare this with the emerging themes identified from the three senior leaders' coaching sessions, an approach I expand on in further detail below.

Some of the administrative elements of the data collection have already been set out in Chapter 4: Project Activity and collated in Table 4: Chronology of data collection and analysis. My findings are described in chronological order, starting with the 1-1 coaching followed by the focus group meetings. The data generated was seen through the eyes of the 12 participants; three senior leaders that were individually coached over a year, and nine early career teachers who were divided into two focus groups that met three times over a 15 month period. In total 14 sessions were recorded, transcribed and analysed. The coachees, Alex, Chris and Sam are equally represented in the findings. Eight out of the nine teachers in the focus groups are represented here, although there were two (one from each group) that gave more feedback than the rest; Claris and Evan. Bethan, who is not quoted individually here made a contribution to the group coaching definition (table 8).

The key question driving my research and introduced in Chapter 1 is:

To what extent can the development of a coaching culture transform outcomes in a school?

The following research sub- questions are explored throughout:

- To what extent can a coaching culture effectively support the professional growth of teachers?
- To what extent can coaching successfully build trust and resilience in a school?
- Is this a model that can be adopted as an alternative to whole school improvement?

This chapter begins by evaluating the 1-1 coaching, which also generated the most data, as there were nine sessions in total over the year compared with five for the focus groups. As a format for the 1-1 sessions I used a combination of Egan's Skilled Helper (2007) coaching model (Figure 3) that sets out three coaching stages with Whitmore's GROW model (2009) (Figure 4), both described in more detail at different stages throughout this study. I have added the analogy of an iceberg as a visual image, linked to the Johari Window (Luft and Ingham, 1955) (Figure 6), to describe the shift in coachees' responses and openness

during the course of the year. Each stage reflects an emerging self-awareness and growth on the part of the coachees, which is described through their feedback. An example of this can be seen in Table 6.

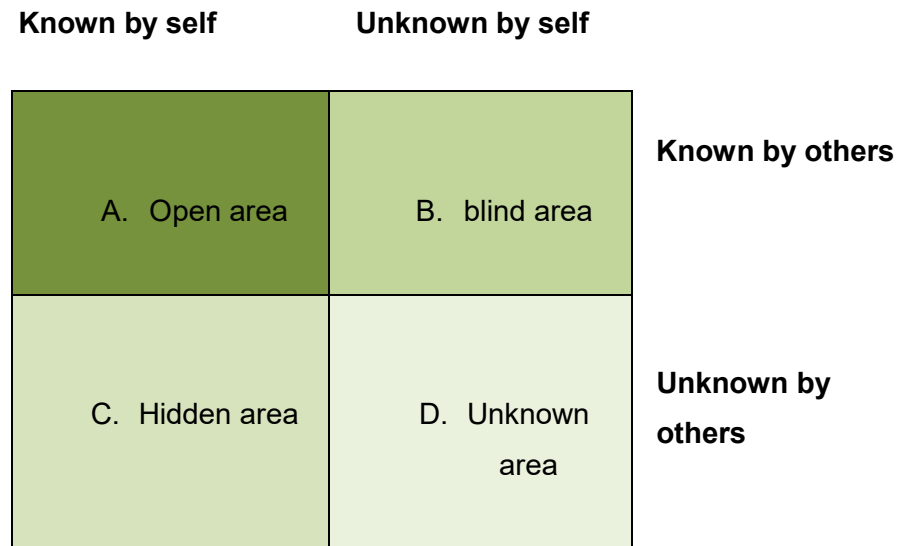
I then introduce the focus group feedback, which I mapped onto the AI framework (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005). An example of this can be seen in Table 7, Focus group 1- analysis of key themes over 3 sessions, using the Appreciative Inquiry framework.

Finally I explore the convergence of emerging themes between the two groups; the three senior leaders involved in 1-1 coaching and the two focus groups. This is of particular interest to me, as the research introduced in the Literature Review is based on leadership, followership and transformational change and the interconnectedness of all three. I felt it was important, because of this, to find a way of describing leadership and followership, through my analysis of the data, drawing out any potential transformational change that had occurred as a result. Throughout this chapter I will also highlight any limitations of the methods used, expanding on these in Chapter 6, Discussion.

5.2 Considerations in the data collection

There are inevitable tensions in collecting qualitative data that I have presented in Chapter 3, section 3.11, Ethical Considerations, and set out in my ethics approval. This is further complicated by my dual role as insider-researcher and headteacher, carrying out research using my staff as the participants, and the inherent power relations that could affect both the responses from the participants and the questions from me as coach. In a coaching relationship, Egan suggests that you start with the premise that both coach and coachee will have '*blind spots*' Egan (2007 p26). These blind spots are highlighted in the Johari Window model (Figure 6). Being aware of the nature of the coaching relationship, and given my insider-researcher status, made me acknowledge, from the outset, that the data collection was an inevitably flawed process, as is the case with all qualitative research.

This blind spot was something highlighted in The Johari Window technique (Luft and Ingham 1955), which I had been introduced to as a trainee coach in 2007. It was a means of helping others to better understand themselves and their relationships with others, useful in the context of this research.



Ref: Adapted from Luft and Ingham, 1955

Figure 6: Johari Window

There are four areas of the Johari Window:

A: The public self; the part of ourselves that we and others can see that is known by others.

B: the blind self; the part of ourselves that others can see that we are unaware of.

C: The private self; the part of ourselves that we choose to hide and is unknown by others.

D: The unknown self; the unconscious side of us that neither we nor others can see. In my opinion, the aim of a coach is to increase the top left hand A quadrant 'Known to self' and therefore minimise the 'blind' 'Unknown to self' B quadrant and the potential for blind spots. At the same time I was hopeful that the coaching sessions for the three senior leaders would provide the forum for the participants to 'disclose' more about themselves professionally, and as a result of the coaching questions become more open and self-aware. However, there was no guarantee

of this, which led to a few considerations and reflections on my part, listed below, before the data capture:

- To what extent were the participants 'willing' participants, or did they feel compelled to take part in the research and was this evident during the sessions?
- Was the practitioner feedback only a fraction of what was really on their mind? What was hidden, and were there any clues to what was hidden (non- verbal clues, the frequency and type of language used etc..?)
- What impact did the reflective journals have on the 1-1 participants? To what extent were they cautious/ guarded in their feedback?
- My role as coach and reflective practitioner, would I be able, given my role, to limit blind spots, avoid bias and increase my self-awareness?

These points will be further considered throughout the analysis below.

5.3 Evaluation of 1-1 coaching

The process of evaluating the coaching data began with an approach from Miles and Huberman (1994), who identify the following guidelines for analysing qualitative data, offering me a good starting point to familiarise myself with the data, before I began the analysis in more detail:

- *Giving codes to the initial set of materials contained in the observations, interviews, documentary analysis etc.;*
- *Adding comments, reflections, etc. (commonly known as memos)*
- *Going through the materials trying to identify similar phrases, patterns, themes, relationships, sequences, differences between subgroups etc.;*
- *Gradually elaborating a small set of generalisations that cover consistencies you discern in the data;*
- *Linking these generalisations to a formalised body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories.*

(Miles and Huberman, 1994, p9)

I then used Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6 stage thematic framework to begin a much deeper analysis of the data. Their model gave me further structure and clarity on how to approach this type of qualitative analysis, including what to avoid. They argue that the main advantage of thematic analysis is that it is flexible, but as I have already considered in Chapter 3, Methodology, there are many critics of this approach that argue that this is precisely why it is less effective, because it is open to interpretation. Perhaps the search for a credible approach was also part of the reason that I initially struggled to collate the data. As Braun and Clarke point out;

Thematic analysis is widely used, but there is no clear agreement about what thematic analysis is and how you go about doing it.

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, p6)

Although the 6 stages, described below, offered a logical progression to me (in what I perceive to be a 'sifting' process, akin to dredging for gold), they were also open to interpretation, which is why thematic analysis is seen by some;

...as a very poorly 'branded' method, in that it does not appear to exist as a 'name' in the same way that other methods do (e.g. narrative analysis, grounded theory)

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, p 6)

In many ways this is precisely why I decided to use it. I didn't want to be restricted and I wanted the freedom to find emerging themes, links and connections. The benefits of the approach is described below by Braun and Clarke (2006);

We hope to strike a balance between demarcating thematic analysis clearly – i.e., explaining what it is, and how you do it - and ensuring flexibility in relation to how it is used, so that it does not become limited and constrained, and lose one of its key advantages.

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, p6)

I would agree with this and add another perspective from Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) who describe that the 'ambiguity' of qualitative research allows for;

...interpretive possibilities, and lets the researcher's construction of what is explored become more visible.

(Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009, p8)

This in turn links back to my school's 'Visible Learning' approach (Hattie, 2009, 2012) that I have described in chapter 2, where pupils and teachers are encouraged to be reflective learners; pupils seeing their learning in the eyes of a teacher and teachers reflecting on learning through the eyes of their pupils. There seemed to be a possibility through the data analysis of adding a further dimension to Hattie's theory; seeing the leadership through the eyes of the followers and followership through the eyes of the leaders.

I have included an anonymised example of the process from transcription to analysis in Appendix 11 which shows the step by step process I took to sift through the material and collate the evidence into themes. Below I describe this in more detail using Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6 stages as follows:

Phase 1: familiarising yourself with your data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p16)

This was the emersion stage. I decided to transcribe the recordings myself to get a really good understanding of the data. As this is small research project I considered that there was no need to use Nvivo or any other qualitative data filtering software.

This process of deep '*familiarisation*' helped me to get to grips with the data and was only possible because of the small scale of the research. The recordings gave nuances such as the tone of the voice, lighthearted moments or pauses for reflection. As a researcher I found I enjoyed the analytical aspect of evaluating the written transcripts, and immersion in the data even though it took time to complete.

Phase 2: generating initial codes (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p18)

Once transcribed, I ascribed a number for each line of each transcription so that I could easily locate the themes later when I started coding. I printed out and read through each transcript several times going over passages and marking up interesting points. I did this by underlining and writing above a possible theme or area that it linked to in pencil. During the second reading I added or amended the

initial codes because as a 'picture' emerged, so the sifting process changed, allowing me to see patterns emerging from all of the sessions. An example of this can be seen in Appendix 12: Example of thematic analysis for and emerging themes during coaching session for 'Alex.'

Phase 3: Searching for themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p19)

In Chapter 2, I set out the aims and objectives of this project. The research questions focus on Leadership and followership and the potential of a coaching culture, as a tool for school improvement. Therefore the themes that emerged were directly linked to these topics. I took notes using my reflective journal for each session, noting the line number and the theme. Then I collated all the notes onto a grid, with comments and quotes, as in the example in Appendix 12: Example of thematic process and emerging themes over 2 coaching sessions for 'Alex'. This was a laborious process, but it allowed me to keep reviewing the emerging themes in a coherent manner.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p20)

By now I had a clear idea of what was emerging and so I returned to my research questions to determine the broad themes. I went through all the collated themes such as confidence or lack of confidence, managing change, difficult conversations, risk taking, with the corresponding page references, creating three broad categories; developing self, developing leadership, developing others. An example of the note taking process, leading into thematic analysis and final evaluation, is set out in Appendices 11 and 12.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p22)

At the end of this lengthy process, I decided to focus on four themes (see Table 6 for an example of this), because they came up repeatedly during the analysis, making me realise that the three initial themes were too broad:

- Building confidence
- Emerging leadership
- Developing followership
- Developing Trust

I added another column so I could note any significant change for each participant between sessions, against each topic. It was then easier to compare the three participants and the impact the coaching had on their skills over time. Table 6 is an example of the grid from Alex, where I have collated the detailed analysis onto a thematic grid showing change over time. As an example, where Alex has shown less confidence in session 1, where Alex is confident as a teacher, but less so when with the team, this has changed in session 2. Now it is evident that Alex feels confident to handle difficult conversations and is generally more self-assured.

Table 6: Example of thematic analysis for Alex over the course of two coaching sessions

Session 1	Session 2
<p>Building confidence 1: Confident as a Phase Leader/ subject Lead Confident in subject knowledge/ standard required Less confident to deal with conflict in A's team Feedback to others- was the correct message delivered? Supporting others to have a more flexible/ less fixed approach? Supporting risk taking?</p>	<p>Building confidence 2: Very confident with class, knows the children well. Less confident with adults- unsure what they are thinking, how they have interpreted situations, conversations (how could A check?) Lacks confidence when delegating- ends up doing too much themselves Has gained confidence/ tools to deal with conflict, difficult situations More self-assured about what A knows works well when developing staff.</p>
<p>Emerging leadership 1: Strategic thinker- synthesising ideas Creative thinker Developing coaching style Leading by example Making a difference- core purpose Time poor work/life balance Learning to prioritise Supportive as a leader High expectations of self/ others Reflective Evaluative Facilitating change</p>	<p>Emerging leadership 2: Beginning to look at whole school improvement, not just their class/ team role Now demonstrating patience, empathy, support, compassion when developing others. Talks about balancing act of many roles (delegating more might alleviate this) Clearly builds from starting points</p>
<p>Developing followership 1: Wants to be respected for what they knows Peer-coaching successful in working party Modelling approach to others (to copy) Unrealistic expectations of others? Follow-through?</p>	<p>Developing followership 2: Now seeing the reciprocal nature of developing others Making links between developing learning in children and developing adults- using similar strategies with more confidence. Although they are less confident to</p>

Disseminating ideas/ strategies High levels of communication	delegate, they talk with confidence about whole school change, distributed leadership and their role in this. Throughout the interview A now has a clear understanding of the importance of developing relationships. The effects of a coaching culture are evident in A's approach with others. Less about controlling, more about developing.
Developing trust 1: Controlling- fear of losing control? Planned outcomes – inflexible approach Tendency to focus on negative Fixed mindset approach	Developing trust 2: Much of this described in their establishment of a working party- very successful Less controlling, more flexible in their approach Linked to the development of followers above. Talks with passion about developing wider community- being seen as more than just a teacher- wider influence of their role Now getting others to take risks and see the benefits

Phase 6: Producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p23)

The analysis and findings from the data are set out in further detail below. This final stage was by far the most complex and intriguing part of this project. My aim was to evaluate the data from the both coachees and focus group perspectives, to explore their validity. I hoped to be able to uncover whether there was a reciprocal aspect to creating a coaching culture that was evident from the findings.

