

**Teachers' Perceptions of Video-based Peer Coaching as a Mechanism for Professional
Development Within Secondary Education**

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Abstract

Education relies on the development and maintenance of teacher skills and classroom practice to develop student learning. Professional development is utilised within English schools and aims to develop learning within classrooms through the development of teachers' pedagogical skills. However, challenges are found within current professional development cycles, such as the considerable time investment required for implementation and the common reluctance of teachers to engage with traditional professional development practices. This study investigated teachers' perception of a peer coaching programme as a mechanism for professional development.

The coaching programme utilised a qualitative study design that aimed to investigate the impact of peer coaching. It incorporated video analysis to enhance reflective practices and professional development among teachers. Participants were placed into coaching partnerships ('dyads') and engaged in lesson observations and coaching sessions/conversations, which formed part of the peer coaching programme used in this thesis. The peer coaching programme employed Korthagen's 'Onion' Model of Reflective Practice (2017), involving layers of reflection to allow for deeper self-reflection of past experiences. Coaching sessions between the coaching dyads were used to foster a holistic approach to teacher development, utilising pre-existing expertise, emphasising trust, communication, and the integration of theory and practice. Data collection was completed across one academic year through semi-structured interviews with teachers pre-, during and post-peer coaching programme. The findings suggest that peer coaching can foster robust trust and communication among coaching partnerships, areas where traditional professional development methods often have proven less effective. Moreover, the video recordings were seen to facilitate a more precise examination of instructional practices, alleviating privacy concerns and encouraging

open discussion among teachers. The results show that the coaching model could provide a reflective framework for professional development and illustrated four key themes: self-realisation and deeper thinking, questioning and challenging practice, sharing effective practices, and collaborative sense-making. Despite the increasing interest in peer coaching as a professional development intervention, the study emphasises the necessity for further research to optimise its effectiveness. Critical factors identified for successful peer coaching include the establishment of trust, effective communication, and reflective discourse, with video analysis serving as a vital tool to enhance the clarity of real-world teaching practices.

Key Words: *Peer Coaching, Teacher Professional Development, Reflective Practice, Video Analysis, Collaborative Learning, Trust-Building, Pedagogical Discussion, Continuous Professional Development (CPD)*

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List of Acronyms

- CPD:** Continuous Professional Development
PD: Professional Development
NQT: Newly Qualified Teacher
NQF: Newly Qualified Framework
OFSTED: Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills
PPA: Planning, Preparation and Assessment
ITT: Initial Teacher Training
MAT: Multi-Academy Trust
ECF: Early Careers Framework

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In this thesis, the efficacy of peer coaching as a mechanism for teachers' professional development is investigated by designing and implementing a peer coaching model within a secondary school. The model integrates video analysis of classroom practices with peer coaching to facilitate effective reflection and enhance stimulus recall during coaching sessions. This approach aimed to address the limitations identified in previous research on traditional professional development strategies, such as diminished teacher morale due to generalised approaches, budgetary constraints, and time limitations within school settings.

This thesis aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of video-based peer coaching as a mechanism for professional development within secondary education. Additionally, the coaching conversations between teachers were analysed for key themes. By comparing pre- and post-programme perceptions, this research seeks to identify shifts in attitudes and perceived effectiveness of peer coaching. Furthermore, this study explored the impact of these coaching conversations on teaching practices and professional growth.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Continuous Professional Development

Teacher professional development is among the most vital processes that should be practised and fostered to continually improve the delivery of services by teachers (Kamali and Javahery, 2024; Ben-Peretz et al., 2018). By participating in Continuous Professional Development (CPD), teachers can gather more information on innovative teaching approaches, curricular changes, and current studies in the educational field (Reisman and Beckwith, 2023;

Reddy et al., 2019). This continuous learning process ensures that educators are well-equipped to handle the diverse challenges their students might encounter (Ben-Peretz et al., 2018).

In the context of secondary schools, CPD is particularly significant due to the need to address the complex academic requirements of learners (Outhwaite and Bettridge, 2009). Teachers must be able to work with diverse student profiles and possess the necessary knowledge to tackle subject-specific issues effectively (Outhwaite and Bettridge, 2009). An effective CPD programme engages teachers in reflective practices, encouraging them to critically assess and refine their instructional methods (Postholm, 2012).

The aims of CPD in schools include equipping teachers with up-to-date pedagogical techniques and fostering an environment of continuous improvement and reflective practice. Additionally, CPD seeks to ensure teachers meet diverse student needs and adapt to changing educational standards and expectations. CPD encompasses various activities, from inset days to lesson observations and performance management. Research indicates that effective professional development enhances teachers' content knowledge and classroom practices, yielding positive results (Kamali and Javahery, 2024; Barclift and Macleod, 2024; Polly et al., 2015; Loughran, 2006). Loughran (2006) emphasised the ongoing pursuit of high-quality professional development to improve teachers' everyday practices. Effective professional development aligns with subject content, classroom activities, and learning opportunities, requiring 20 to 100 hours over six to twelve months to impact classroom practice (Rotermund et al., 2017; Blank and De Las Alas, 2009; Desimone and Garet, 2015).

1.2.2 Educational Coaching in English Secondary Schools

The significance of coaching has been accentuated by its potential to address the unique contextual nuances of schools (Charteris and Smardon, 2013). This includes navigating the intricacies of assessment frameworks, adapting to evolving pedagogical methodologies, and fostering inclusive learning environments (Soisangwarn and Wongwanich, 2014). More recent research underscores the role of video-augmented and peer-based coaching in enhancing professional practice and supporting teacher adaptability (Barnhart and Vega, 2024; Canaran, 2023). Within this context, educational coaching becomes instrumental in skill development and pivotal in nurturing a resilient and adaptive teaching community (Postholm, 2012; Svaricek, 2024).

Coaching is the art of facilitating the performance, learning, and development of an individual through structured conversations and activities (Kamali and Javahery, 2024). It involves maximising performance, focusing on immediate improvement and skill development through instruction, and is grounded in established psychological approaches (Downey, 1999; Law, 2002). Coaching aims to improve task-related performance and maintain that enhanced level of sustainable performance.

Educational coaching has become increasingly recognised as an indispensable component of teacher professional development in English secondary schools (Joyce and Showers, 2002; Knight, 2009). Recent studies highlighted the effectiveness of structured peer coaching and reflective video-based approaches in strengthening teachers' professional communities and encouraging sustained professional growth (Kamali and Javahery, 2024; Baran, et al., 2023). The multifaceted nature of secondary education, characterised by diverse student populations, varying learning needs, and evolving curriculum demands, necessitates a dynamic approach to professional

growth (Knight, 2009; Ilgan and Basaran, 2023). Educational coaching, emphasising collaboration, reflection, and personalised support, aligns seamlessly with educators' complex challenges in the secondary education landscape (Joyce and Showers, 2002; Reisman and Beckwith, 2023).

1.2.3 The Evolving Role of Video Analysis in Education

As educational coaching gained prominence, educators sought tools to facilitate more nuanced and objective reflections on their teaching practices (Sherin, 2004). Video analysis for teaching, training, instruction, and presenter coaching originated within sports coaching and human performance evaluation (Whiten and Byrne, 2012) but found its useful application in schooling (Bannister and Reinhart, 2016; Sherin, 2004). The flexibility that video allows as a medium means that instructors can document live classroom scenarios and then use the footage as a source to derive critical moments of student and peer self-reflection and facilitate group discussion and analysis (Barnhart and Vega, 2024; Canaran, 2023; Baran, et al., 2023; Bannister and Reinhart, 2016).

Technological advancement has also increased the chance of incorporating video analysis into educational coaching (Soisangwarn and Wongwanich, 2014). With the advanced portable recording apparatus and the easy-to-use social media platforms for sharing and reviewing videos, educators have the unique opportunity to capture teaching and learning moments. The transition from conventional to technology-supported coaching with more reflection thus holds an interesting prospect for profound cognition about teaching practices and enhanced directed professional learning.

Video analysis in education goes beyond previous modes of observation, where educators can critically analyse moments in teaching and learning because videos can be referred to occasionally (Barnhart and Vega, 2024; Thacker, et al., 2022; Sherin, 2009). As video analysis for professional development enables the researcher to gain different views of pedagogical decisions, interactions among students, and complex classroom dynamics, it enables a broader perspective on teaching practices that other methods of coaching may not consider (Sherin, 2004). Integrating educational coaching and video analysis as the ideal shift in professional development measures within secondary schools affirms the findings of Soisangworn and Wongwanich (2014). The working partnership for enhancing technology integration in education speaks to the belief in applying technology to improve teaching activities, creating a culture devoted to ongoing progression that adapts to the present-day educational landscape.