5.3.1 Session 1 coaching – the tip of the iceberg

My first question to Sam, Alex and Chris was ‘What’s your story? How did you find yourself teaching at Greenfields?’ This was an attempt to get them to relax and discuss something familiar to them. All were able to plot their journey from different starting points to the position they now hold. They talked at varying lengths about their different routes into teaching. For example Alex had a short, succinct response from becoming a graduate to Alex’s current role:

At the time, to go into teaching I just needed to do my PGCE. I thought it could open doors depending on what I wanted to do, be it something in psychology or be it not.

(Alex, teacher research participant)

There was an air of formality in Alex's choice of words 'be it something...or be it not' and precision in Alex's responses that was echoed in the regular use of shorter sentences;

I wanted to work abroad so I worked in a school in [REDACTED]. I liked it. But I missed London so I came back.

(Alex, teacher research participant)

I surmised that this demonstrated an air of caution about the coaching process, the power relations between myself and Alex, and the need to move to a less personal topic. I also noted that throughout this session Alex's responses and examples tended to deal with the here and now, rather than the past, an area Alex seemed to be keeping private (Figure 6, Johari Window).

Sam, on the other hand, spoke at length about the past and was the only one to go back to childhood experiences of being taught and make a link to a previous teacher as one of the reasons for becoming one;

It all began in Primary school...I think it was then that I started to realise that I wanted to be a teacher.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

There was a connection with an inspiring teacher with the qualities that Sam wanted to replicate as a teacher;

...his lessons were all very relaxed and open, warm and friendly. That I remember. I think that's my longing memory of being in his class I'd say.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

Chris spoke at length linking both professional and personal episodes over time in a highly personal and reflective manner;

I moved away from where my mum lived from [city] to here and that was really hard. I didn't know anyone and it was quite daunting.

(Chris, teacher research participant)

Chris's lengthy responses, in contrast with Alex's shorter ones, have a cathartic element to them. Here the coaching conversation has opened the flood gates and Chris is not holding back. The opportunity to reflect has highlighted several professional episodes that are etched in Chris's memory;

I remember we had a LA review and I was observed. [Person] just pulled me into her office and they both told me off. I was blamed for letting the school down.

(Chris, teacher research participant)

This sets a pattern throughout the rest of the conversation as Chris describes a real concern about failing, being found out and letting others down that seems to link to a punishing work schedule that in turn builds resentment about workload and work/ life balance.

That's what a bad week looks like, not having the time and energy to do things and catch up with people, friends or family.

(Chris, teacher research participant)

There is also tension between Chris being able to give others enough time; that appears to contradict Chris's definition of a successful leader as;

Someone who is willing to give up their time for you...empathic...supportive.

(Chris, teacher research participant)

It appears from these responses that Chris trusted me enough to disclose a fair amount. In turn this made me consider whether this was also a cry for help or simply a way of off-loading. It also concerned me that some of these issues seemed deep rooted and areas I might not have picked up on outside coaching. I made a mental note at the time that I needed to put workload and well-being at the centre of the development of a coaching culture.

In addition, whilst carrying out stage 5 of the analysis I made a list of the types of words that Chris had used to see if there was further evidence of a lack of confidence. From this analysis it was evident that Chris tended to use the language of probability such as possibly, might, sometimes, maybe and these seem to point to a lack of conviction and self-belief.

This issue of time was also a concern for Alex who describes it as 'the enemy'. Alex can see that delegating more and having a less controlling approach to supporting others could be the solution. Much of the time is used describing scenarios where Alex has supported others to develop their practice. More recently this has developed from 1-1 support to facilitating a working party. There is still, however, an emerging tension for Alex between being relaxed about leading others whilst raising standards in a framework of accountability;

Sometimes I think maybe I'm a little bit more chilled out and other times I think I am definitely not more relaxed and I'm like a crazy person. I definitely have high expectations and I know what needs to be achieved.

(Alex, teacher research participant)

This then develops further into the issue of trust and managing others, something that all three describe in detail, both through examples and from their own perceptions of leadership. Sam is able to draw on an experience in another profession before becoming a teacher, as the reason why a professional environment with reciprocal levels of trust was so important to Sam as a working culture;

From the managers...even the line managers were all just playing a game.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

Sam states that the culture ultimately rests with the leader and that the important aspects are;

Having a clear visual path...Not just for me but for everyone. So everyone knows their roles, everyone's engaged, welcoming.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

Risk taking was something that Chris and Alex brought up in terms of having a fixed-mindset, and how others might perceive them. They both stated that they were less inclined to take risks and saw this as a personal development point;

I don't think I'm good at delegating...I don't want it to seem like I'm being lazy....Sometimes I can get defensive, I think that sometimes I feel that I'm under threat..

(Chris, teacher research participant)

....I know I can't control everything...it's knowing that you're not in control...

(Alex, teacher research participant)

Here the continuing tension between wanting to be more relaxed, but needing to control others, seems to point towards the tension of accountability and relationships argued by Biesta (2009) and discussed in Chapter 1. One of the examples that Alex describes is how feedback could encourage others to take risks;

Just being very open to saying take a risk, don't worry about sticking to what we have planned...go with the flow, see where it could go.

(Alex, teacher research participant)

This is an insight into Alex's awareness as a leader, that control and having a fixed mindset link to relationships and developing others. In this initial phase there was an early indication that emerging leadership skills, particularly in change management and managing others, was an area to explore for all of them. Each session ended with a suggestion that they note down any scenarios in their reflective journal, to use as the focus for the next session.

5.3.2 Session 2 Coaching – dipping below the surface

The biggest change in the second session was that all three seemed more comfortable to identify and show their vulnerabilities as a means of working through potential scenarios and finding solutions. They were encouraged to be

reflective with a focus on any changes in their approach or leadership style and what impact this had on themselves or other colleagues since the previous session.

I could detect an eagerness from all of them to get started, which suggested that they were now seeing the real benefits of coaching and there was anticipation that the session would support them professionally. I noted that they all arrived with a few minutes to spare, armed with their reflective journals prepared with notes for the session. Chris in particular had used the reflective journal as an aide memoire and referred to it throughout the session, adding to it during the session. An example of Chris's journal can be seen in appendix 9. What was notable was that Chris had set out before the session what was working well, which included some of the areas we had discussed as barriers in session 1. It appeared that Chris was delegating more, which is saving precious time, something discussed at length in session 1. The language Chris was using throughout the session had a more strategic, upbeat quality to it. Chris began by highlighting what session two needed to focus on, whilst also identifying some points that are '*going well*'. For example, although Chris was now '*delegating*', something that was discussed as an action from session 1. There were other leadership tasks that also took time, so time has been added as a point for further discussion in a different context. However, a more strategic use of time was also seen as a positive step, linked to delegating, and a move away from operational, management tasks. Although coaching others was identified as a strategy that Chris is having some success with, it is also an area of focus, identified as '*difficult convos*' by Chris. The suggestion here is that Chris as a leader is increasingly focusing on the followers, by supporting teachers to improve and refine their practice. There is also a suggestion that these difficult conversations can sometimes lead to conflict. There are two statements in particular that stand out in Chris's journal, illustrating the change between sessions 1 and 2:

Constantly learning – being challenged

Okay to make mistakes

(Chris, teacher research participant)

During the 1-1 sessions Chris, Alex and Sam were able to articulate the reciprocal nature of leadership and how small, subtle changes could make a difference, such as following up discussions and trialing strategies from teachers. This second session took place at the end of the academic year, when all three were about to start new and challenging roles as part of Greenfields leadership team. What also comes across in this transitional phase were mixed emotions about what lay ahead.

Sam describes this transition as 'daunting' but 'exciting' and is realistic about the challenge ahead:

The big thing that's kind of staring at me now is being responsible for all of the year groups.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

There is also the awareness that others are seeing Sam in a different light:

People are starting to see me in that role more.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

Although there is awareness (and a hint of frustration) that developing trust in staff will take time, Sam is dealing with situations differently which seems to show a deeper understanding of how to develop trust in a team;

I was kind of tip-toeing on eggshells around certain members of staff. I was too worried about their feelings. It's like a catch 22...I need to be thinking about their feelings and get a message across. Now I'm more comfortable talking to different teachers about their practice.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

Sam describes professional development as an area of change and growth across the school where the emphasis on coaching feedback has made a difference. Sam links the impact of damning feedback to a lack of trust and sees it from both sides;

Beats you down a bit, you really don't have to say all those negative things.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

Alex came to the session in a reflective mood and from the outset appeared open to discuss leadership and followership issues, most of which were around difficulties with delegation and developing trust in the team;

I never realised how difficult that [delegation] was for me. I'm still learning and I'm still trying. I realized in myself that I find it more challenging than I should.

(Alex, teacher research participant)

Thinking more strategically as a leader, and less operationally as a manager, was an area to explore, especially in relation to delegation. I could detect a confidence in Alex in relation to distributed leadership and its impact more recently across the school. Alex had facilitated a working party and put its success down to a coaching style of leading;

I think I've just thought of it in a more, hopefully, positive way where it's more to support and to, I guess, increase standards. Not thinking that the person is in what team or what phase but actually just holistically just as a school we want good standards, that's it.

(Alex, teacher research participant)

This 'positive' approach, with an eye on 'good standards', implies that Alex can now articulate the vision and lead the team towards it, rather than looking at professional development exclusively an individual transaction.

As with Sam, there is a concern about their next role and the change in others' perceptions of Alex, which is more noticeable since being promoted. There is also a much clearer understanding of peer-coaching to support others. Alex is beginning to use the language of coaching in the same way as Sam, as an approach, not only for leading staff, but for teaching pupils. Alex acknowledges that there is a more professional culture amongst staff;

It's a lot more positive. There's a lot less back-biting.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

In a similar way Chris has a more confident start, in a more positive tone;

I think those things have gone really well and I've been really pleased with the direction I'm heading because I just feel like I'm constantly learning loads of different things all the time.

(Chris, teacher research participant)

The issue of time is fleetingly mentioned, 'I'm more effective with my time', leading me to deduce that the cathartic and reflective process of being coached has helped shift the emphasis to developing leadership skills and the team. Chris confirms that reflection has been part of the change, with the last session promoting reflection on a growth mindset, making Chris less fearful of making mistakes and seeing the potential in strategic leadership, in a similar manner to Alex;

Here I know if I make a mistake people will support me...we were trying to come up with something that might work for KS2 and KS1.

(Chris, teacher research participant)

Chris can now see the benefits of a more personalised, supportive approach to professional development of others that has a reciprocal quality. Like Alex, Chris also draws parallels with teaching;

I've tried to use that coaching side...I think it's definitely worked both ways...I feel that it has been a two-way relationship and not just one-sided.

(Chris, teacher research participant)

What was evident from the data was that in a short space of time (two months) between sessions the three senior leaders had been through a highly reflective process that had questioned their understanding and perceptions of leadership and followership, (set out in the Literature Review in Chapter 2), with the result

that they were beginning to trial new approaches with some success (see Appendix 12: Example of thematic analysis and emerging themes during coaching session 1 for 'Alex') They all spent time during the second session discussing the impact a different more supportive approach to developing others was having. This increased awareness, links back to the 'disclosure' and 'feedback' element of the Johari Window (Figure 6). It seemed that building a trusting relationship was allowing for more disclosure and increasing self-awareness and the ability to act with 'Emotional Intelligence' (Goleman et al, 2002). The evidence shows that all three were beginning to take more risks, to act more strategically and delegate more effectively.

5.3.3 Session 3 coaching- taking the plunge

It was a year between the second and final coaching session (see table 4: Chronology of data collection and analysis). A lot had happened and what we were really doing was describing how the first year in their new role had gone. I emailed the participants beforehand with a brief outline of the session (see appendix 8). The analysis is captured below in 5.4 alongside the final focus group session.

5.4 Evaluating the focus group sessions

As with the 1-1 coaching sessions, the 5 focus group sessions were initially transcribed using the Miles and Huberman (1994) approach described in 5.3, followed by the Braun and Clarke (2006) deeper analysis also described in 5.3. The key difference was that I used the AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) 4Ds (discovery, dream, design and destiny) to enter the comments and reflections of the groups as this was the focus of our meetings. In addition I used the flipchart posters (see Appendix 5: Coaching poster- focus group 1 and Appendix 6: Coaching poster- focus group 2) that I had created to check that my referencing from the recordings married up with the comments that were summarised during the session. Following the second session I used the grid to add any new comments in italics to show any change. What became apparent was that in

between the sessions, the participants had thought about the design and destiny sections in more detail.

The focus groups were more difficult to arrange than the 1-1 coaching sessions. This was because there were more individuals involved, and cover needed to be found for their classes while they joined the group. Logistically this was quite difficult, so if I were to repeat this approach, I would suggest meeting after school. I was trying to see things from the perspective of the followers and their workload, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, and limit the need for staff to stay at school longer than necessary, which is why the sessions were timetabled during the day.

5.4.1 Focus group definition of coaching- a hesitant start

This initial session with the focus group drew a hesitant response from the participants. As already explained in the introduction to this chapter, my role as insider researcher and head teacher made collecting data a challenge and power relations almost certainly contributed to this. In addition, the three 1-1 participants knew me quite well professionally. They had all been middle leaders at the school, line-managing four teachers in a phase, and had recently been promoted to the senior leadership team. The deputy head was line-managed by me, so according to my ethical considerations, she was offered an external coach, to support her professional growth on her return from maternity leave. The focus groups, on the other hand, were made up of teachers of varying experience, that did not know me professionally as well as the senior leaders. I could see from their body language (folded arms), and long pauses between question and answers, that some of them were daunted at the prospect of a meeting with me. Although they had been given an outline of the sessions beforehand, some of them admitted they had not read the content, which might also be a reason why they contributed less than others in the first session. This could have been avoided if I had given a presentation to the group before the first session, instead of presuming they had read the outline they had been sent. I was concerned that they would not engage sufficiently for me to produce enough data to compare with the 1-1 sessions. In the event, in a similar way to the 1-1 coaching sessions, the groups did relax, become less hesitant and more confident. This is illustrated in the following example from Claris (pseudonym

for one of the participants) in Focus group 2, session 2. Claris is comparing the old format of lesson observations, with the newer learning walk that we had introduced as part of our coaching culture process;

I think they are useful because they give us, you know when they say, 'You can do this next time', so they give us a goal to work towards. But I do agree that the first thing you think about is, 'Oh, no! Stress, stress, stress.' Whereas, like you said, if it was a friend I've taken part in Visible Learning, you feel a little bit more relaxed, you feel more confident because you know they're coming to see a strength of yours and they're going to get ideas from it. Whereas when it's an observation you know that it's going to be... you're happy that they're going to see what you're good at but again you're still... they're not coming to see one thing, they're looking at everything, whereas if it's a friend coming to see, for example, questioning, you that that's what they're going to focus on. But I think observations have got better recently, because we call them Learning Walks now, it's eased off a lot compared to how I was observed back in the day, which was a lot scarier. So, it's getting better, I think.

(Claris, Focus group teacher research participant)

This is further illustrated below in table 7 below where I grouped responses from each focus group over two sessions; session 1 focussed on discovery and dream, followed by session 2 on design and destiny.

Table 7: Focus group 1 – analysis of key themes over 3 sessions using Appreciative Inquiry framework

2. DREAM	3. DESIGN
Active listening as a coach	CPD in coaching
A personalised approach	Supervision for coaches
Not telling you, finding your own solutions through questioning	Enough time factored in to coach
Getting to the root of the problem through skilful questioning	An inspiring approach tailored to the individual
Allocated time to be coached by any	Use the GROW model throughout the

<p>SLT</p> <p>A calm, supportive culture where people feel secure, valued,</p> <p>An honest and open culture</p> <p>Coaching as the preferred style of leading others</p> <p>Coaching all stakeholders- staff, children, parents</p> <p>High levels of trust between parents and teachers</p> <p>Working with other schools on the model</p>	<p>school</p> <p>Build in a reflective model that encourages the individual to consider change</p> <p>Appraisals- how these can be personalised and support the whole process</p> <p>A model of CPD that is home grown- e.g. working parties- champions</p> <p>Smaller CPD sessions in phases or year groups</p> <p>Blended approach using external expertise and internal talent</p> <p>Action Research- what works well approach</p> <p>Peer support so that teachers are less isolated</p> <p>Sharing the research as a means of sharing good practice</p> <p>Induction for new staff/ NQTS in our approach</p> <p>Use the VL slots to support effective induction</p>
<p>1. DISCOVERY</p>	<p>4. DESTINY</p>
<p>Very supportive PLs who always have the time to stop and give advice.</p> <p>An approachable HT. Everyone giving their time to support you to a better solution, outcome.</p> <p>Open-door policy</p> <p>You are directed to people with expertise</p> <p>You are given suggestions about what to do for them</p> <p>Circle time for children, Learning Journeys, reflecting on their work</p> <p>PSHE curriculum</p> <p>Children lead the reports</p> <p>PPMs</p> <p>Structured conversations with parents</p>	<p>RQTs/ returning from maternity leave- support back into the classroom environment- plan out carefully</p> <p>Career path planning built into appraisals</p> <p>Continual development- MA level courses</p> <p>Teachers' audit of where we are and where we need to go next</p> <p>Continual feedback during SLT informal</p> <p>LWs- takes you out of your bubble</p> <p>LWs to remove the stigma of formal observations</p> <p>Work/ life balance</p> <p>Teachers being able to do LWs to magpie ideas</p> <p>Consistency across the phases</p> <p>Teacher forum - for sharing ideas</p>

Key:

TLR/ SLT	Teaching and Learning Responsibility/ Senior Leadership Team
CPD	Continuing professional development
GROW	Goal, reality, options, will
VL	Visible learning
HT	Head teacher
LW	Learning walks (to monitor standards)
PL	Phase leader (Key stage leads)
PSHE	Personal, social, health and economic curriculum - a central part of the curriculum for all pupils
PPM	Pupil progress meeting
ML	Middle Leader with subject specialism
MPS	Main professional scale
UNQ	Unqualified teacher (overseas trained without UK qualified status)
NQT	Newly qualified teacher (1 st year)
RQT	Recently qualified teacher (2 nd year)

Prior to the first session the Focus Groups were sent an outline of AI with their participant letter, in which the research question and methodology were set out. The first session started with a definition of coaching and how this could link to a coaching in a school context. In table 8 below are summaries of the definitions based on the posters and the recorded discussions (see appendix 5 and 6).

Table 8: Focus Group definitions of coaching

Focus group 1 definition of coaching, being a coach or a coachee:

Teaching, building confidence, getting you to achieve your goals, improvement and bettering, identifying what needs improving (sports). Pinpoint what needs to be worked on. The coach knows them inside out, is a very good communication. Modelling how to improve, giving specific, constructive feedback. Trust, [coach] has your best interests at heart, it's for

your benefit, are they being personal or are they helping me develop my role professionally? Knowing you can trust somebody, approachable, not telling but suggesting things. A consistent approach.

Coachee: A reflective process- a bit like therapy, no excuses. Resilient, open to change, unlearn some aspects of what we already know. Explore other options not being closed. Taking a risk.

Focus group 2 definition of coaching, being a coach or coachee:

Helps you to build on something, teaching strategies from coach to coachee, working with a coach to achieve an objective, the top bit of what you are trying to do, a mentor or a trainer, like a football coach, pushes you forward, motivates you, reaching goals that are set, targeted and customised approach, pick up on strengths and where you could improve, life coach, guide you, a relationship based on respect, confidentiality, gives feedback that can easily be acted upon, a good communicator and listener, support from someone higher up,

Coachee- Open-minded, could feel a bit vulnerable, don't take it as a judgement- open to change, resilient, accept there are things you need to work on, only open up if you have trust.

There are similarities in the definitions with both groups using the term 'open to change'. They both identify the feedback process as a means of moving practice forward within a trusting relationship. Focus group 1 uses the terms '*improvement and bettering*' and emphasises the need for '*constructive, specific feedback*', implying that it is not just negative and supports growth. They feel a coachee needs to be resilient to take feedback. The term '*consistency*' comes up in terms of a whole school approach. Focus group 2 adds '*open-minded*' to their definition as an important attribute that the coachee needs to build on to improve. They raise the notion of the '*vulnerability*' of the coachee and that change can occur but only if trust is in place.

Creating a joint definition enabled the groups to come to some sort of consensus, bond as a group and get to the root of what a culture based on this definition could look like. They then looked at the first two quadrants of the AI model and

described what they felt we already had in place followed by what we could aim for as a school. Again there were ideas in common from both groups which was heartening, as it showed that there were already elements of consistency in the culture across the school. *'An open-door policy'* and *'very supportive Phase Leaders'* with *'an approachable head teacher'* were identified by Focus group 1 with similar statements made by Focus group 2;

- *A really strong team*
- *always someone you can go to and share professional problems with*
- *staff go out of their way to help*
- *SLT give you feedback that makes your 'problem' manageable*

(Focus group 2 teacher research participants)

In the 'dream' section Focus Group 2 described a positive, pre-emptive culture where training and support are being viewed as a continual process. Focus group 1 add to this that a coaching culture would get to the root of a problem through skilful questioning that supported you to find your own solutions. In contrast to Focus Group 2, they made analogies to this type of support and the reflective, Visible Learning (Hattie, 2009, 2012) approach to supporting pupils. It was a tentative and encouraging start but the second session, two months later, enabled them to build on the initial discussions allowing ideas to flow more readily.

5.4.2 Focus group- swing in momentum- from discovery to destiny

In the same way that the senior leaders had increased in confidence and openness over time, so too did the teachers in both focus groups. After giving a short explanation that we were focussing on the last two AI (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) areas; design and destiny, the groups started to put forward their ideas. I have named these sessions a 'swing in momentum' because I was asking fewer questions and they were much more engaged and forthcoming with their ideas. I think this was in part because they could see the process was not threatening; it was an exchange of ideas that we could work into our approach to CPD. This was further confirmed by my subsequent analysis of the sessions, where I noted fewer pauses, more 'echoing' implying agreement and consensus,

and the tendency to complete sentences for others, which were a change from session 1. The responses from individuals were also significantly longer than session 1.

The session reaffirmed the changes that we had already made at Greenfields as a result of introducing innovative new approaches to teaching such as Visible Learning (Hattie, 2009), coaching and Lesson Study (DCSF, 2008). In the design quadrant of AI (see Table 7, Focus group 1 – analysis of key themes over 3 sessions using Appreciative Inquiry framework). Three main areas were identified by both groups as a way of sustaining the coaching culture; appraisals, CPD and leadership. Appraisals were described as a continuous loop, where you received feedback or ‘check-ins’ and follow through in a highly supportive and personalised manner. The GROW model (Whitmore, 2009) (see Figure 4) was seen as a way of sustaining this and maintaining the reflective nature of a growth mindset culture. Effective CPD was a key element of the design with ‘*creative*’ approaches needed, and ‘*specialisms*’ offered as part of a ‘*flat-line*’ structure that was ‘*solution focussed*.’ The third overarching area was leadership, which was often implied in the other two areas. For example Focus Group 1 called for an ‘*inspiring approach*’ that ‘encourages the individual to consider change’ linked with ‘*peer support*’ and well thought out induction into best practice, for newly qualified teachers and new staff.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the second sessions was the feedback on the fourth quadrant, destiny. There was consensus that the style of observations needed to be changed to ‘*Learning Walks*’ (something we had already started to trial) and the terms ‘*genuine*’ and ‘*supportive*’ were used to describe feedback following the initial trial. The rationale put forward was that learning walks promoted professional growth in the following ways;

- they are not graded according to the Ofsted grades (something that Ofsted have moved away from but which some schools still use)
- the feedback given is in a coaching style, asking questions rather than giving a summary of what was seen, and it is given immediately after the learning walk to minimise stress brought on by waiting too long for feedback.

- They provide an opportunity to explore best practice; discussions could lead to a suggestion to trial particular evidence based approaches, or to share good practice with other less experienced teachers or suggest visits to schools within our locality that use similar approaches.
- They focus on the learning taking place and the impact of teaching on that learning.

The coaching model of sharing good practice and developing further growth was also put forward as a means of supporting teachers to take risks. For Focus Group 2 *'working parties and smaller groups'* were seen as a non-threatening way of sustaining the approach and developing deep professional trust. Work life balance was brought up by both groups as something that needed to be central to any model leading to a *'healthier...less stressful'* working environment.

5.5 Developing a coaching culture- convergence of leadership and followership

The 1-1 coachees and Focus Groups had one final session a year later as a means of exploring the impact that the emerging coaching culture was having across the school (see table 5 for an outline of the emerging coaching culture). This was a critical moment for the project as it would show any longer term effects of the coaching culture from both perspectives. To explain the impact of this I compared the feedback showing any links or connections between coachees and focus group feedback.

Chris described the change across the school in a year as 'dramatic' and a shift from what had been in place before. Chris feels this has had a transformational impact on every aspect of Chris's performance from senior leader to teacher and describes several anecdotes to explain this in detail. Chris puts this down to moving away from an attempt to control situations to a more personalised, day-to-day formative approach, which in turn has made Chris more confident and empathetic, creating deeper trust;

I think before I liked to hold on to everything and just do it myself. But now I think, I've understood that for them doing it, there's a purpose behind it...and hopefully they have that ownership. You can see the impact of it straight way. With the children's learning as well as the teacher's learning.