1.3 Research Aims and Structure

The aim of this thesis was to explore teachers' perceptions of video-based peer coaching as a mechanism for professional development within secondary education. This research implemented a structured framework for peer coaching, utilising video feedback to facilitate reflective practice and enhance teaching strategies.

This thesis was structured to analyse teachers' perceptions of a video-based peer coaching model as a mechanism for professional development. It begins with an introductory chapter that outlines the context, background, and aims of the research, including a detailed discussion of continuous professional development (CPD), educational coaching within England, and the evolving role of video analysis. The literature review follows, systematically examining professional development, reflective practices, coaching paradigms, peer coaching approaches,

and the integration of video analysis in educational coaching. This section also identifies research gaps and outlines the study's aims, questions, and rationale.

The research design and methodology chapter detail the research paradigms, study design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques, ensuring methodological credibility and addressing ethical considerations. The subsequent chapters present the research findings, including preliminary interviews, in-session coaching conversations, and review interviews, focusing on key themes such as self-realisation, collaborative sense-making, and the sustainability of coaching practices. The discussion chapter synthesises these findings, relates them to existing literature, and considers the implications for practice and policy. The thesis will conclude with a summary of key findings, addressing limitations, proposing future research directions, and reiterating the study's significance.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review examines the current state of teacher professional development in education, with a specific emphasis on how peer coaching enhances ongoing professional growth. The integration of teacher education, whether for newly qualified or serving teachers, is identified as a critical component of school development (Goldschmidt and Phelps, 2010; Ilgan and Basaran, 2023). Central to these initiatives is the imperative for teachers to continuously refine their professional skills, directly impacting student achievement. Recent research has highlighted how structured peer coaching and reflective approaches can strengthen teacher development, fostering collaboration and sustained engagement with practice (Kamali and Javahery, 2024; Canaran, 2023). Professional development plays a crucial role within educational institutions, yet the debate on how best to incorporate it into the overall developmental framework for teachers has persisted for several decades (Hill, Ball and Schilling, 2008; Svaricek, 2024). Previous research has largely focused on the effects of professional development models on system-wide teaching practices and their implementation (Kamali and Javahery, 2024; Bell et al., 2010; Garet et al., 2008; Goldschmidt and Phelps, 2010; Hill et al., 2008; Heck et al., 2008; Polly et al., 2015; Wallace, 2009). The advent of new technologies has further transformed teacher development, introducing novel challenges and opportunities (Heck et al., 2008).

This study explored coaching, particularly peer coaching, as a potential strategy for professional development. The specific concerns identified with continuous professional development (CPD) are a lack of consistent integration into the broader educational framework, challenges of ensuring its effectiveness in genuinely enhancing teacher skills and a lack of variability in implementation and standardisation. The coaching style used has been shown to

impact the effectiveness of teaching development, especially the traditional model of deficit-based approaches, which often prioritise assessment over professional growth, relying on expert assessment rather than fostering genuine professional growth (Rotermund et al., 2017). This approach, compounded by legislative pressures, has contributed to increased teacher burnout and a national shortage of educators (Jarvis, 2017). Acknowledging the heightened demands placed on teachers by CPD, this review seeks to discuss effective CPD practice design with a specific focus on CPD strategies, coaching, and peer coaching, as well as explore both strengths and limitations identified within traditionally used CPD models.

2.2 Professional Development

Teacher education plays a vital role in developing teachers' competencies to implement new learning models and interventions, thereby increasing their effectiveness and the quality of service they offer their learners (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). In the context of England, staff development is commonly organised through training sessions or inset days, during which teachers participate in structured professional learning activities (Department for Education, 2016; Rotermund et al., 2017). These sessions are usually scheduled at times when students are not in school, enabling teachers to work collaboratively and, in some cases, with external facilitators to enhance professional practice.

2.2.1 Use of Professional Development Within Educational Landscapes

Enhancing the teacher's capacity for professional growth is essential for enhancing student learning in all educational provisions. It is, therefore, important in teacher training to help develop the professional capacity, skills, and traits a teacher can use to enhance their professional toolkits (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Mohan, 2017). This process is called continuing professional

development (CPD), and it is the foundation for teacher development and is widely utilised to develop the necessary abilities of professionals directly involved in teaching practice. The concept of teaching teachers has been present in practice for many years and many studies have investigated the cause and consequence of professional development on learners' performance (DeMonte, 2013; Heller et al., 2012; Polly et al., 2015; Whitmore, J. 2002, and Yoon et al., 2007). Previous research has examined how implementing professional development programmes has influenced teachers' content knowledge and classroom practice and has yielded positive results (Polly et al., 2015). Loughran (2006) noted that for many years, educational research has been in the quest for professional development, believing that if the provision were good enough, it would improve the everyday practices of all teachers who completed it.

Professional development is most effective in changing teacher practice when it focuses on the subject's content, corresponds with the school or classroom activities, or provides a learning opportunity, such as observing experts or leading discussions (Rotermund et al., 2017). Studies have suggested that between twenty and one hundred hours of focused professional development is required over six to twelve months to affect classroom practice (Blank and De Las Alas, 2009; Desimone and Garet, 2015). Rotermund (2017) investigated professional development within state schools and found that 85% of teachers' professional development was focused on the subject content knowledge they taught. For example, science teachers' professional development primarily involved looking at the science curriculum content knowledge with the second most common CPD theme being the use of computer-based instruction, followed by reading instruction, and student behaviour and classroom management. Research such as this illustrates the landscape

of current professional development, which often focuses on *what* is happening in the classroom as opposed to *why*.

While these studies highlight the thematic content and delivery modes of professional development, recent research has shifted focus toward the personalisation, autonomy, and frequency of PD experiences, and their relationship with teacher satisfaction and retention (Ilgan and Basaran, 2023; Canaran, 2023; Kamali and Javahery, 2024). Ilgan and Basaran (2023) conducted a large-scale quantitative study examining how the types, frequency, and perceived relevance of professional development (PD) activities relate to teachers' job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Their findings revealed that teacher-led, needs-based PD activities, those in which educators have agency over their learning content, timing, and mode, were more likely to correlate with higher job satisfaction. Conversely, mandatory sessions were frequently associated with disengagement, limited transfer to classroom practice, and even professional fatigue. These results lend substantial empirical weight to the argument that autonomy and contextual relevance are critical determinants of sustainable professional development. In this light, the peer coaching model examined in this thesis, with its emphasis on dyadic relationships, teacher ownership, and personalised feedback, is not only pedagogically valid but also potentially impactful on teacher morale and retention, especially in contexts where burnout and attrition are rising concerns.

2.2.1.1 International Perspectives on Professional Development Research

Educational research in professional development varies across regions due to differences in cultural values, educational policies, and teacher expectations. What is considered effective PD

in one context, such as collaborative peer coaching or reflective autonomy, may not translate directly to another, where hierarchical structures or standardised training models are more dominant. Researchers from North America, have demonstrated a strong emphasis on the integration of technology and video-based feedback in professional development. For instance, Eghterafi et al. (2022) investigated the impact of video-based peer modelling on self-efficacy in learning, while Reisman and Beckwith (2023) focused on improving instructional coaching through structured online video feedback for teachers. Similarly, Baran et al. (2023) examined how mobile video-enhanced observation tools supported peer feedback among preservice teachers. This trend is echoed in studies like those by Barnhart and Vega (2024) and Barclift and MacLeod (2024), who explored the benefits of video clubs and video reflections in teacher education. In Canada, Thacker et al. (2022) explored peer-to-peer learning through video analysis for physical education skill development. These studies show a clear North American interest in harnessing digital tools to enhance collaborative learning, reflection, and pedagogical practice.

In contrast, researchers from Europe, including the Netherlands and Slovakia, have tended to explore cognitive and reflective practices in teaching and learning, often in professional or clinical contexts. Kuhn et al. (2023) analysed whether learning-by-teaching could enhance deliberate reflection among professionals in the Netherlands, finding limited effectiveness without additional support. Meanwhile, Svaricek (2024) presented a case study from Slovakia detailing how a sceptical teacher transformed during a professional development programme focused on dialogic teaching and reflective inquiry. These European studies suggest a regional focus on internal cognitive processes, belief systems, and structured reflection as tools for professional growth and instructional improvement, particularly in complex or emotionally charged settings.