(Chris, teacher research participant)

Like Chris, Alex is a fan of daily check-ins with colleagues, which are memorably described by Alex as daily '*little conversations*', a term picked up through this study because of its link to a coaching culture'. Alex describes these '*little conversations*' as non-threatening, short, professional discussions that are highly personalised. They seem to fulfil the '*follow through*' issue identified by the focus groups in initial first focus group meeting, where not enough support was given by senior leaders to teachers to sustain their development over time.

Sam adds to this emerging personalised picture by describing a change in approach;

I've become more patient with people, giving them more responsibility. I was tightly wound in certain things, borderline untrustworthy, but I think that's all changed now.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

The followers can see this change in leadership at Greenfields, linked to trust and developing relationships;

That adds to the feeling that you can approach them because you think actually they're not here to come down on us they actually want us to do our best.

(Evan, Focus group teacher research participant)

I feel we're open to saying, that's not really helping the children, then SLT would say then don't do it. That's where the trust comes in.

(Geraint, Focus group teacher research participant)

All three senior leaders mention a new approach to ‘difficult conversations’, something that would often take place after an observation as a means of feeding back. The new ‘*Learning Walk*’ approach is now embedded across the school and the coaching sessions and focus groups are clearly finding the process less stressful and more rewarding. Here the key is empathy, building relationships, valuing different styles and viewpoints and seeing what everyone brings to the process. Alex describes building trust as follows;

Everyone’s a lot more confident, more willing to help and take ownership and responsibility. In terms of relationships....I now value that so much more, and I think they do too...Those little conversations...go a long way.

(Alex, teacher research participant)

The phrase ‘*little conversations*’ used by Alex is highly significant in the context of this research. ‘*Little conversations*’ links back to Heffernan’s research about the importance of culture, set out in the Literature Review in Chapter 2. This phrase moves coaching away from a formal 1-1 session towards a culture of growth and development, evident in everyday practice. It promotes the idea of a regular, non-threatening approach that builds authentic professional relationships.

Time is now less of a factor for Alex or Chris; both state that they are more relaxed in their approach to work, they have more balance in their lives. The emerging culture seems to have had a positive effect, allowing more autonomy and time for core tasks to be completed.

The focus group participants confirm that the Learning Walks are a more positive, relaxed experience than observations and this has made teaching less pressured;

There’s not so much pressure that it has to be perfect. I think it is more about taking risks. But before I think there was more of a sense you have to stick to one way...

(Anwen, Focus group teacher research participant)

They [learning walks] are less stressful because I know exactly what they're coming in to look for.

(Sian, Focus group teacher research participant)

Sam is thinking ahead at what approaches will sustain this approach through CPD that is less formal and pre-planned and more flexible and relevant and by focussing on what really matters;

What do you want for a CPD next week...Less of us waffling on...and more of us facilitating.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

Sam suggests that making time for coaching in the future will be important and suggests that being resilient as a practitioner goes alongside this by;

Opening themselves up to be critiqued. (Sam, teacher research participant)

Self-improvement is something that the focus groups highlight as a key change. They are becoming more reflective about their practice in a drive to improve;

A drive to better myself with my teaching practice so that the kids can get more out of what I'm doing as a teacher.

(Idris, Focus group teacher research participant)

I am more open to talk about my faults or where I think I could improve.

(Lloyd, Focus group teacher research participant)

A sustainable model that builds on these early successes is also discussed by the focus group as something they want to see more of;

The last CPD...it was nice that we could bring our own ideas, we were the CPD rather than being told and spoken at.

It felt like we were in charge. It felt really relaxed...

We are more involved, we're not just being talked to so we get a lot more out of it.

(Myrddyn, Focus group teacher research participant)

Both senior leaders and teachers can see that the change in approach across the school has also impacted on the school culture and the approach to teaching and;

Developing that growth mindset in them [the pupils] as well as myself. I used to think that if I don't show them how to do it they won't be able to do it. But quite often with that coaching style...people have different ways of coming at a scenario, and that's ok. (Chris, teacher research participant)

This is echoed in the focus group feedback and attributed to a change in staff mindset...an open, coaching culture...where it's ok to not get it right...to take risks.

(Sam teacher research participant)

In addition Sam identifies the impact of a change in culture as far-reaching and more than just developing trust and resilience within the organisation;

[they said] that their child has been included as part of that community. They [the class] knew how to react and how to treat that person in that situation so it was a really nice reflection on what we have achieved so far.

(Sam, teacher research participant)

Sam highlights the deep commitment to inclusion, by recounting a conversation with a parent who was commenting on effective inclusion in a class; Sam concludes that that is the impact of a powerful change in school culture.

5.6 Summary

It has been my intention to give the reader an insight into a small scale research project that took place across a year at Greenfields. This involved the different perspectives of senior leaders (coachees) and those they line manage (focus groups) as the school went through a time of change in leadership and focus. The findings described in this chapter have shown the change over time in the two

separate groups. These were centred on the following key themes identified by the research process and considered throughout this chapter:

- The emerging confidence of all the participants
- The development of leadership skills of senior leaders
- The development of people – management/ followership skills of senior leaders
- The development of trust within the organisation
- The issue of teacher well-being

This pointed to a highly personalised approach to teaching, through investment in relationships across the board with the aim of building a reflective, resilient community. This is a repeating theme of huge significance in the context of this research, summarised here by Senge;

When we inhabit a school as a living system, we discover that it is always evolving. We participate in that evolution by asking questions....The aim of this questioning is not criticism but learning.

(Senge, 2003, pp 55, 56)

In addition, a more trusting style has created an emerging transformative approach to CPD rather than a transactional one. For example the Learning Walks have evolved into coaching sessions, along the lines of *'questioning...not criticism'* (Senge, 2003) described above and linked with my own views on the reciprocal nature of leadership and followership; the constant challenge and review required to effect transformational change. This is far removed from what I describe as the *'tick-box'* approach to coaching and creating a coaching culture in Chapter 2 as it requires a foundation of deep trust and authenticity.

Miles and Huberman (1994) gave me a starting point to consider how to evaluate the qualitative research. Following this I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis format. I have included their checklist in which they set out the common errors that are made when using thematic analysis. As a summary to this chapter I have used these as a means of evaluating my own approach:

1. *Not doing any analysis at all.*
2. *The use of the data collection questions (such as from an interview schedule) as the 'themes' that are reported.*
3. *A weak or unconvincing analysis, where the themes do not appear to work, where there is too much overlap between themes, or where the themes are not internally coherent and consistent.*
4. *A mismatch between the data and the analytic claims that are made about it.*
5. *A mismatch between theory and analytic claims, or between the research questions and the form of thematic analysis used.*

(Braun and Clarke, 2006 pp25-26)

In this chapter I have made a strong case to answer all five points above, which I will explore further in the wider context of the research in Chapter 6: Discussion.

Chapter 6 – Discussion and implications

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the threads of the research are drawn together. The results are interpreted within the context of research introduced in the Literature Review and in relation to the cultural and socio-political environment. I highlight the limitations of the methods, and any shortcomings linked to the project design, and the overall findings. Within this chapter I will also reflect on my own learning whilst undertaking this research. Finally I will share the aspects of this study that are my original contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

The question at the heart of this research was:

To what extent can the development of a coaching culture transform outcomes in a school?

The following research sub-questions were explored throughout:

- To what extent can a coaching culture effectively support the professional growth of teachers?
- To what extent can coaching successfully build trust and resilience in a school?
- Is the coaching approach developed in this study a model that can be adopted as an alternative to whole school improvement?

The above research question and sub-questions were explored through the following overarching aim:

- To gain a practitioner understanding of the potential of a coaching culture.

In this chapter I will explore each sub-question in turn to answer the overarching question above. The chapter will conclude with the implications of creating a culture of coaching within a school. This is further developed in Chapter 7, Conclusion, where I set out the merits of developing this approach as a tool for school development.

6.2 To what extent can a coaching culture effectively support the professional growth of teachers?

In the literature review I explored the definition of a coaching culture, its links to mentoring and 1-1 coaching and its distinctiveness as a way of leading and developing others, particularly in a school context. In addition I identified the challenges and tensions of adopting this type of culture, summed up in the following blog:

Educational leadership has become a very managerial process- one through which a priority is holding colleagues to account. The language of exploration and development which might be developed through coaching and mentoring does not always translate easily in accountability regimes.

(Lofthouse, 2015 n.p.)

Lofthouse argues that there is a tension between developing a culture of coaching within a school accountability system that is holding teachers to account whilst also supporting their professional growth. Moreover, there is mounting evidence, set out in my Literature Review and echoed in the latest DfE (2018, 2019) and Ofsted publications (2019), that investing in the meaningful professional development of teachers, what Lofthouse (2015) describes above as ‘the language of exploration and development’ towards a ‘collective teacher efficacy’ (Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, 2000) should be seen as central to school development and improvement.

It is important in the context of this research to note that the DfE through its ‘Early Career Framework’ (DfE, 2019) and Ofsted in its new framework (Ofsted, 2019), are both promoting the use of evidence based research as an important aspect of the professional development of teachers. There is a danger, articulated by Biesta (2009) and Lofthouse (2015), that the ‘exploration and development’ (Lofthouse, 2015) of teachers is at odds with a system that relies too heavily on pupil outcomes and is driven by data and league tables. I agree with this and in my opinion until we remove the dominance of this reliance on data, it will be difficult for many head teachers to moving away from a sharp focus on accountability as the most important driver in a process that is often termed ‘school improvement.’

Therefore, although I do not feel that the Ofsted framework and DfE guidance goes far enough, there are signs that there is a gradual move away from measuring accountability towards a more holistic evaluation into what constitutes good education. This might help to alleviate some of the issues facing schools, particularly the recruitment and retention of teachers and teacher workload and well-being.

Prominent educationalists such as Professors Alison Peacock, John Hattie, Dylan Wiliam, Rachel Lofthouse, all cited in this thesis, are advocating a culture of professional development that I feel needs to be carefully considered in schools as an opportunity for perpetual self-improvement, rather than an emphasis on early career teachers, especially NQTs. The culture needed to adopt this approach is described below by Wiliam:

...establish a culture where all teachers improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better.

(Wiliam, 2018, p 218)

This 'culture' is I believe, often linked to the style of leadership set by the head teacher or system leader and promoted in their school. Creating this culture will also depend on whether they value and recognise teacher growth as a vital component of school development. In my experience school leaders are mindful of balancing these but drawn towards accountability because of the pressures put upon schools to perform to a set of numerical standards that they are judged against.

In the literature review I set out the styles of leadership that build professional trust in an organisation compared with those that do not, (Goleman 1996, 2000, 2004; Goleman et al 2002; Boyatzis and McKee 2005). Linked to this were the challenges of leading ethically (Heffernan, 2011, 2015), leading authentically (Avolio and Gardner, 2005) and leading as a system leader (Senge et al, 2015). In addition, I cited the work of Hattie (2012, 2018) Donohoo (2017) and Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) into developing collaborative approaches towards 'collective

teacher efficacy' (Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, 2000) as described below by Hattie in a blog;

The collective belief of teachers in their ability to positively affect students.

(Hattie, 2018, n.p.)

Therefore a coaching culture, led by ethical, authentic leaders, who recognise the potential that each member of staff has to offer, will undoubtedly have an impact on the professional growth of teachers. This will inevitably impact on pupil outcomes.

Several approaches have been developed and further explored in this research study. The importance of daily '*little conversations*' to create a compassionate and caring approach that builds a culture where everyone is valued. , Linked to this is the importance of a foundation of trust, because this enables the '*pushing and pulling*' of ideas. In this approach deep questioning and refinement are encouraged. And finally, a move away from what I call '*tick-box*' approaches to coaching, towards the tacit ability to use coaching as a default style of leading. I have described them here in everyday language, as this is how we use them at Greenfields. Although they are informal phrases, they are part of the research story, and are used to demonstrate the impact of this project from doctoral research to every day practitioner development.

Linked to leadership are questions at the heart of this study that need further exploration. To what extent did the impact of the research stem from my own interest in coaching? Would it be realistic to presume that someone without this level of interest could adopt this type of culture? Would there have been a similar impact if different approaches had been used? Can this approach be easily used by other leaders, or could it be created and achieved using other approaches?

I appreciate that as an experienced coach I have a great interest in the coaching style of leadership and developing styles of leading that develop a co-coaching culture of professional growth described herein. However, I know from the training and support I give as a consultant headteacher and through the interest in my

podcast (Appendix 14), shared on Twitter, that there are a growing number of schools who are interested in developing this approach who are new to co-coaching and developing a culture of coaching.

Other whole-school intervention strategies; such as becoming a UNICEF Rights Respecting School, have had a far reaching impact that have led to a change in school culture. However, I would argue that these alone do not invest enough in the professional growth of teachers. This is the one internal variable in a school that Hattie (2012) and Wiliam (2018) argue has the most profound impact on pupil outcomes. If we want a solution to the accountability measures linked to outmoded concepts such as 'school improvement', then we need an approach that also has direct impact on teaching and learning. Investing in professional growth will have this impact.

During this very small scale research project I have highlighted other areas that I feel would benefit from further research and exploration linked to this study:

- Developing a coaching culture across a Multi Academy Trust;
- The impact on pupil outcomes of developing a coaching culture (a longitudinal study);
- Creating a parental coaching programme (following parental consultation in survey format);
- Coaching within a behaviour management framework for pupils;
- Developing a Professional Growth culture across a network of schools;
- The impact of co-coaching in Action Research and Lesson Study and sustainability using AI principles.

Creating a coaching culture to effectively support the professional development of teachers, has had wider benefits that I could not have anticipated at the outset; discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. Although the impact was not evident straight away, it built up cumulatively, over a period of time and is continuing to have lasting impact long after the end of the data collection and coaching period as we have embedded a coaching culture throughout the school. An important aspect of the evaluation of this thesis, linked to research on coaching and

mentoring in Chapter 2, is that a change in culture not only takes time to set up but also needs sufficient time to develop. All too often school improvement initiatives are set up with the expectation that impact will be felt immediately because there is an urgency to improve pupil outcomes. However, this research has shown the benefits of creating a coaching culture lie in the medium to long term; as evident in Table 5 in Chapter 4, because building a genuine professional relationship takes time. Instead of terms such as ‘school improvement’ and connotations of a deficit model linked to accountability I have described a school development model that focusses on practitioners’ professional growth and well-being.

For example, the participants in focus groups, from a slightly hesitant start, described in Chapter 5 Findings, developed measurably in confidence so that they could enthusiastically articulate the ‘destiny’ stage of AI and what this looked like from their perspective as followers. This is set out in more detail in the section 5.4.2: Focus group-swing in momentum-from discovery to destiny. Giving teachers professional reflection time; the space to improve in a culture of collaboration, where they are given freedoms to articulate their ‘dream’, had a deep and empowering impact. As they grew in confidence they were able to offer powerful feedback using the appreciative aspects of AI. For example, they identified three areas as critical to developing the coaching culture; appraisals, CPD and leadership, and were able to feedback on the impact the coaching culture was having on them, an example of which is below;

...as a continuous loop, where you received feedback or ‘check-ins’ and follow through in a highly supportive and personalised manner. The GROW model was seen as a way of sustaining this and maintaining the reflective nature of a growth mindset culture.

(Clariss, Focus group teacher research participant)

Linked to these were the Action Research projects that each teacher led as part of their appraisal and professional development (Table 5: Table of the coaching culture, Appendix 13: Article for Impact Magazine ‘Action Research: Developing a Reflective Community of Practice’) described in Chapter 4, Project Activity as ‘an evolution’. Although not directly linked to this research project, these teacher led

Action Research projects illustrate the enthusiasm for change and development that is available to be harnessed.

The term 'little conversations' articulated by one of the teacher research participants, and further discussed in Chapter 5, signals the emergence of the coaching culture from the perspective of the senior leaders. This phrase is hugely significant in the context of this research because it moves coaching away from a formal 1-1 process into the tacit ability of teachers to ask deep and searching questions to support growth and development of their peers. The term and meaning '*little conversations*' forms the original contribution of this study to the existing body of knowledge on creating a coaching culture and is an indicator of culture movement from transactional towards transformational school development.

6.3 To what extent can coaching successfully build trust and resilience in a school?

For the reasons already set out above, the findings from this research indicate that coaching can build trust and resilience in a school, although the tensions outlined in 6.2 are ever present and also a consideration here. Trust and resilience have been continually highlighted throughout this research and linked to styles of leadership and corresponding followership traits set out in the Literature Review.

I have attempted to describe the relationship between leaders and followers that mirrors an approach that teachers use with their pupils. The power relationships between leaders and followers are inherent but it was my belief that if I could draw out as many comparisons between effective teaching and effective coaching, then teachers would be more receptive to adopt approaches that they could make parallels with and that developed their self-efficacy through a model of highly personalised professional development.

An example of this is our use of Hattie's Visible Learning approach (2009, 2012) in which he explores the benefits of teachers seeing learning through the eyes of pupils to help them become their own teachers. (Hattie 2012). The findings from

this research indicate that coaching and creating a highly reflective community of teachers has the capacity to do something similar.

Another example of this is Nottingham's 'Learning Pit' (2017) described in Chapter 2. This could be compared with a coaching session following a learning walk between a teacher and line manager, as a way of exploring different teaching approaches that could lead to visibly better learning outcomes. The pit is seen by pupils as a point where learning is seen as challenging, something that you have to work at. In the same way that new approaches are not always easy to assimilate for a teacher, the assumption is that this will take time and a bit of trial and error. Just as pupils understand that they are responsible for their learning journey and how to identify gaps in their learning, using the meta language of learning to support them, so too, within a coaching culture can teachers. By approaching professional development in this way, there is the potential to change the approach to supporting staff. An example of this, described in Chapter 5: Findings, is the use of questioning and challenge that we have created as a leadership group; where we are unafraid of using double or triple loop learning, (Argyris and Schon, 1978) to challenge perspectives, so that we achieve the best possible outcomes at Greenfields.

This resonates with the messages within Goffee and Jones' article, 'Followership: It's Personal Too' (2001) where they set out the importance of a leader investing in their followers, as the catalyst for transformational change. Moreover, there are links here with teaching. In the same way that teachers develop a sense of agency with their pupils, that allows a safe space for reflection and feedback, so too, with a real investment in the professional culture and relationships, can followers and leaders develop a similar approach in a school, which has been the case at Greenfields.

Although it is clear from my research, that I feel there are considerable merits in developing a coaching culture, there are also limitations in using coaching alone, as a means of leading, which will be further explored below.

6.4 Is this a model that can be adopted as an alternative to whole school improvement?

This study indicates the possible benefits for schools when there is a deep commitment to long term professional growth. In doing so, the analysis of the findings suggest that it is time to rethink terms such as 'whole school improvement', that are born out of outdated accountability systems, and consider a more collegiate and humanistic model of professional growth.

As I have already argued in Chapter 2, Literature Review, school leaders need the flexibility to use a combination of approaches, depending on the context they are working in. For example, in a school that is in 'Special Measures' (an Ofsted category that is well below average and requires a very quick turnaround), the safeguarding and basic systems and structures need to be urgently reviewed, so coaching would not be an appropriate style on its own to support such a transformation. In my experience the core purpose of a head teacher is the safety and security of pupils so a short term directive leadership style is more appropriate in this context, safeguarding pupils and staff.

However, if we consider the importance of continuing professional development of all practitioners and building what Lofthouse describes as 'spaces' (Lofthouse, 2018, p34) for teachers to grow, then every school needs to establish systems that create a personalised culture of growth and development. In my view, a coaching culture can support this approach. However, there is still very little evidence or research to show the impact of coaching in a school setting, since it was introduced 20 years ago. I believe that there are very real benefits of using this approach, as set out in this small scale project, and suggest that there is now a need to consider a larger scale research project, to evaluate the potential of a coaching culture, as an approach to professional growth and school development.

6.5 Limitations of the research

As with any research, there are ethical considerations, although clearly set out at the outset, that I feel need to be considered in respect of the outcomes.

As an insider researcher, it was important for me to consider not only the affect my role could have on research participants, but also on the interpretation of the data.

In addition to this, my position as a head teacher within the organisation was pivotal, as it could be seen on the one hand as hugely beneficial (I knew the organisation well), but also detrimental, because of my potential lack of objectivity and power positionality.

Through undertaking this study, I cannot now separate my leadership style of coaching from my drive to invest in others, with a strong focus on relationships, across my school. This is how I lead and structure my school and all of the learning within it. That I chose to research its effectiveness, through coaching is an extension of my understanding of my role as an educator, who also happens to be a headteacher. What started as an ethical concern for me; being an insider researcher, has given me the advantages that an outsider would not have had; a deep understanding of my staff and of relationships across the school. As a head teacher I believe that you can never know enough about the stakeholders within your school; children, parents, the wider community and staff, in order to create a truly personalised approach, that matches the needs of your locality. Coaching has empowered me to really understand Greenfield's' community.

Another limitation was the recruitment strategy, which I would set up in a slightly different manner were I do to this research again. Linked to the power-relations and my position as insider researcher, I can now see that the research participants might have felt compelled to take part, something that is reflected in their hesitant start and further described in Chapter 5: Findings. It became clear overtime, in sessions 2 and 3 that they had all gained in confidence, shown in Table 7. However, it is possible that they would have gained more from the experience at the outset if I had given them more choice from the start.

Another consideration was the reflective journals, given to the senior leaders, involved in 1-1 coaching, which were not used as well as I had envisioned. Although one senior leader chose to write at length in their journal, the others did not. I feel this was a missed opportunity, which I would reconsider in future research, because I know how powerful my own reflective journal has been in illustrating the impact of my learning as a leader over time. It was my concern that I would add to their workload that made me offer the journals as an optional part of the process. Furthermore, I would recommend the use of reflection as a

professional development tool to any leader creating a coaching culture in their school. It has the potential to support practitioners to see the journey and progress that they have made; not numerical pupil progress data, that are at the heart of schools that focus on accountability above all else, but key professional data, that could arguably, have more impact on shaping outcomes for pupils. An example of this is explained in my article for Impact Magazine: Action Research: Developing a Reflective Community of Practice (Appendix 13).

I also considered whether I could have taken more notes as part of the focus group meetings, in the same way that I had at the 1-1 coaching sessions, and whether this would have given me further insights. I think as a researcher this would have helped me to pull together the data in Chapter 5, an area I found extremely challenging. I think any notes could have helped my thought processes when I came to evaluate the responses. However, I had to balance this with the important role I had during the focus group meetings, to collate ideas onto a flip chart, referring back to these throughout the process, whilst asking questions to generate discussion from the focus groups. It was important to have the ideas represented in poster format for future analysis, as an aide memoire for me at a later stage, during the data evaluation in Chapter 5: Findings. (Appendix 5 and 6).

6.6 Summary

I cannot underestimate my own personal growth as a researcher during the process of reading, reflecting, researching and writing this project. When I started researching, what I felt was a small scale project of more personal significance to me and my setting, has now changed my attitudes, becoming central to my way of thinking about education, not only in my school, but across the network of all schools that I work with in my locality.

This research has come at a time when school leaders are looking for new approaches to counter the very real difficulties that schools are facing, described at length throughout this thesis. Although there have been considerations and limitations in the data collection, described above, on balance, I feel the findings pave the way for more substantial and timely research into the impact of developing a coaching culture in a school setting.

The aim of this study was to explore a new approach to leading schools, set against all the challenges and policy changes currently facing UK maintained schools, highlighted in Chapter 1, Introduction. It is hoped that policy makers, school leaders and other interested parties will consider some of these approaches, in order not only to support the long term professional growth of teachers and school leaders, but also the culture and ethos of everyday teaching and learning, which could have a much wider impact on their professional lives. I have also considered the limitations of advocating coaching as a style of leading, as I have met very few other headteachers that use this approach. However, my personal insight into coaching has led me to the conclusion that putting practitioners at the heart of school development is something that all leaders must prioritise, if we are to recruit, retain and genuinely support our present and future generations of teachers. In my view, this is a moral and social imperative, because the impact is not only our teachers, but also future generations of our society. The '*little conversations*' build trust and make way for challenge through questioning, linked to double and triple loop learning, (Argyris and Schon, 1978) that builds resilience and professional trust. I would argue that policy makers and school leaders need to consider adopting this approach to leadership, in an era of uncertainty and relentless change, to address the many issues facing the profession set out in Chapter 1.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

In my conclusion I address the contribution to knowledge of this research and make recommendations to stakeholders, including policy makers and educationalists, universities and local and national government, which include opportunities for wider dissemination of the findings and future research development.

7.2 Research question

The research question central to this thesis was:

To what extent can the development of a coaching culture transform outcomes in a school?

I have set out at length in my discussion in chapter 6, an evaluation of the extent to which my research has been effective in answering this question. I can now say with some certainty that creating a coaching culture at Greenfields has not only been successful but continues to be a key driver of success since the end of the research project. Below I will set out the reasons for this and some recommendations for further research.

7.3 Implications for teachers and contribution to practice

The key words that have been explored and questioned throughout this thesis, captured in the sub-questions are followership, leadership, culture, trust, coaching, change, reflection and professional growth. The findings, based on qualitative data, suggest the vital importance of relationships and culture as key drivers of success in a school. These findings were most relevant to the time and context when this study was carried out; however, I feel that there may be naturalistic generalisations (Stake, 1978) that may be transferable to other similar school settings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Of central importance has been creating the right professional platform to enable a coaching culture to develop; in this case a collegiate and affiliative culture of professional growth that embraces the reciprocal relationship between leaders and

followers. This has created a depth of trust and resilience explored at length throughout this study. Below Heffernan sets out the merits of focussing on professional growth;

Most organizations invest more in rooting out underperformers than in cultivating pervasive achievement. Standard tools of appraisal, assessment, and ranking provide an illusion of control, a comforting defence against the slacker. But they've over engineered the solution to the small problem while ignoring the bigger one. Turn that around - focus instead on liberating and celebrating talent-and the results are predictably disproportionate.

(Heffernan, 2015, p 80)

There are professional implications here for teachers and practitioners in schools that adopt this approach. Rather than a focus on measureable outcomes set out in formal and inflexible performance management targets, schools that invest in personalised development of the individual reap the rewards of building trust and resilience amongst their staff. In this environment everyone is seen as a life-long learner with the capacity to develop and change over time.