In the Middle East, studies from Iran and Turkey have been oriented towards peer coaching, job satisfaction, and online professional learning. Kamali and Javahery (2024) investigated the application of a peer coaching among Iranian teachers, emphasising cultural and contextual challenges in collaborative PD. Kamali and Javahery (2024) explored the integration of Galperin's psychological model within peer coaching structures, offering a case for using cognitive frameworks in teacher development. This study illustrated how structured, stage-based learning enhanced teachers' reflective capabilities, trust-building, and pedagogical discourse, even in challenging, resource-constrained educational environments. Researchers Ilgan and Basaran (2023) and Canaran (2023) focused on the types, frequency, and effectiveness of professional development activities, as well as the role of online peer coaching in supporting teacher educators during remote learning periods. These studies underscore regional priorities around structured, sustainable professional development models and teacher well-being, particularly in resource-constrained or transitional educational systems.

In Singapore, professional development is anchored in a highly centralised structure steered by the Ministry of Education. Centralised institutions such as the National Institute of Education and the Academy of Singapore Teachers are responsible for designing, coordinating, and delivering CPD across the country (Lopez and Escarlos, 2025). The Ministry of Education provides structured professional learning pathways, ranging from induction support to leadership training and subject-specific development, available to all educators nationwide. This centralised model ensures consistency in quality, alignment with national goals, and equitable access to career-long development opportunities (Xia, Wang and Zhang, 2022).

By contrast, in England, the delivery of CPD is largely decentralised. While national frameworks such as the Early Career Framework and National Professional Qualifications are funded and issued by the Department for Education, the day-to-day decisions on CPD funding, selection of providers, and design of content are delegated to individual schools or trusts. This autonomy allows schools to tailor CPD to their own needs, but the responsibility for planning, purchasing, and evaluating quality rests primarily at the school, a structure that has led to wide variability in how much schools spend on professional learning and the quality of provision across the system (Higham and Earley, 2013). Collectively, these regional distinctions highlight how local educational needs and systemic conditions shape research priorities and methodologies in teacher professional development.

This international research into professional development practices highlighted significant cultural influences in how CPD is designed, delivered, and received. Studies from North America have emphasised the integration of technology and video feedback as tools for fostering reflection and collaboration, while European research often focuses on cognitive processes and structured reflective inquiry. In contrast, work from the Middle East and Asia illustrates the importance of peer collaboration, trust-building, and cultural responsiveness in professional learning. These varied approaches demonstrate that CPD is shaped by the social, institutional, and cultural contexts in which it operates. This insight influenced the present study by reinforcing the need for a peer coaching model grounded in relational trust, contextual relevance, and teacher autonomy, elements shown to be central to effective and sustainable CPD across diverse educational settings.

2.2.1.2 Policy and Professional Development in Secondary Schools

Professional development in the English secondary education sector is increasingly shaped by national frameworks and policy initiatives aimed at raising teaching standards, improving retention, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. A central development in this area is the Early Career Framework (ECF), introduced in England in 2021 as part of the Department for Education's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy (Department for Education, 2019). The ECF extended the statutory induction period for early career teachers (ECTs) from one to two years, offering a funded entitlement to structured training and mentoring. This shift marked a move towards embedding professional learning in the early years of teaching and recognising CPD as an ongoing, career-long process (Department for Education, 2019; Fletcher-Wood and Zucollo, 2020).

The framework is underpinned by a structured curriculum aligned to the Teachers' Standards, covering areas such as behaviour management, pedagogy, curriculum planning, and assessment. It is delivered through a blend of self-directed study, instructional coaching, and regular mentor meetings. This model reflected an increased reliance on evidence-informed practice, with training materials often derived from research in cognitive science and instructional design (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021). While this structure offers clear benefits, including enhanced support for new teachers and a more coherent national offer, it also reduces school-level flexibility. Schools and mentors have expressed concern that the ECF's prescriptive content limits their ability to tailor professional development to individual needs or local contexts (National Foundation for Educational Research, 2022).

Further limitations are evident in the capacity and resourcing required to implement the ECF effectively. Despite central funding, many mentors report insufficient time or training to meet the demands of the role, leading to concerns about the quality and consistency of delivery (Sharp et al., 2022). Additionally, experienced teachers and middle leaders often receive less structured CPD, as funding and staffing are prioritised toward meeting ECF obligations. This results in a fragmented professional learning landscape, where provision for early career teachers may be strong, but support for mid-career development remains inconsistent (Cordingley et al., 2015).

Beyond the ECF, the broader CPD landscape in secondary schools continues to be shaped by systemic challenges. While national guidance such as the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development (Department for Education, 2016) outlines the features of effective CPD, evidence-based, collaborative, sustained over time, implementation is highly variable. Budget pressures, particularly in smaller or non-academy schools, limit access to external providers or time away from teaching. The decline of local authority support and the fragmented nature of the multi-academy trust (MAT) system have further contributed to variation in CPD quality and coherence (Greany and Higham, 2018).

Moreover, recent reforms to initial teacher training (ITT) have expanded minimum requirements and increased training hours, placing additional pressure on schools that act as placement hosts. While intended to improve rigour, this change, combined with rising workload and static budgets, has stretched school resources and created tensions in how CPD is delivered to staff at different stages of their careers (Department for Education, 2022). As such, leaders face the ongoing challenge of balancing statutory requirements with broader professional learning aims.

While policy in England has made significant progress toward a structured and supported model of early career development, limitations in flexibility, funding, and infrastructure continue to hinder the broader realisation of sustained, school-led professional learning. Addressing these challenges will require not only adequate investment but greater autonomy for schools to innovate and adapt CPD to their own unique contexts.

2.2.2 Continuous Professional Development Model and Associated Limitations.

Professional development is often adopted without a deeper consideration of why it might be effective in enhancing professional learning or without an understanding of how complex and multidimensional professional learning is (Korthagen, 2017). Many schools employ two-fold professional development that resonates with what Korthagen (2017) called *professional development 1.0*. This attempts to link the model to theory and focuses explicitly on developing existing teachers. Conversely, CPD practices that link model-to-practice, specifically trainee teachers, can be equally ineffective, with theory getting artificially imposed into practice without a firm understanding of its reasons (Korthagen refers to this as ‘Professional development 2.0’). Korthagen (2017) explained that both styles are problematic in stimulating genuinely effective professional development because they reduce the complexity of teacher learning and ignore the vital connection with the ‘person’ of the teacher. Korthagen (2017) theorised that most teaching is unconsciously guided by decisions based on cognitive, affective, and motivational aspects. Decisions that include cognitive aspects are often unconscious; this domain is essential and underexplored.

2.2.3. Reflective Practice Approaches within Educational Landscapes

Schön (1996) defined ‘reflective practice’ as the process by which teachers thoughtfully consider their experiences applying knowledge to practice. Teachers who actively and consistently reflect receive information directly from the assessment of their own concrete experiences (Soisangwarn and Wongwanich, 2013), often due to its high-quality collaborative nature and ability to remove barriers to sharing ideas and thoughts without conjecture or judgement. In addition, becoming a reflective teacher enables teachers to work and coach each other, thus creating a positive development cycle. This allows for the sharing of good practices and positive experiences among teachers within a school or trust (Soisangwarn and Wongwanich, 2013).

Korthagen (2017) took reflective practice to new levels by creating a new model for teacher reflective practice, which he called ‘The Onion Model’ (see Figure 2.1). This framework focused on using reflective practice, not just on reflecting on concrete experiences but reflecting on teachers’ core identity. The Onion Model works to guide teachers through multiple levels of cognitive reflection. This model further explored the vast complexity of teaching and admits that the alignment of all the differing parts (layers) may not even be accomplished with one’s career/lifetime (Korthagen, 2017; Downey, 1999).



Figure 2.1: The Model of Levels of Reflection ‘The Onion Model’ (Korthagen, 2017).