Building trust supports the '*discretionary effort*' (Buck, 2017 p19) and '*collective self-efficacy*' (Hattie, 2018 n.p.) that all school leaders value; staff who will go the extra mile for the good of the wider organisation and understand that collectively they make a difference to pupil outcomes. Parallels have been drawn in this study between great leaders and great teachers. The effective leader builds genuine relationships with their followers and values their input, and is not afraid of entering into healthy conflict and professional dialogue, built on an ethical foundation that supports professional lives (Peacock, 2016). This resembles a great teacher; their agency with their pupils, their ambition to support better outcomes for all pupils in the firm belief that there is potential in all to do well (William, 2018). With both leaders and teachers it is a matter of finding the right way through, of creating the right culture for development and learning.

7.4 Implications for schools in my locality

This research is timely as it comes during a period of unprecedented change between 2014-2019 in education policy and ideology in UK mainstream schools that I have set out as the context for this research in Chapter 1. In the four years since I began this research the challenges outlined above and throughout have become interlinked; a financial crisis in maintained schools, problems with recruitment and retention of staff, a concern about the volume of workload impacting on well-being, a plethora of policy changes, including the regular review of the accountability frameworks. These issues present an opportunity for school leaders to develop a different approach, as a possible solution to the continual debate in the press and social media on the detrimental impact of the many challenges facing schools.

I am fortunate to be an active member of my local learning partnership, involved in leadership training for two teaching schools and mentoring and coaching for senior leaders in my LA. However, I know that my approach is not in line with the way other leaders approach school improvement. This might be partly because I have not entered a career of headship in the traditional manner, as I describe in Chapter 1 and also because I have doubts about the usefulness of the term 'school improvement', as it contradicts the coaching culture of professional growth and reflection that I have described in this thesis. My extensive training in coaching and mentoring, in leadership and research has given me a different insight into leadership. The outcomes of this research have given me the determination to share with other headteachers and school leaders the benefits of creating a culture in which trust and resilience can support improved outcomes for all, not just practitioners. The findings suggest that this approach; *little conversations, pushing and pulling*, using the GROW model (Whitmore, 2009) using the AI methodology (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005), could be further developed to support the professional lives of all involved in education such as student teachers, apprentices, governors, families and pupils.

7.5 Implications for policy makers

In Chapter 1 I set out the many interconnected challenges facing teachers and school leaders in mainstream schools in the UK; workload, well-being, recruitment

and retention have all been explored. Alongside this has been the concern that accountability has become the main focus of school leaders causing a narrowing of the curriculum resulting in increasing pressure on teachers to reach numerical targets. This has moved us away from the core purpose of education;

....we have lost sight of questions about values, purpose and the goodness of education.

(Biesta, 2009 p3)

A review of a broad and balanced curriculum, (DfE, 2014) is a positive move, although there is still a lot more work to be done (Ofsted, 2019).

This research has highlighted that we have narrowed professional growth in the same manner that we have narrowed the curriculum, by focusing on outcomes alone through performance related pay. Instead, we need a model of whole school development which is developed as an alternative model to whole school improvement. We must also value well-being as integral to any model of development. My research recommends that creating a coaching culture can support a more integrated model. This will, however, require further investment in training programmes and policy development at school level. Initial teacher training programmes will need to support curriculum development and evidence based approaches to teaching and learning. An investment in leadership programmes including coaching that allow future leaders the time and space to develop into the next generation of leaders. Finally, a career-long investment in the mental health and well-being of practitioners.

7.6 Defined Contribution

The contribution of this study to educational research theory and practice, set out below, is to move towards an ethical and humanistic culture, where teachers and practitioners will be less afraid of making mistakes. They will be able to use approaches that we have at Greenfields, to support their professional development, such as Action Research, lesson study, coaching, time for reflection in professional 'spaces' (Lofthouse, 2018, p34). These approaches will help them to consider their practice, with time to link with other practitioners to sharpen and deepen their professional development and understanding over time. Within this

highly supportive professional culture we have created these ‘spaces’. We have achieved this through reflection and coaching, resulting in the daily use of ‘*little conversations*’ to build the right culture. We have not being afraid to use the technique of ‘*pushing and pulling*’ as a strategy to gain insight and develop practice. All of this is brought together in our ‘Professional Growth’ model, which is described in table 9 below.

I have summarised some of the products of this research and their use and impact at Greenfields school (table 9); the Local Authority (table 10); and at a wider, national level (table 11). All of these projects, initiatives, articles and conferences stem from the culmination of this research. My Professional Growth Policy is the blueprint for this approach in schools. It sets out how to create a culture of coaching and professional growth in a school using the approaches described above. I have been asked to share this approach with other schools in my locality (table 10) and with other educationalists (table 11). I am in discussion with an educational publisher and a coaching company about writing a manual to support a sustainable coaching model in schools.

Professional Growth in Schools Model

Table 9: School Level

Date started/ due to start	Products, Impact and Reach
September 2019	Professional Growth Policy and supporting documents adopted and agreed by staff and governors
October 2019	Coaching sessions between SLT and teachers begin to determine personalised growth plan
November 2019	Action Research projects begin for all teachers
November 2019	Spirals of enquiry identified through coaching begin for all teachers
November 2019 onwards	Team teaching/ demo lessons begin to support spirals
termly	Termly catch up to reflect on growth plan and adjust
June 2020	Staff review to feedback on impact of new approach

Table 10: Local Authority Level

Date started/ due to start	Products, Impact and Reach
September 2018-September 2019	Cross-phase (primary and secondary) local Action Research Learning Community for 12 teachers. Share outcomes with primary heads.
November 2019	Local Authority Cluster group meetings to share Professional Growth model and offer support/ CPD for schools who want to use it.
November 2019	Meetings with local schools who want to trial 'Professional growth Model' to map out meetings, provision
ongoing	CPD in schools on coaching and Action Research as part of the model
ongoing	1-1 coaching with headteachers to evaluate progress in use of the model
November 2019	Organise and host a Leadership conference for school leaders on well-being and workload and share Professional Growth model with delegates
ongoing	Active member of the Local Authority Recruitment and Retention Committee. Cluster lead (12 schools) for the Local Authority.

Table 11: Wider Partnerships

Institution/ Organisation	Date	Products, Impact and Reach
Middlesex University	January 2020	Presentation to Doctoral students as part of IPL5001 course
	March 2020	Future plans to write article in collaboration with academic supervisors
	February 2020	Short course in Learning, teaching and assessment to develop teaching opportunities at university
	March 2020	Partnership work with Education department to discuss future projects/ collaborations
Leeds Beckett University	June 2020	CollectiveEd article to summarise impact of Professional Growth in schools in partnership with Coaching in Education Department.
Institute of	September	Facilitation for National Professional

Education	2017 onwards	Qualification courses.
Chartered College of Teachers	May 2019	Fellowship Award Article summarising the impact of using Action Research to support Professional Growth in schools
'We are in Beta'	May 2019	podcast on Twitter Reflection on creating a coaching culture.
National conference #DiverseEd	January 2020	Panel Interview on coaching culture and professional Growth followed by Q and A session
MalCPD	July 2021	Co-author of forthcoming publication and suite of resources 'Coaching for Growth in Schools'

The tables set out, at each level; school, local and national, the products stemming from this research and the time they were implemented.

7.7 Future research and career progression

The aim of this research was to explore a humanistic approach to school leadership and professional growth, moving away from an accountability model driven by rigorous monitoring. This research and thesis were completed just before the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and heightened awareness of environmental issues and as a result the findings are even more relevant and timely. More than ever there is a need to support our most valuable educational resource: our practitioners, not only for their benefit but also because of their huge influence on the next generation. There is scope now to align this research with a new way of working in schools, particularly in the area of professional growth.

Furthermore, when I embarked on this research in 2015 I did not realise the transformational change and impact it would have on me personally and professionally as a school leader and educationalist. Nor could I have foreseen the possibilities that this research sets out in the light of considerable global change referred to above.

My role now is to reflect on my career, look beyond my school and local authority, and see how I can develop some critical thinking amongst my peers and other educationalists in support of this new model of whole school development. I have made a start with this in several ways, illustrated above. For example, I wrote an article for the Chartered College of Teachers 'Impact' magazine (see appendix 13) on using Action Research to support professional growth in schools based on our approach at Greenfields. I am also leading a learning community across several local schools with a focus on developing Action Research which will be disseminated through Leeds Beckett University to a nationwide research group. In addition, as a result of this research, there is an approach to professional growth that I am in the process of disseminating widely with eleven local schools that I lead, as part of my local authority's learning partnership.

My aim is to create a blueprint, based on the outcomes of this research, for the professional growth of practitioners in schools (See Appendix 14). This will replace the traditional performance management process, that is driven by target setting and performance related pay, which is causing some of the overlapping issues of a narrow curriculum and the recruitment, retention and well-being of teachers, faced in schools today. Given the enormous additional pressures on schools due to COVID-19, I plan to write up this research with my academic supervisors in a relevant educational journal and present it at local and national conferences in the UK.

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Appendix 1: Guidelines for co-coaching (based on this research study)

██████████ Primary School and Nursery: Guidelines for co-coaching
Here are some key guidelines and principles to support a co-coaching
conversation

At ██████████ Primary School and Nursery coaching is used as an everyday professional development tool. There are times, however, that coaching will take the form of a meeting to review the current situation and explore options. In these cases the following guidelines should be adopted.

1. The coaching relationship is voluntary for both parties. If it is to work trust needs to be built beforehand.
2. It is crucial that the confidentiality of conversations between the coach and the coachee is guaranteed. Ensure that meetings take place in private.
3. Any notes following a coaching meeting should be made and kept in absolute confidence.
4. If any conflict of interest arises between the role of coach and any other this should be recognised and discussed as a matter of emergency.
5. The goal of coaching is to help coachees progress professionally in ways which both address their work-related issues and benefit the learning community. This needs to be established from the start.
6. A coach should not attempt to deal with trauma or problems requiring psychotherapeutic treatment. These should be dealt with by qualified professional counsellors through our Workplace Options contract.
7. Meetings are best held in a quiet environment where both parties feel they can speak freely without being overheard or interrupted.
8. Meetings should be long enough to allow for in-depth discussion. Cover needs to be found as the meeting should not add to workload.
9. Both coach and coachee have the right to withdraw from the relationship if, despite genuine efforts, it is not working.
10. An external ██████████ will offer you supervision every half term.
11. Any concerns about any aspect of the process should be discussed with the headteacher.

Appendix 2 Staff questionnaire 2018

		Strongly agree/ agree	Disagree/ strongly disagree	Strongly agree/ agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree/ strongly disagree
1	I am proud to be a member of staff at this school.	100%	0	100%	0	0
2	Children are safe at this school.	100%	-	100%	0	0
3	Behaviour is good in this school.	86%	14%	86%	4% (1)	10% (3)
4	The behaviour of pupils is consistently well managed.	83%	17%	86%	0	14% (4)
5	Leaders support staff well in managing behaviour	-	-	79%	14% (4)	7% (2)
6	The school deals with any cases of bullying effectively (bullying includes persistent name-calling, cyber, racist and homophobic bullying).	91.5%	9.5%	82%	14% (4)	4% (1)
7	<i>Old- The school makes appropriate provision for my professional development.</i>	90%	10%	x	x	
	New-Leaders use professional development to encourage, challenge and support teachers' improvement	x	x	100%	0	0
8	New-Leaders do all they can to ensure the school has a motivated, respected and	x	x	93%	0	7% (2)

	effective teaching staff					
9	New- Leaders have created a climate in which teachers are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for the pupils	x	x	86%	10% (3)	4% (1)
10	New- This school has a culture that encourages calm and orderly conduct and is aspirational for all pupils	x	x	93%	7% (2)	0
11	New- The school challenges all pupils to make at least good progress	x	x	93%	7% (2)	0
12	The school is well led and managed.	98%	2%	96%	4% (1)	0
13	New- Leaders and managers take workload into account when developing and implementing policies and procedures so as to avoid placing unnecessary burdens on staff	x	x	43%	43%	14% (4)
14	All staff are treated fairly and with respect at this school	x	x	86%	14% (4)	0
15	Leaders and managers are respectful of my well-being	x	x	79%	21% (6)	0
16	I enjoy working at this school	x	x	96%	4% (1)	0

Evaluation:

- 2018 new style survey. Judgement- 'neither agree or disagree' added
- 100% strongly/ agree for points 1,2,7
- 90%+ for points 8,10,11,12,96

- Fewer strongly disagree that behaviour is good- point 3
- Fewer strongly disagree that behaviour is consistently well managed- point 4
- All staff feel supported professionally, an improvement of 10% - point 7
- 8 new categories of which staff well-being (point 15) and workload (point 13) are areas to focus on.
- Point 5: Leaders to consider what else can be done here.
- Point 6: Bullying- We have done a lot of work on this for anti-bullying week last term. A focus on this going forward. Compare with parent/ pupil surveys and discuss next steps across the school.
- Point 7: CPD well received 100%
- Point 13: Workload only 43% agree. 43% neither agree or disagree. Well-being/ workload working Party, discuss with GB
- Point 15: Well-being linked to workload- a policy/ guidance to support this judgement.

Next steps:

- Share with all stakeholders and create an action plan to support points 13 and 15 in particular.
- Create a wellbeing group to support point 15.
- Discuss with SLT staff perceptions of how leaders manage behaviour and how this could improve.

Appendix 3: Participant Letter

Version 1

Study Title: Project title 'An exploration of the development of a coaching culture in school leadership and followership.'

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

The aim is to explore how to develop a coaching culture to support leadership and followership within a school setting.

The objectives are:

- To introduce a system of coaching for three school leaders over a five month period within an academic year. Coaching sessions will be taped for future analysis.
- To explore the impact of coaching of senior leaders through the use of reflective journals
- To interview other members of staff (in a focus group) working within the phases who are not at leadership level, to evaluate the wider impact of coaching. These sessions will be taped for future analysis.
- To evaluate and reflect on the project findings with a view to sharing good practice with others and developing a model for school improvement.

The expectation is that the final write up of the research is a case study for whole school improvement that can be disseminated to other educational organisations, local authorities and education departments in universities.

You have been invited to take part because you are a senior leader or a teacher at the school.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form, of

which you will receive a copy. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Your involvement will be over a period from March 2017 to July 2018. During this time if you are a senior leader you will be invited to attend three coaching sessions and keep a reflective journal in between the coaching sessions. The sessions will take place in the Learning Hub, away from the main school building and last for up to 60 minutes. During these sessions you will be introduced to a model of coaching that will support you to reflect on your role as a senior leader. These sessions will be recorded for future analysis. Following each session you will be invited to keep a record of your thoughts and actions in a journal, although there is no obligation to do so. These journals will also form part of the evidence base for future analysis. It is anticipated that this research will take 18 months to complete.

The following research methods will be used:

Semi-structured interviews (coaching sessions):

In a semi-structured interview we aim to collect information to answer the research question by using a coaching framework and recording the interviews to analyse.

Reflective journals:

By using reflective journals the aim is to collect and analyse written information that is available to answer the research question.

Focus group meetings (for teachers):

Using an Appreciative Inquiry approach (see attached outline), teachers not involved in the coaching and reflective journals above will meet for three sessions in the 15 month period to evaluate the wider impact of coaching. These sessions will be taped for future analysis.

Please note that in order to ensure quality assurance and equity this project may be selected for audit by a designated member of the committee. This means that the designated member can request to see signed consent forms. However, if this

is the case your signed consent form will only be accessed by the designated auditor or member of the audit team.

Taking part in the research requires answering questions about leadership styles and line management in order to solve problems and move forward. Any lifestyle restrictions on the participants, e.g. if any were to become pregnant during the research, would be carefully considered and appropriate allowances would be made. Any woman who finds that she has become pregnant while taking part in the study should immediately tell the researcher and her medical practitioner.

There are no known risks in participating in this project. However, If you suffer any symptoms you should report them next time you meet for coaching or sooner if necessary. The contact name and number should you become in anyway concerned is: Clare Rees Tel: [REDACTED]

We hope that participating in the study will help you to develop your leadership style and develop your emotional intelligence. However, this cannot be guaranteed. The information we get from this study may help us to support leaders in other educational settings.

All information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Any information about you which is used will have your name and any personal information about you removed so that you cannot be recognised from it.

All data will be stored, analysed and reported in compliance with the UK Data Protection Legislation.

The results of the research will form the basis of a doctoral project. As a participant you are invited to contact the researcher for the results. You will not be identified in any report/publication.

The Research Ethics Committee that reviewed the study is the Middlesex University, School of Health and Education, Health and Social Care Ethics Subcommittee.

Clare Rees (researcher)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dr Gordon Weller (academic supervisor)

School of Health and Education, Middlesex University, Hendon campus, The Burroughs, NW4 4BT

g.weller@mdx.ac.uk Tel: [REDACTED]

Dr Leena Robertson (academic supervisor)

School of Health and Education, Middlesex University, Hendon campus, The Burroughs, NW4 4BT

l.robertson@mdx.ac.uk Tel: [REDACTED]

Thank you for considering your participation in this research.

On signing the consent form you will receive a copy of that form with this information sheet to keep.

Appendix 4: Consent form



Version Number 1

Participant Identification Number: 1

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: An Exploration of the development of a coaching culture in school leadership and followership

Name of Researcher: Clare Rees

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 3.2.17.....for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I agree that this form that bears my name and signature may be seen by a designated auditor.
4. I agree that my non-identifiable research data may be stored in National Archives and be used anonymously by others for future research. I am assured that the confidentiality of my data will be upheld through the removal of any personal identifiers.

5. I understand that my interview may be taped and subsequently transcribed.

6. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of participant	Date	Signature
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Name of person taking consent (if different from researcher)	Date	Signature
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Clare Rees	3.2.17	
Researcher	Date	Signature

1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher

Appendix 5: Coaching poster- focus group 1

What is coaching?
building a 'something'
Teaching Strategies - giving/helping
Goals - reaching them
football - www/ebi / coaches = open minded
= tan resilient) - non-judgment
music
mental coach/therapy life coach
trainer/mentor

What needs to be in place for it to be successful?
TRUST - making yourself vulnerable
coach is skilled good listener
Respect - protocol / confidential timely / TIME
supervision

If we had a coaching culture, what might it look like?
VL slots → learn from each other
Not as a result of a 'problem' 'tve culture' - safe enough
CPD — training in coaching
Not judged
TA

Appendix 6: Coaching poster- focus group 2

What is coaching? *listen carefully*
Knowing your role
 teaching
 Confidence-building / goal setting
 Sports - focus on a specific area - improvement
 practice skills } high levels of communication
 → www/ebi → next next steps
 Don't take things personally - reflective/resilient

What needs to be in place for it to be successful?
 Open to Change *risk*
 Explore new Options
 Modelling
 Feedback - specific
 TRUST - best interests at heart *rooms / improve*
 Approachable *mixed ability*
 Pupils / Civdetime / PSHE
 Parents / Workshops

If we had a 'coaching culture' what would it look like?
 Consistency - all on same page - TRUST
 CPD?
 Asking? knowing who to go to. *Not personalised*
 Coaches - why? Deep?
 ATM - sometimes given similar response
 Make time - meet / coaching sessions
 Calm - secure feeling / honest + open

Appendix 7: Outline of Focus Group session 3

An exploration of the development of a coaching culture in school leadership and followership

Last year you took part in research on creating a coaching culture ay school. The discussions focussed on how CPD, appraisals, induction and monitoring could be rethought and base on a model of trust, collaboration, research and openness. 2 posters and were created (attached). The final focus group will capture what, if anything has changed over the course of a year, based on these questions:

1. Reflecting on the year, can you describe what elements of a coaching culture were established?

What impact did this have on you and your practice?

What about outcomes for children?

2. To what extent have school leaders supported your personal growth?

Can you share an example, transformational moment?

3. What do you think we could do more of to sustain the right culture?

And less of?

Clare Rees 22.6.18

Appendix 8: Outline of 1-1 coaching session 3

An exploration of the development of a coaching culture in school leadership and followership.

Outline of 3rd coaching session for school leaders.

The session will use the following questions as a starting point. Please make notes in your reflective journal and bring these to the session.

1. Reflecting on 2017-2018 can you describe how you have changed as a school leader?

Are there examples you can give of how you do things differently now?
What created this change? Any transformational moments to share?

2. What impact has your leadership had on those you line manage and other stakeholders at school?

How do you know?

To what extent has coaching enabled this change?

3. What do you want to develop next as a school leader?

And what next for the school to continue to grow and develop as an organisation?

Developing a coaching culture to support school improvement

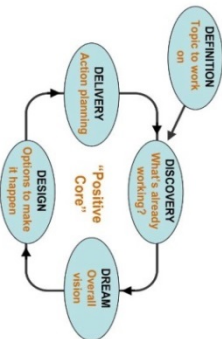
Clare Rees, School of Health and Education, Middlesex University London

B. How?

I am using a combination of the following to capture qualitative data for my research:

1. Appreciative Inquiry

A process that supports discussion about change starting with and building on the 'positive core'



This will be used as a solution focused, problem solving tool with Senior leaders, to promote a coaching culture.

2. Semi-structured interviews with senior leaders in a school
These consist of 3 x 1-1 coaching sessions over 6 months with Senior Leaders

3. Reflective journals
The Senior Leaders keep a journal and note any key changes between coaching sessions

4. Focus group meetings with teachers
Groups of teachers meet over 6 months to evaluate the impact of a coaching culture

A. Why?

Since 2010 there has been very little investment in developing school leadership in state schools.

As a head teacher I was interested in approaches to improve schools that supported the development of trust.

I wanted to research a different approach that had an impact on the whole organisation from the leadership team, to the teachers, to the pupils.

Coaching for improvement using highly motivating tools like Appreciate Inquiry and reflective journals, became the focus of my research.

What is a coaching culture?

'Coaching is the predominant style of managing and working together, and where a commitment to grow the organisation is embedded in a parallel commitment to grow the people...'
(Clutterbuck and Megginson 2006 p 19)

C. What next?

Triangulating and evaluating the evidence from B

Mapping qualitative data onto quantitative data (pupil outcomes) to judge impact

Publishing the research findings

Creating a model for whole school improvement to be shared and disseminated within and beyond my locality.

References

- Boyatzis R and McKee A (2005) *Resonant Leadership*, HBS Press
- Cooperrider D and Whitney D (2005) *Appreciative Inquiry*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers
- Pask R and Joy B (2007) *Mentoring- Coaching*, OUP
- Clutterbuck D and Megginson D (2006) *Making Coaching Work*, CIPD
- Egan G (2013) *The Skilled Helper*, Brooks/ Cole
- ****
- Clare Rees: head@havelock.ealing.sch.uk

Appendix 11 Anonymised version of data- from note taking to thematic analysis to evaluation: Note taking

- Tell me what has happened since we last met
- Is there anything you remember from our last meeting that you want to explore / discuss?
- Reflective journal - has this been a useful way of capturing your thoughts / reflections? Why?

Can you identify the main areas you want to move forward with?

* time management

- SLE role
ATT role - good process to go through

★ make mistakes

★ Sept
look for a solution. eg timetables.
data + IT.

(Nov) - Yr group at a time. + support
Certain ch^s - what are you doing for
these ch^s?
was Sept start.

Induction programme in July

Thematic analysis

1

Coaching Session 2 date? May? generally less talk from me longer/more confident reports from GC Gap between sessions

I just wanted to think about what has happened since we last met. Have you got anything that you've written down, or any thoughts that you've got?

Confident start reflective journal

1 Yep. I wrote down I think since the last time we spoke I ended up getting the

2 SLE role. So, I felt really positive about that because that was quite a

3 strenuous process to have gone through and it was quite a scary process to

4 go through because of the sort of things we had to go through for that.

5 Naturally, I got the Assistant Head role and I was a bit worried about what the

6 process might be but it was actually a good process to go through because it

7 allows you to sort of remind yourself of all the different things you do over the

8 year because I think sometimes you forget what different things you're doing.

9 You're not just a Class Teacher but sometimes you're working in so many

10 different levels, it's almost like you're not just a teacher you're also a

11 daughter, a mother, and so forth but that's the same thing as working in a

12 school. You're doing a number of different roles and there's lots of different

A change from Session 1 when time/laying of

change/stopping up

many change

reflecting

Assistant

mind

action

Evaluation: Main themes

Session 1	Session 2
<p><u>Building confidence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting back to past experiences- linking personal and professional • A tendency to focus on the negative/ faults • Feeling Chris will be found out/ let the school down 	<p><u>Building confidence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More confident start (evident by less repetition and more focus/ clarity, use of positive language, well prepared with notes and reflective journal) • Asks to be put on the spot (although acknowledges that this is difficult) • Evidence of lack of self-belief (e.g. use of passive voice, a surprise that they have been promoted) • Still needs time to prepare for difficult conversations
<p><u>Leadership Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed/ growth mindsets- understands these terms and relates more to fixed mindset • Taking risks/ learning from mistakes- beginning to but not comfortable with this • Not evaluative -Not always seeing the links • Does not act/ think strategically (link to operational side/ time poor) • Open to change, honest in responses • Contradictions- time poor but needs to fill time with operational tasks; telling or being blunt as a strategy (when it hasn't worked for her) • Work/life balance as a leader 	<p><u>Leadership skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection is a key part of her learning • Beginning to embrace growth mindset approach- less anxious about failure • Seeing the benefits of collaboration in leadership- reciprocal approach • Able to list leadership attributes; approachable, empathic, clear expectations • Challenging the status quo to make things even better • Developing a more strategic approach- data as a tool for whole school improvement • Pedagogy- using key ideas from research that support teaching and