Korthagen (2017) theorised that only when all ‘layers’ have been reflected upon can true core reflection, and thus actual professional development, occur. The Onion Model may help to give order to teacher reflection and create a deeper meaning to professional development (Korthagen, 2004). This focus shifted away from the antiquated task/goal-oriented reflection seen within schools for decades to meaning-oriented reflection and, in some points, even reflection that incorporates deeper level of self-reflection, known as ‘Core reflection’ (Korthagen, Kim and Greene 2013). Korthagen (2017) explained that this form of reflection had been shown to have a substantial impact on teacher learning and proposed a view that an effective teacher is effective at aligning all of the layers of the onion, reflecting not only on the environmental elements of teaching (*What happened?*) but reflecting right down to the teacher’s core qualities and professional identity

(What kind of teacher do I want to be?). Interestingly, Mejer et al. (2009) highlighted that when combined with guided reflection, such as peer-to-peer reflection, the Onion Model enabled teachers to reframe their self-concept and empowered them to change their classroom practices effectively.

Korthagen (2017) noted that although most teacher behaviour and learning seem to occur unconsciously, in-depth reflection is essential in establishing fruitful connections between practice, theory, and person. His idea of reflection permeates with current research and warrants further discussion of reflective practice and how it influences larger professional development models.

Meijer, Korthagen, and Vasalos (2009) noted that the integration of this positive approach showed that the Onion Model was instrumental in restructuring teachers' self-construct systems about their practice when used jointly with coaching. This informs the coaching programme's focus on the Onion Model by Korthagen in a way that gives it a certain degree of independence. The programme was able to validate the effectiveness of coaching, which was observed during the teaching practice, with the information provided by Meijer et al. (2009) to show the relationship between reflective practices based on the Onion Model and the changes in teaching behaviours. This realisation that self-concepts are linked with practices in the classroom relates to the model that underpins the Professional Development 3.0 framework discussed by Korthagen (2017) which aligns with the approach and design of this study.

As discussed previously, professional development can provide a crucial stepping stone to the development of educators. Self-motivation and critical analysis of one's teaching can be significant factors in the impact on performance (Vasalos et al., 2009). The self-reflective element of professional development permeates into different types of CPD, including guided instruction, observations, and coaching, which each share a common cornerstone to their impact, the reflective element (Schön, 1996).

2.2.4 Use of Reflective Practice and Real-world Applications

Reflective practice can be used in various sectors, from medicine and business to education (Myrberg, E. et al., 2025; Barclift and MacLeod, 2024; Svaricek, 2024; Kuhn et al., 2023; Reisman and Beckwith, 2023; Mayer and Salovey, 1997). Reflective practice is often used to promote the performance of the teacher in order to improve the performance of the students (Yoon et al., 2007). Reflection can take on many forms within education, such as **Reflective journals** - journals kept that enable teachers to reflect on their practice formally. This can be kept personal or shared with others through a professional dialogue that facilitates the sharing of good practice. **Observations** - teachers share experiences and feedback on how these experiences were perceived (Yoon et al., 2007). This allows teachers to reflect on their practice utilising an alternative vantage point and gain another perspective. **Workbook reviews** - student work is assessed for understanding and policy adherence. Work can be checked, feedback can be given, or dialogues can be opened to discuss classroom practice through the lens of student work.

Each of these forms of reflection facilitates the development of practice through self or peer reflection to improve self-understanding and enable more meaningful teaching practice to develop. Both Mayer and Salovey (1997) and Barclift and MacLeod (2024) found that reflective thinking can regulate a teacher’s emotions and develop emotional and professional growth. More evidence is needed to apply reflective practice to the skills the teachers demonstrate (Soisangwarn and Wongwanich, 2013). Law (2014) described the importance of high-quality reflective practice and the impact that it can have on a teacher’s behaviours as a reflection on action (Carroll, 2006). Law (2014) incorporated critical reflection into his much larger cycle of continuous professional development (CPD) (see Figure 2.2).

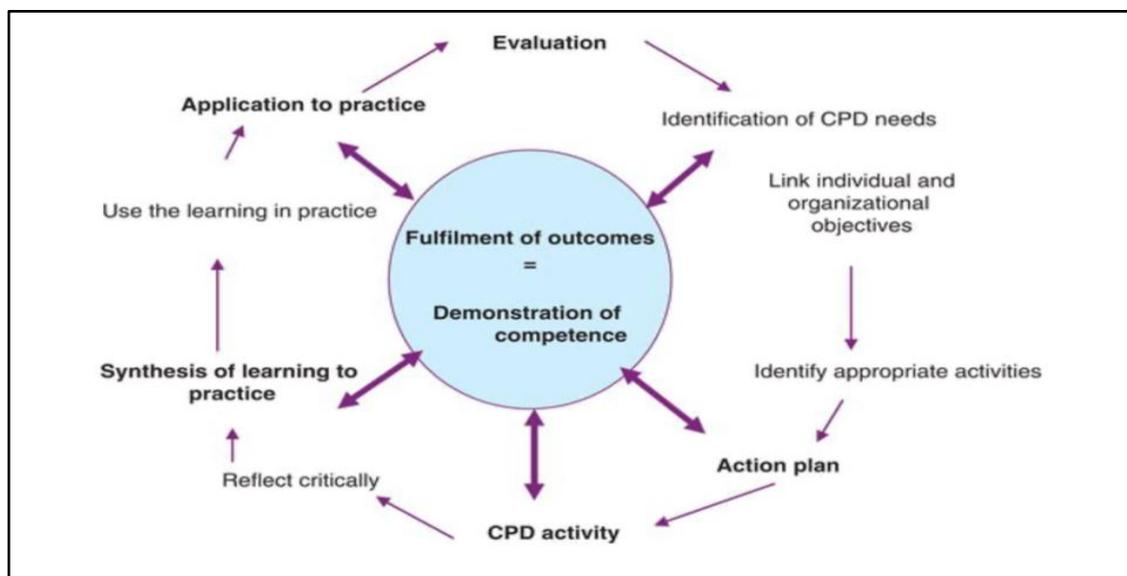


Figure 2.2: CPD Cycle, Department of Health CPD Project in the UK (Law, 2014, p. 94).

Law (2014) believed that only when impactful critical reflection has taken place can CPD become the synthesis of learning and practice. This can lead to both the fulfilment of outcomes and the demonstration of competence within their teaching (Van Woerkom, 2003). Calderhead and Gates (1993) concluded that pre-service and in-service teachers could be unaware of their

behaviours and underlying reasons; however, they can still reflect on these to develop their practice. This illustrated how reflection is an essential element needed for professional development to take place (Vermunt and Endedijk, 2010; Van Woerkom, 2003 and Schön's, 1987) research identified that 'strong' professionals are characterised by the mere fact that they can reflect on their practice regularly and aim to improve their practice moving forwards. Korthagen (2017) reiterates this by explaining that strong professionals learn and reflect on their experiences consciously and systematically. This aligns with Charteris and Smardon's (2013) research that highlighted the need for teachers looking to develop in-class skills to be seen as agentic co-learners, taking an active role in the creation of their knowledge and reality.

2.3 Limitations to Reflective Practice within Secondary Education Establishments

Problems arise within reflective practice within the educational landscape due to the loose definition of 'reflection'. Although there is abundant research addressing what reflective practice is, there needs to be more research to pinpoint how to perform reflective practice (Korthagen, 2017). As a result, reflective practice needs to be more varied within the grand teaching scheme (Cole, 1997). Research has since addressed the issue of how to reflect on one's practice through the publication of reflection models, such as the action research cycle, which are Act, Observe, Reflect, Plan, Act (Korthagen, 2017). These models aimed to guide professionals through the reflective cycle and allowed for self-reflection to be carried out on a small scale yet effectively. Korthagen and Kessels (1999) published a reflective model that proposed five steps for self-reflection that follows a cycle of action, reflection, awareness, alternative method planning, and trial, known as the ALACT model (see Figure 2.3).

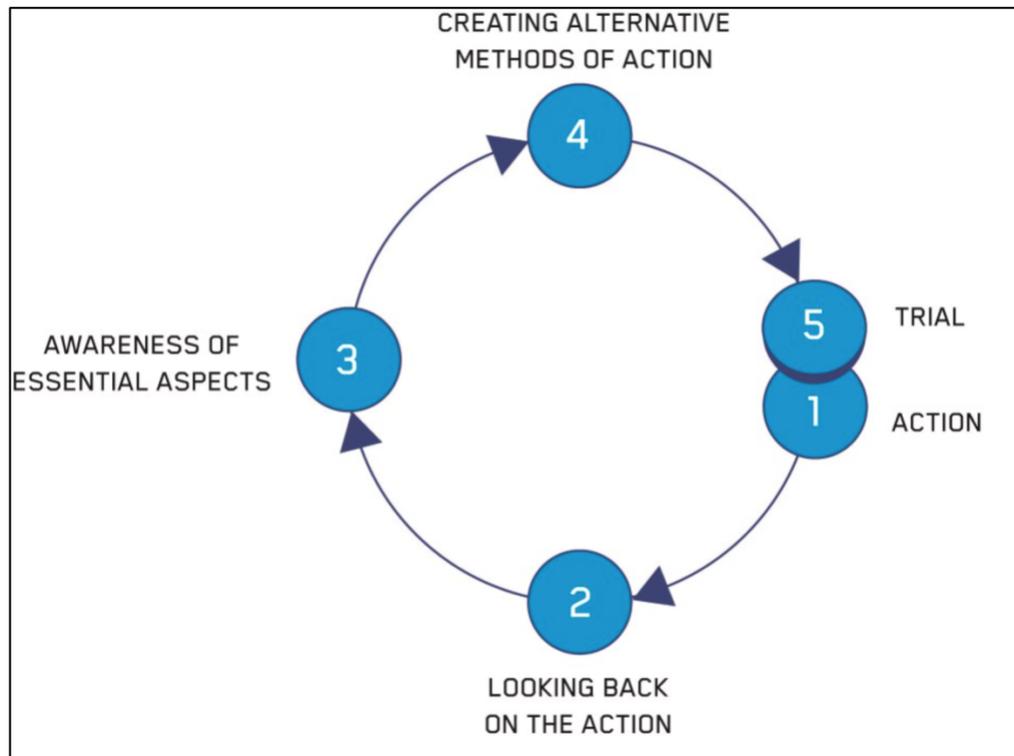


Figure 2.3: The ALACT Model of Reflection (Korthagen and Kessels, 1999, p.13).

This model of reflection identifies the importance of ‘Looking back on the action’ (reflecting) as a crucial step before one can gain awareness of the experience and create alternative methods to develop, thus readying oneself to re-trial the new action. Meijer, Korthagen, and Vasalos (2009) investigated the learning process of coached teachers using a reflection model as the primary form of their professional development. They utilised reflective logbooks, coaching sessions, and interviews and identified that teachers began to reframe their previously negative self-concept and general teaching beliefs about teaching experiences (Meijer et al., 2009).

Reflective practice is inherently complex due to the nuanced and often intangible nature of teaching. Evaluating its effectiveness poses significant challenges, as it involves assessing deeply

personal and context-specific insights teachers gain through reflection (Meijer et al., 2009). This complexity is exacerbated by the diverse ways in which reflective practice is understood and implemented across educational settings. As a result, guided reflection has emerged as a more structured approach to professional development, offering a framework within which teachers can engage in reflective practice with the support of their peers and mentors. This approach is particularly effective in addressing the challenges associated with the individualistic nature of reflection by introducing collective thinking and shared experiences into the process (Barnhart and Vega, 2024; Canaran, 2023).

However, implementing reflective practices, such as guided reflection, also presents its own challenges. The intrinsic difficulties in applying and assessing reflexivity in teaching stem from the complexities of human learning and the varying contexts in which teaching occurs. Teachers often struggle to translate reflective insights into tangible improvements in their practice, underscoring the need for more robust strategies to bridge this gap. While guided reflection, often referred to as ‘Coaching’, is frequently used as a tool within guided reflection to facilitate this process, the underlying issues it seeks to address, such as the inconsistency in reflective practice and the difficulties in evaluating its impact, remain persistent obstacles.

Moreover, the broad adoption of coaching and reflective practices in professional development has highlighted the need for a more nuanced understanding of these strategies. The effectiveness of such approaches must be examined in greater detail, with a focus on how they can be adapted to meet the diverse needs of teachers. A deeper exploration of these issues will not only refine the practice of reflective teaching but also contribute to the development of more effective

professional development frameworks that can address the evolving demands within educational environments.

2.4 Coaching within Educational Landscapes

‘Coaching’ is a form of guided reflection amongst professionals. More specifically, it is used as a strategy for facilitating the performance, learning, and development of another through various means, such as instruction or tutoring (Downey, 1999). A more detailed definition of coaching is discussed later in Chapter 2.5.

Within the last 20 years, coaching has emerged as a highly effective strategy for facilitating professional development within the educational community (Cornet and Knight, 2009). Internationally, coaching has been advocated on a large scale and is seen across several educational systems as one of the most promising strategies (Knight, 2009). Coaching highlights the importance of placing the needs of the teachers as central to professional development (Korthagen, 2017). This can be done through personalised and individualised coaching specific to each coachee (Knight, 2009). Kraft, Blazer, and Hogan (2018) concluded that ‘teacher coaching’ has been widely used as a promising alternative to the traditional professional development model.

Since the early 2000s, coaching has been used as a method of professional development throughout the educational sector (Lee, 2017). Coaching emerged through the evolution of more traditional professional development methods, such as the generic training courses that can be viewed as an addition to professional development and packaged together to form the main provision of teacher training days (Lee, 2017). These more traditional training packages have been found to have a limited impact on the professional development of teachers’ skills (Lee, 2017),

and due to this limited impact, educators have turned towards coaching as a cornerstone of their professional development. Coaching has found its popularity amongst the educational community due to the perceived emotional benefits identified by teachers, as well as the value seen through utilising opportunities to analyse one's teaching and reflect deeply (Lee, 2017; Cordingley, 2005; Leat and Lofthouse, 2006; Roberts and Henderson, 2005).

Educational coaching has been researched heavily and has been shown to impact teaching positively. Specifically, specialist coaching has been shown to benefit individual teachers on both a personal and emotional level, and adaptations to teachers' daily practice and benefits were found on a school-wide/organisational level (Lee, 2017). However, the impact of specialist coaching was found to vary depending on the coachee's role, where newly qualified teachers (NQTs), middle leaders, and senior leaders each found differing benefits (Roberts and Henderson et al., 2005).

Coaching is widely recognised as one of the most effective tools of guided reflection, as it enables professionals to facilitate reflective dialogue and foster collective thinking among colleagues (Barnhart and Vega, 2024; Canaran, 2023). Evidence showed that this approach enhances teachers' practice and remains a central strategy in supporting professional growth within the teaching community (Kamali and Javahery, 2024; Svaricek, 2024). The application of reflexivity in teaching and how it can be assessed is an even more significant challenge due to the intricacies of human learning. As previously discussed, coaching has established itself as a prevalent strategy for enhancing teacher practice and maintains its popularity across the educational landscape. However, many coaching techniques and divergent interpretations of the coaching process necessitate a more in-depth examination. The current understanding of

coaching's effectiveness in fostering reflective practice must include the granularity required to comprehensively inform educational practitioners and policymakers. As coaching plays a pivotal role in shaping teacher development, there is an evident need for further research to untangle the nuanced dynamics of coaching, providing a more contextually rich understanding of its impact on reflective practice in diverse educational settings. A deeper exploration will contribute to refining coaching strategies and their integration into professional development frameworks, addressing the evolving demands of professional development within educational environments.

2.5 Key Definitions within Coaching Paradigms

Both national and international coaching associations have developed their own definitions of coaching, which vary in emphasis and scope. For example, the International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines coaching as 'partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential' (ICF, 2025, para. 1). The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) emphasised coaching as a 'facilitated, reflective process to enable learning and development with the purpose of improving performance and enhancing effective action' (EMCC, 2022, para. 1). Similarly, the Association for Coaching (AfC) defines coaching as 'a collaborative solution-focused, results-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experience, self-directed learning and personal growth of the coachee' (AfC, 2021, para. 1). These varying definitions highlight both shared principles and distinct priorities across associations.

Still, all share a single common theme: the need to improve a specific task-related performance and maintain that new level of performance in the long term. Coaching can be defined in many ways within the different factions of science (Downey, 1999). An example of this can be

the difference between sports coaching, which is used to develop physical and strategic prowess within sports, and life coaching, which is drawn more towards the self-awareness and well-being of a person through a holistic lens (Law, 2002). Coaching can be seen as a set of activities undertaken with the goal of personal or professional skill development. Downey (1999) explored coaching activities and stated that coaching can only exist if the associated activities follow two key principles. Firstly, there is a series of structured conversations, which should be learner-led regarding the questions addressed and answers found. Secondly, the coach must adopt a non-directive approach, facilitating the coachee's self-discovery and development rather than providing solutions or imposing their own agenda. Together, these principles ensure that coaching remains a collaborative and empowering process focused on the learner's growth and autonomy.