	<p>learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p><u>Developing followership:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that Chris does not give a lot of time to build relationships • Evidence that Chris does not assess where people are in their current practice and where they need to get to- comparing them with own practice. • Concerned about being judged by new staff. • As a follower Chris is clear about the leadership qualities that one would want to see in a leader • Lack of trust in others stems from insecurity/ lack of confidence/ fear of being judged • Balance of power shifting when Chris is promoted- recognises a change in dynamic and professionalism required 	<p><u>Developing followership:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing the benefits of being outward facing and developing teachers in other schools • More confident to take risks • Seeing a reciprocal approach developing in her role with others • Beginning to develop a more personalised approach to developing others • Learning as a leader also requires asking questions and making mistakes. • An understanding of pedagogy will gain respect of the 'followers' • A more sympathetic/ supportive approach to CPD; smaller groups, coaching • Chris seems to be seeing followers on the same lines as class pupils. • Less about telling someone their faults, more about leading them to something better
<p><u>Trust:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Leaders- knows this is key but few examples of when Chris has seen it work well • Professional relationships- sometimes quick to react, unable to see the bigger picture/ lack of empathy 	<p><u>Trust:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing trust as a key aspect of leadership • Diplomacy, sensitivity when appropriate- more able to see the person and the professional • Coaching and developing a

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates high levels of trust by being open/honest in responses	<p>coaching culture evident in responses and strategies used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to admit mistakes during session and see them as a key moment of learning/ growth
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Appendix 12: Example of thematic analysis and emerging themes during coaching session1 for 'Alex'

Line(s)	Code/ themes
2-9	Summary of session 1. Reflective.
10	Self-awareness of struggles with delegation. Honest ' <i>I never realised how difficult that was for me.</i> '
11	It's not a quick fix. Commitment to change ' <i>I'm still learning and I'm still trying.</i> '
13	' <i>realised in myself that I think I find it more challenging than I should..</i> ' reflective, needs to step up as a leader. Has been thinking since last session.
12-15	Issue of loss of control when delegating- perfectionist?
16-20	Issue of delegating related to trust has changed since session 1. This now seems to be about whether it is their remit. Should they do what I ask? Developing followership a concern. How do you make people follow you?
23-29	Balancing act
23-29	Unable to deal with conflict, ask questions; ' <i>obviously there's the issue that I'm not first aid trained...</i> ' How was Alex going to approach this?
32	Passion for Alex's role with the children and community.
35-38	Beginning to think strategically when delegating.
41	Demands of teacher's role. Balancing act. Does not want to add to other's burdens.
49	When it is an area where Alex has the bigger picture Alex feels more confident? It is a shared goal for all involved.
54	Building people up from their starting points, building capacity
56-60	A more confident approach to dealing with petty comments. Leadership is confronting not Avoiding
62	Impact is ' <i>more willing to just do things and more understanding.</i> ' Developing trust, less controlling.
66	Empathic- able to see someone's skills and build from there. Resulting in more realistic expectations and a better working partnership. 'they are

	really capable...sometimes even doubt themselves...' Less directing, more signposting and praising.
76	Distributed leadership- working towards the vision- shared goals with others.
79	Strategic approach- sees her role as raising standards across the school. A change from session 1. Accountability
83-84	Confirmation of Alex's changing perspective across the whole school
85	Burden of responsibility on her as the English lead.
86	<i>Our...children...the data...the starting points...where they need to be'</i> Unrealistic expectations? Progress from starting points rather than unrealistic progress.
88	' <i>Huge mountain</i> ' pressure, fear of failure?
90	'whoever year group you're in' whole school approach, strategic.
96-98	Compassionate as a leader-
99- 106	Anecdote regarding a vulnerable pupil who has made outstanding progress in spite of circumstances.
107	Supportive of the family/ community- developing trust with parents supports better outcomes.
108	' <i>consistency....that fine tuning of knowing the issues...having a bit of extra time for them.</i> ' Relationships are key; pupils, parents included. They are also followers. Developing trust to unlock learning.
108	The importance of school in vulnerable pupils' lives.
116	Vision for the school succinct, articulate and passionate
116	' <i>High expectations. No ceiling effect.</i> ' Strategic leadership, high expectations.
118	' <i>If you need anything all you need to do is let us know</i> ' Growth mindset for the children
119- 133	Critical thinking; problem solving. Thinking ahead.
134	' <i>we could use the current grids....the new SPAG checklist..</i> ' The approach is abstract- lacks element of communication, building trust through communication so that any misconceptions are ironed out at the outset.

144	Talking from an ideal scenario with teachers who are capable
148	Support for teachers who are struggling/ inexperienced is mainly CPD 'Training. <i>CPD session to go to.</i> ' Is telling enough?
151	Showing a deep understanding of data analysis systems- strategic
159	Moving towards a clearer understanding of how others develop their understanding; communication, peer-coaching. Element of risk taking when trust has been developed.
161	Building confidence in the 'followership'
164	Beginning to see the importance of building relationship with those you lead. Effective communication, shared goals build trust. Beginning to describe a coaching culture, empathic, supportive. Echoes the approach they use with children.
168	Commit to change. Coaching culture, developing trust ' <i>open enough to say what they find challenging.</i> '
170	Critical thinking. Analysis of practice. Not enough detail of how to effectively support change.
174	' <i>I guess a bit of a hint to what it could be...</i> ' Contradicts idea of developing trust.
175	Collaborative approach to support improvement ' <i>...work together, research something.</i> '
178	Tried and tested approach- not taking a risk.
181	Managing change is difficult- inflexible approach
182	Managing change requires clear expectations, common goals
188	An admission that they do not like taking risks ' <i>I know I don't like taking risks.</i> '
190	More detail- happy to take risks if they know the audience – i.e. class
191- 194	Describing a 'cold' task that is very challenging. Taking risks.
195- 199	Explanation of why Alex can take risks with children's' learning; ' <i>I know the kids really well....So I'm more likely to take a risk.</i> ' Empathy.
189- 199	Implication that it is harder to take risks with adults; ' <i>sometimes with colleagues...I want to make sure that...it's taken in the right way and not misunderstood.</i> '

200	Has Alex just found the answer to working with adults by describing her approach with children; <i>'they discuss, they talk to each other.'</i>
205- 206	Further explanation of what works well with the children <i>'They were comfortable. It was just building on their previous knowledge.'</i> Good pedagogy. Building on starting points.
208	Making the link from children to CPD/ supporting adults
211	<i>'I care. I think maybe that's the problem.'</i> Alex is over concerned about what people think, how they are perceived.
214	Understands what outstanding CPD looks like <i>'inspired, ...inspirational...having the experience, qualities, comfortable'</i>
219- 221	Comparing similarities between how children/ adults learn.
222- 223	Further confirmation of lack of confidence when supporting adults. Developing followership is an emerging theme. The message given is not always what is expected.
225- 228	Further evidence of lack of empathy- what interests some people concerns Alex. Over concerned about what others think, say. Lack of confidence.
267- 268	Understanding that they needs to take more risks
269	Committing to change- research
271	Growth mindset- learn from mistakes
284	Change in culture has supported a more professional environment. Note that Alex might have been inadvertently contributing to this?
309	Trying to steer conversation/ comments away from petty gossip.

Appendix 13: Article for Impact magazine: Action Research: Developing a Reflective Community of Practice

Action Research: Developing a Reflective Community of Practice. February 2019

Clare Rees

Appraisals, done well, can be at the heart of moving a school forward. My experience, however, is that they are more often part of a cycle in a busy schedule of activities in the autumn term under 'performance management'. They are increasingly viewed by staff as generic, linked to whole-school priorities and pupil outcomes. As a head teacher, I was looking for a more personalised approach that could have a lasting impact on pupil outcomes by having a sharper focus on what was happening in the classroom. We needed a change in culture so that teachers felt more able to take risks, learn from each other and be actively engaged in continuously reflecting on and refining their teaching. With this in mind, I set out to develop a reflective approach linking appraisals with professional development.

I wanted teachers to have the chance to create their own research projects within a professional learning community (PLC) so that we could 'establish a culture where all teachers improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better' (William, 2018, p. 218).

We had already used Hattie's *Visible Learning* meta study (Hattie, 2008) to identify what approaches really make a difference to pupil outcomes. One of the most important influences identified was the quality of teacher-pupil feedback. This was timely, as our feedback policy needed a complete review. So, we decided to use Hattie's research as a starting point to rethink our approach to feedback.

We decided to pilot 'action research' for teachers, linking effective feedback to a whole-school priority: writing. The beauty of this approach is that it is not dissimilar to the planning model (plan, do, assess, review), with which many teachers are already familiar. Additionally, the individual research projects would support wider discussions about improving outcomes in writing across the school, and would be the focus of staff meetings throughout the year. Teachers worked in pairs so that

they could share their research and coach each other in developing it further. They were initially supported with a series of question prompts to develop a research proposal. The visual I gave them was that of a funnel. Their initial idea was at the wide end of a funnel and the coaching would distil their ideas into a clear model of an 'intervention', from which they would form the research proposal. The initial session was spent looking at the area of focus and creating a 'big question' using co-coaching.

One example was a Year 6 teacher who wanted to explore how to improve outcomes for boys who were underperforming in writing. They had identified the pupils for the research (those at risk of not making expected progress), and developed regular 10-minute pupil–teacher conferencing as her 'intervention'. They identified a baseline for her pupils as a starting point to track progress over time and feedback on their progress to the PLC. The sessions were used to give verbal feedback and agree targets for improvement with each pupil.

Although all teachers followed a similar approach – linking feedback to writing – the projects were very different. Professional development sessions were used throughout the year to support the process and share best practice. Teachers were increasingly forthcoming and enthusiastic about their research and how this had changed their approach to teaching. All pupils in the action research groups made better progress than expected. However, the impact of this pilot across the school was not only in numerical outcomes for pupils, who on average made much better than expected progress in writing, but also on their engagement across the wider curriculum and their general attitudes to learning, evidenced through better attendance, improved behaviour and improved test results.

The Year 6 example above helped us as a school to consider what really makes a difference to our pupils – written marking or building confident pupils by giving them time for meaningful 1:1 feedback? Using action research has helped teachers to see the impact that small, meaningful changes to their practice can have on their pupils. It has encouraged teachers to engage in the craft of teaching, which can be lost in a sea of data, monitoring, assessments and feedback. It has given them the freedom to look at an area of their choice and come up with their

own solutions. Using pupil–teacher conferencing has been adopted as a ‘visible feedback’ (Hattie and Clarke, 2018) approach in Year 6 and is now one of several new approaches adopted by teachers.

We are now in our second year of action research, with a few changes from the pilot: all those undertaking research can identify their own focus for research; this is discussed at length in their initial appraisal meeting in September. We have also extended the programme to include our higher-level teaching assistants (HLTAs).

In July 2018 we were awarded a year-long commission by the Ealing Learning Partnership (ELP) to lead action research across schools in Ealing, with a focus on reading. Twelve schools have signed up to this PLC, including two high schools. The PLC is supported by teachers from my school, who are championing the benefits of this approach. It is hoped that the results will be published online in 2019 and that the work of the PLC will develop further in 2020.

References

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Appendix 14: How to build trust in schools by creating a coaching culture (extract)

We Are In Beta podcast

May 12 2019

By Niall Alcock—Founder, We Are In Beta

Clare Rees, Head teacher at [REDACTED] Primary School in [REDACTED] has spent the last three years asking some big questions:

- How do you develop trust to move a school forward?
- How do you develop an openness that sometimes isn't there?
- How do you develop a new style of leadership?

Not easy questions to answer, especially when you're doing a research doctorate **as well as** your full-time head teacher role.

"I've completely changed my thoughts on the journey," Clare said in her interview on the *We Are in Beta podcast*.

So how did she create trust using a culture?

First, she ran focus groups about effective CPD with her teachers where she asked "What works? What doesn't work? What do people want to see more of?"

She then gave her senior leadership team one to one coaching. These sessions were painstakingly "recorded, transcribed and then coded and evaluated" which gave her an insight into the "language people were using, the feelings attached to what they were doing" so they could see how we could build a future.

From there, she worked with an external consultant who gave her senior leadership team training on how to coach. Over the course of a year, they began to use a coaching approach in staff appraisals.

All the while she was on hand to support her team to answer questions they had about the coaching in appraisals. “What happens if they say this or that?” they would ask.

As coaches do, she said she often replied with “What do you think you should say?” so that (Lundy, 2013) she could model the approach and that it began to trickle down through her team.

She gradually rolled the approach out beyond staff appraisals to learning walks. They “don’t have observations” anymore. The feedback is given in a coaching style where the observer never says things like “I saw this” or “I didn’t see that”. She says it’s always about asking the class teacher about the lesson.

Where there were occasional disagreements between observers and teachers Clare would model the coaching by asking “Could you show me evidence of that?” so teachers could come to their own understanding, for themselves.

Her passion for developing her team is clear. “We have a real buzz and connection in the school sharing ideas on that front. That’s the bit I love and wanted to marry to the headship bit. So I’m very lucky I can do both these roles really.”

In his interview, Clare shares her thoughts on:

- Why it’s her ‘grandmother’s fault’ she became a teacher
- The advice her colleague gave her that she ignored
- Why she didn’t believe she could do a doctorate but took it on anyway
- How, over the course of three years, she gradually implemented and embedded a coaching culture

- The difficulties she and her team faced and how she overcame them
- What you need to get in place that makes building trust surprisingly easy
- Why looking to hospitals could help solve teacher retention
- What we need to do that will help teachers exceed all performance goals
- The problem they face when implementing a zero-tolerance behaviour policy and what they did to make it disappear
- How good behaviour for learning helps them to balance the books
- The one question she could ask every head teacher if she could
- Why she is optimistic about the future of education.