Coaching is the art of facilitating the performance, learning, and development of another through various means, such as instruction or tutoring (Downey, 1999). Law (2002) explored this premise further and suggested that for coaching activities to be effective, they should possess four key elements. They unlock people's potential to maximise their performance; they help people to learn rather than teach them (facilitation function); they are directly concerned with the immediate improvement of performance and the development of skills through a form of tutoring or instruction, they enhance performance in the domains of work and personal life, and this is underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established psychological approaches (Law, 2002).

This demonstrates the metacognition associated with coaching and how the use of coaching can improve a participant's ability to learn how to learn; thus, coaching should promote a

facilitation function (Law, 2002). In addition to this, Law's (2002) key elements show the use of psychological models to underpin the concept of the coaching activity. Utilising the research and definitions of practical coaching/coaching activities of Lee (2017), Downey (1999), and Law (2002), this research will see coaching under the following definition: 'The art of facilitating the performance, learning, and self-development through instruction or tutoring'. This definition clarifies the professional development tool/programme and sets clear parameters for the meaning of coaching within this research.

2.6 Coaching versus Mentoring: The Differences and Nuances Between Approaches

Although as previously identified, coaching can be used as a form of CPD for teachers, it does have limitations, which are often magnified when used within an educational setting (Parsloe, 1995). Education and schooling usually need to improve on developing an effective professional development model, namely time and finances (Lee, 2017). These barriers are evident in all educational establishments and are made worse through budgetary cuts and reforms (Parsloe, 1995).

While coaching and mentoring are frequently used interchangeably, their distinctions are pivotal, and Law (2014) emphasised these differences. According to Law (2014), mentoring is aligned with long-term professional development, spanning a considerable portion of one's career and multiple job roles. A mentor's primary focus lies not on performance metrics but on fostering self-awareness and professional growth. Parsloe (1995) also draws a clear delineation between coaching and mentoring, delineating mentoring as an individual, a development-centric approach centred on career issues, while coaching and personal development are deemed more performance-centred. With this, it can be said that mentoring focuses largely on considerations of one's professional journey and role (promotions, professional relationships, etc.) as opposed to coaching,

which focuses on the development of one's teaching practices and skills (classroom performance, student outcomes, etc.).

Parsloe's (1995) distinction sheds light on coaching's potential to address specific, tangible performance issues, even if the coaching relationship is deemed 'short-term'. The crux lies in the sustainability of performance improvements facilitated by coaching, positioning it as a tool capable of effecting enduring positive changes (Parsloe, 1995). Coaching can also be continued until sustainable developments have been assured. In contrast, mentoring focuses on career issues more broadly, whereas coaching enhances measurable outcomes and provides targeted solutions to immediate challenges (Law, 2002). The element of self-discovery inherent in coaching contributes to the sustainability of performance enhancements, eliminating the heavy reliance on an 'expert' to maintain developments. Consequently, coachees can autonomously sustain progress without prolonged dependence on external guidance.

Despite coaching's proven effectiveness as a form of CPD, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations, particularly when implemented within an educational context (Law, 2002). Educational settings grapple with two predominant constraints: time and financial resources. These limitations become exacerbated in the educational landscape, where budgetary cuts and reforms compound the challenges of developing and sustaining effective professional development models (Law, 2014). While coaching emerges as a potent and impactful approach, its application in education necessitates a nuanced consideration of these inherent limitations to ensure its successful integration into professional development initiatives (Law, 2014).

2.7 Types of Coaching Approaches used within Education

Many different terms are given to the types of coaching, each applicable within a specific area. Creasy and Patterson (2005) examined coaching and determined seven types of coaching. Lee (2017) adapted this further, simplifying it into four main types of coaching and summarising it (see Figure 2.4).

Type of coaching	Coaching activity	Example (added by author)
Specialist Coaching	Where a coach has specialist knowledge of an area	Lead practitioner coaching teachers to develop teaching practices in the classroom
Co (peer) Coaching	Working in a structured way with a colleague on an issue	Teachers across faculties observe and coach each other on an aspect of teaching (e.g. questioning skills)
Team Coaching	Where a team of staff works with an external coach with additional expertise in the area under development	Educational psychologist coaching a senior leadership team (e.g. to develop a vision for the school)
Expert Coaching	Coaching for staff to help them develop coaching skills themselves	External coach working with middle leaders to develop their use of coaching in performance management

Figure 2.4: Types of Coaching Activities (Lee, 2017, p.112).

Educational coaching encompasses diverse approaches tailored to meet the varied needs of educators. Specialist coaching involves the guidance of a coach with in-depth expertise in a specific subject or pedagogical area (Law, 2002). This targeted support aims to enhance educators' proficiency in specialised domains, fostering a deeper understanding and application of subject knowledge.

Team coaching extends the collaborative ethos to groups of educators working together towards shared goals (King and Winn, 2017). This coaching type emphasised collective problem-solving, communication skills, and collaborative strategies to enhance team dynamics and effectiveness in achieving educational objectives. Expert coaching involves a seasoned professional guiding a less-experienced educator (King and Winn, 2017). Drawing on their extensive knowledge and practical experience, expert coaches offer targeted insights and personalised strategies to help educators refine their teaching practices and navigate complex challenges.

Peer coaching is founded on a collaborative model in which educators work together to support one another through shared experiences and mutual learning (Lee, 2017). This approach encourages teachers to engage in meaningful, reflective dialogues where they can openly discuss their practices, challenges, and successes with their peers. By exchanging feedback and insights, educators can gain new perspectives on their teaching methods and strategies, allowing them to refine and enhance their approaches. Furthermore, peer coaching fosters a sense of collective responsibility and camaraderie as teachers collaborate to navigate the various challenges they face in their professional lives. This collaborative effort helps to build a strong community of practice, where continuous improvement is not only encouraged but also embedded in the culture of the educational environment (King and Winn, 2017). Over time, this ongoing exchange of ideas and support contributes to the overall growth and development of both individual educators and the educational community, creating a more dynamic and responsive learning environment for students.

Each type of educational coaching brings unique strengths to the professional development landscape, catering to the diverse needs and contexts within the education sector (Lee, 2017). The versatility of these coaching models enables educators to choose approaches that align with their specific goals, fostering a dynamic and supportive learning environment. Lee (2017) stated that specialist, team, and expert coaching types utilise an external facilitator, compared to co (peer) coaching, which utilises colleagues to collectively address teaching performance from within a school. Although each coaching activity is effective in its rights, using an external facilitator has limitations.

2.8 Limitations to Coaching within Modern Education

Using an external facilitator/coach introduces barriers to reflective practice (Law, 2002). External coaches can often lack an in-depth understanding of the school's culture or current morale amongst teachers, or they may even lack a full understanding of the school's vision and priorities. Due to the nature of freelance coaching, coaches may use generic processes due to their work across multiple schools. Finally, due to reduced school budgets, the cost of external coaches can often limit the time they have available to each staff member (Huling, 1999).

King and Winn (2017) identified time constraints within coaching programmes and found that this was linked to feelings of apprehension. This is especially true with external coaches; due to funding or logistics, they are often only brought in for short periods, during inset and training days, or similarly, needing more coaches within the school to effectively facilitate an intensive coaching model. Schools will usually attempt to continue to work on these coaching cycles without having continued access to the external coach's expertise (Charteris and Smardon, 2013). Coaching programmes rely heavily on observation and feedback cycles, and there is a heightened

strain on the time of both teachers and coaches to fit this into an ever-busy schedule (Charteris and Smardon, 2013). Online meeting platforms have introduced more flexibility and availability that would not have been accessible in the past; however, external coaches often work across many different schools and can struggle to meet with all teachers promptly.

Coaching can often be used as a form of support or seen as a punitive measure for underperforming teachers, mainly when carried out within the hierarchical constraints of a school system, for example, an underperforming NQT being ‘coached’ by the assistant principal whose remit is teaching and learning across the whole school (Charteris and Smardon, 2013). These are often referred to as rapid improvement programmes (RIP) and are often used as a preceding measure before teachers are placed on a process known as ‘capabilities’, where a teacher’s capabilities are developed as a measure to improve their teaching, this is often the terminal stage, where employment contracts are re-evaluated. Due to this, there can be a negative connotation with coaching, and this can form a significant barrier. To overcome this, practice moved towards a peer-to-peer coaching model, known as ‘Peer coaching’, which looked at utilising colleagues’ relationships to develop each other’s practices. Metz (2010) discussed the many benefits of peer coaching and stated that it can be used in developing new service models to engage staff, build leaders, and help staff through change transitions.

As discussed, the existing limitations inherent in coaching, particularly when administered by external professionals, highlight a critical imperative for expanded research focusing on peer coaching (Metz, 2010). External coaches frequently grapple with impediments hindering effective reflective practice and professional development due to a need for more intimate knowledge

regarding the school's culture, morale, overarching vision, and key priorities (Svaricek, 2024; Huling, 1999). The utilisation of standardised processes within an undifferentiated paradigm, common in freelance coaching, may need to be revised to cater to the nuanced needs of individual institutions and teachers, thereby diluting its developmental impact. Moreover, the financial constraints within educational institutions limit the availability of external coaches, restricting prolonged collaboration with teaching staff (Charteris and Smardon, 2013). As discussed above, peer-coaching can have a similar impact as coaching while mitigating some of the barriers seen when using a non-peer coaching model, such as financial and time constraints. These limitations have informed this research in a number of ways. These limitations have been discussed further in Chapter 2.9.5.

2.9 Peer Coaching Approaches and Impact

Peer coaching, much like coaching, focuses on facilitating the performance, learning, and development of another (Soisangwarn and Wongwanich, 2013). Unlike traditional coaching, peer coaching focuses largely on collaborative practice between colleagues, often within a single school or trust. The key difference here is that peer coaching is carried out between colleagues, who are seen as being of similar stature within the coaching constructs (Jarvis, 2017). Peer coaching can mitigate the limitations found within coaching, such as time constraints, the use of external experts, and the negative connotations of coaching.

2.9.1 Key Components of Peer Coaching Approaches

Charteris and Smardon (2013) introduced the idea that peer coaching and its open dialogue allow teachers to develop questions around their classroom practice and set out their own next steps and actions to support student learning. This illustrated the benefit of peer coaching in

enabling teachers to have accountability and responsibility over their developmental pathways, thus improving teacher engagement (Charteris and Smardon, 2013). Building on the foundational work of Charteris and Smardon (2013), who advocate for dialogic peer coaching rooted in trust and mutual inquiry, recent international studies further validate the importance of structured, relationship-driven design to peer coaching approaches. Canaran (2023) investigated the implementation of online peer coaching among teacher educators during the period of remote instruction, uncovering that collaboration, mutual accountability, and context-specific support structures were critical determinants of programme success. Despite the virtual context, participants reported a high degree of trust and professional dialogue, facilitated by intentional pairing strategies and structured reflective tasks. These findings strongly echo the design of the dyad-based coaching model presented in this thesis, where interpersonal trust and shared pedagogical goals were foundational. Canaran's (2023) emphasis on contextual sensitivity, ensuring that coaching conversations remained relevant to the specific challenges faced by educators, parallels the thesis's effort to ground peer coaching in real classroom experiences, captured through video. Furthermore, her study reinforced the idea that trust and structure are not mutually exclusive, but interdependent: when peer coaching is framed around clear expectations and personalised dialogue, it can flourish even in challenging or unfamiliar formats. This supported the claim that sustained reflective development hinges on both relational dynamics and strategic design.

Although there are many methods for executing reflective practice, as discussed above, peer coaching is commonly adopted as a vehicle for this due to lower financial implications and utilisation of in-house expertise (Soisangwarn and Wongwanich, 2013). Jarvis (2017) stated six

essential components of the peer coaching process: establishing and maintaining trust, designing differentiated professional learning for all, establishing coaching configurations to maximise learning, calibrating individuals' skills and needs, using reflection as an integral part of coaching, and providing descriptive feedback. These six components represent peer coaching approaches in general, where initiating, implementing, and maintaining trust, learning, reflecting, and feedback are a priority. In addition to this, Charteris and Smardon (2013) add that for peer coaching to have open and effective communication, a dialogue needs to be present that must incorporate the following characteristics: suspension of judgement, release of our need for a specific outcome, an inquiry into an examination of underlying assumptions, authenticity, a slower pace of interaction with silence between speakers, listening deeply to self and others for collective meaning. This also highlighted the benefits of peer coaching over its more traditional counterpart, as the 'peer' element would allow teachers to work within a community with pre-existing professional relationships, thus generating trust and authenticity sooner than working with an external practitioner, as discussed previously.

2.9.2 Peer Coaching as a Tool for Reflective Practice and Professional Development

Aligned with reflective practice, peer coaching is often used in education, business, and medicine as a form of professional development (Bell et al., 2025, Huling, 1999; Parker, Hall, and Kram, 2008). King and Winn (2017) explained that peer coaching is being increasingly recognised as highly suitable for professional development programmes due to its many benefits and few disadvantages. Peer coaching can be a tool to develop teaching, promote leadership skills in others, and guide teachers through times of change and transition. McCarthy and Milner (2013) explained a direct link between the amount of peer coaching and the levels of satisfaction shown by staff members, as well as an increase in individual performance and the performance towards

organisational goals. Peer coaching has also been identified in numerous studies as an ideal setting for the development of reflective practice (King and Winn, 2017). Peer coaching's affinity to reflective practice is an impactful way to develop other teachers due to the coach's accountability that is gained and placed on the coachee. This accountability ensures that the coachee is responsible for setting and achieving goals, which the coach facilitates. This process improves the ownership of the reflection and development. This is reinforced by Lee (2013), who also stated that coaches identified that a key benefit to peer coaching was that coaches gained a greater ownership over the process, and this gave a better understanding and focus on their own goals throughout the process. These benefits were not contained within the confines of the coaching partnerships but can have an impact at a school-wide level and allow all staff to begin to reflect on their teaching. These school-wide benefits could often be put down to the coachees who now feel better able to support other colleagues outside of the coaching setting with questioning techniques and problem-solving.

2.9.3 Types of Peer Coaching Approaches used within Education

Peer coaching can take two forms: 'reciprocal' and 'instructional'. Reciprocal peer coaching often utilises a reflective approach while leaning heavily on the social process or collective thinking and critique (Devine, Meyers, and Houssemand, 2013). Instructional coaching supports teachers in implementing research-based teacher practice through modelling, observation, feedback cycles, and reflective dialogue within a coaching partnership (Knight, 2004; Kowal and Steiner, 2007). The former focuses on problem-solving and utilising collective thinking to develop professional standards often garnered from the other coach in the partnership. The latter encourages the modelling and idea-sharing through observations of each other garnered through research-based practices, not through the personal experience of the practice itself (e.g., if an issue arises that neither teacher has encountered before, then research on this area is needed, and

strategies can be explored and implemented). These two forms of peer coaching can be used in combination or during specific points of a coaching journey; however, the approaches have slight differences that need to be noted.

2.9.4 Impact of Peer Coaching on Teacher Practice and Mindsets

Zwart (2008) found that increased peer coaching within secondary schools increased the experimentation seen within classes daily and that peer coaching had a significant impact at a school-wide/organisational level due to the increased support and professional conversations the coaches and coachees had with their colleagues. Peer coaching's ability to have its impact permeate through multiple areas of a school and affect those outside of the coaching community was also identified in the work of Lofthouse (2010), which looked at 'peer coaching' (referred to as 'co-coaching') within English schools, showed that the peer coaching style of professional development could carry with it high levels of impact due to its collaborative nature being developed within a school, as opposed to the more traditional coaching model.

Glickman (1990) investigated the use of peer coaching with pre-service teachers and identified the collaborative nature of this style of professional development and the informal evaluation (reflective) process rooted within: *...opportunities to refine teaching skills through immediate feedback and experimentation with alternate strategies as a result of the informal evaluation. During peer coaching, pre-service teachers collaborate to develop a shared language, forums to test new ideas about teaching, and, ultimately, expertise (Glickman, 1990, p87).* Glickman (1990) concluded that teachers developed a shared language and actively used experimentation to identify alternative methods within their teaching, similar to the ALACT model (Korthagen, 2001) discussed previously. Although Glickman's (1990) work refers to peer

coaching for pre-service teachers (NQTs), this is relevant to its use through the lens of professional development for all teachers. Kamali and Javahery (2024) mirror Glickman's points on shared language and the need for experimentation within teacher practice, but within a more recent context. This showed how reflective practice is deeply ingrained within peer coaching. Through this practice, teachers can experiment, adapt alternative strategies, and gain immediate feedback from an additional perspective (Bowman and McCormick, 2014). Conversely to traditional coaching, peer coaching maintains a more immediate feedback cycle, often completed with a teacher from within the same school who understands the school's priorities and the constraints facing that teacher. This can help the professional relationship develop and help the coach and coachee develop and refine their teaching skills more effectively (Bowman and McCormick, 2014). This area may not be as easily accomplished using an external coach who may need to understand or know the school's deeper workings. Bowman and McCormick (2014) explored this idea of the construction of meaning through social processes relating Vygotsky's (1978) work on the construction of meaning to peer coaching.

Kamali and Javahery (2024) investigated a peer coaching initiative among teachers and found that collaborative peer engagement significantly improved teaching efficacy and self-perception. Their work highlighted the role of contextual and cultural sensitivity in designing peer coaching programs, a consideration especially relevant in diverse secondary school environments. Vygotsky's (1978) theories support the tenets of peer coaching, who also views professional development as a social process, contending that the construction of meaning occurs first as exchanges between individuals. Vygotsky's (1978) research reiterates the importance of social interaction and discussion in meaning-creation. This element supports the idea of peer-to-peer

discussions being more effective due to the reliance on pre-existing relationships between colleagues and thus being able to utilise shared knowledge of their teaching environment (Bowman and McCormick, 2014). Barnhart and Vega (2024) expanded on this and explained that video-based peer coaching ‘clubs’ facilitated collaborative discussions or collective thinking through professional communities, thus enabling individuals to develop their perspectives and adopt the strengths of others.

Through the social interaction of discussion, active learning evolves. Each participant interprets, transforms, and internalises new knowledge through to collective thinking. Within the peer coaching framework, such collaborative discussions allow individuals to develop their perspectives and model strengths for others (Dale, 1994). When paired with social processes, peer coaching enables teachers to access a safe development space to freely discuss and critique ideas authentically and without judgement, as specified by Charteris and Smardon (2013) and Jarvis (2017). King and Winn (2017) reflect on the importance of the social element of peer coaching and explained that purposeful and regular critical reflection can be directly linked to professional success and that peer coaching can be the perfect strategy (Bowman and McCormick, 2014).

2.9.5 Limitations to Peer Coaching Approaches

Ben-Peretz, Gottlieb, and Gideon (2018) discuss a need to argue for a conception of in-service teacher development that transcends the hierarchical relationship between coach and coachee to achieve a dialogical interaction between two established professionals. Peer coaching can be effective and satisfying for teachers by allowing them to observe, reflect, exchange ideas, and share problem-solving (Bergen, Engelen, and Derksen, 2006; Zwart et al., 2008).

Removing the perceived hierarchical difference between peer coaches is essential to gain insight into both parties' practices and the thought process related to these practices. Ben-Peretz (2018) suggests that it is seen as two masters coming together, and the importance lies with the world they share as opposed to the hierarchy that may be present. As mentioned above, the perception of hierarchy between teachers will always be present in traditional coaching. This also applies to peer coaching (Ben-Peretz et al., 2018). Although teachers may be paired randomly during CPD sessions or through the duration of a peer coaching programme, many factors could lead to the perception of one teacher possessing more 'power' than the other, be it through perceived subject knowledge, teaching experience, or role within the school (Bowman and McCormick., 2014).

Svaricek (2024) explored a case study detailing the transformation of a sceptical teacher through dialogic teaching and structured reflective peer interaction. The study emphasised how peer coaching, when framed around open discourse and mutual inquiry, can challenge entrenched beliefs and facilitate meaningful professional growth, even among initially disengaged or resistant participants. This finding directly addresses one of the frequently cited limitations of peer coaching: the variability in participants' openness and willingness to engage (Ben-Peretz et al., 2018). As peer coaching relies on reciprocal vulnerability and collaborative critique, teachers who are sceptical or defensive may initially struggle to participate authentically. However, as demonstrated by Svaricek (2024), a carefully scaffolded and trust-rich environment can mitigate these barriers.

As mentioned above, both coaching and peer coaching have time constraints. Coaching that utilises an external or single coach for multiple teachers will inevitably lead to scheduling issues. Ben-Peretz's (2018) research concluded that there is a tendency in any professional setting to indulge in the privacy of one's work rather than share it and its challenges with others. This could be due to fear of criticism, fear that one's best ideas and practices will be copied, co-opted, or simply formal time or space has yet to be set aside for such deliberation.

Jarvis (2017) found similar scheduling issues due to the need for the feedback cycle of peer coaching to happen promptly, as discussed above. Bowman and McCormick (2014) identified the need for this feedback to be immediate. Jarvis (2017) discussed the need for a process by which either the feedback is immediate, which can carry difficulties due to the busy landscape of education, or the need to keep the teaching experience fresh within the minds of the coach and coachee. This time constraint is an ever-present issue within teacher education that can be eased through video recordings (Sherin, 2004). The use of video recordings to capture teacher experiences has been researched (Eghterafi et al., 2022; Baran, et al., 2023; Barnhart and Vega, 2024; Thacker et al. (2022); Kuhn, 2023; Reisman and Beckwith, 2023; Barclift and MacLeod, 2024; Sherin, 2004; Sherin, 2009; Charteris and Smardon, 2013; Avalos, 2010; Ben-Peretz, Gottlieb, and Gideon, 2018) and, although still within the early stages, has been shown to have a positive impact on strengthening the reflective cycle due to the playback-ability of video to allow teachers to keep teacher experiences fresh within their mind (Sherin, 2004).

Video recordings have increasingly been shown to enhance the peer coaching process by supporting stimulus recall and deepening reflection. For example, Barclift and MacLeod (2024)

demonstrated that video-based reflections prompted more critical insights into teaching practice, while Barnhart and Vega (2024) found that video clubs fostered professional relationships and egalitarian mentoring through shared analysis. Such approaches highlight the potential of peer coaching as an avenue for professional development, where collaboration and reflective engagement enable teachers to refine their practices (Kamali and Javahery, 2024; Canaran, 2023). Peer coaching, characterised by its collaborative and reciprocal nature, offers a pathway for addressing persistent challenges in professional development, such as time constraints, reliance on external experts, and the limitations of hierarchical coaching models (Canaran, 2023; Barnhart and Vega, 2024).

Despite the vast potential that peer coaching offers in influencing fresh conceptualisations in professional development patterns, there is no question that further research is called for to unravel some of the limitations of the said approach and to further fine-tune the methodologies that are used in it, as well as to explore newer ways of making it more effective (Kamali and Javahery, 2024; Canaran, 2023; Zwart et al., 2008). As the following detailed account of the dynamics of peer coaching reveals, it is imperative to further the concept of teacher development and enhance the reflective and collegial learning environment within various academic settings (Barnhart and Vega, 2024; Baran et al., 2023; Ben-Peretz et al., 2018). Nonetheless, cooperative and interpersonal training and development approaches such as peer coaching entail subtle and non-tangible aspects in the teaching environment (Svaricek, 2024; Jarvis, 2017; Charteris and Smardon, 2013). Such factors as trust building, accessible communication and the complex gamut of the pedagogical discussion make this a highly abstract process (Jarvis, 2017). This indicates that

video analysis complements peer coaching to enhance learning since it offers tangible viewpoints to intangible areas of learning. Chapter 2.10 will discuss the use of video analysis in further detail.

2.10 Use of Video Analysis within Educational Coaching Approaches

The integration of video into teacher education can be traced back to the 1960s, and its use has expanded steadily with advances in digital technology. Recent studies show that video analysis now plays a central role in supporting reflection and professional dialogue among educators (Baran et al., 2023). For example, Baran et al. (2023) found that mobile video-enhanced observation provided accessible opportunities for preservice teachers to engage in peer feedback, overcoming barriers of time and distance. Similarly, Barnhart and Vega (2024) reported that video clubs facilitated reflective collaboration and community building among teachers, illustrating how technological developments have removed the traditional limitations of geography and scheduling in professional learning.

2.10.1 Impacts of Video Analysis use within Coaching Approaches

Although research has been published on the use of video analysis within teaching development (Eghterafi et al., 2022; Baran, et al., 2023; Barnhart and Vega, 2024; Thacker et al. (2022); Kuhn, 2023; Reisman and Beckwith, 2023; Barclift and MacLeod, 2024), many researchers agree that more should be known about using video analysis within teacher training and development. Sherin and Van Es (2009) followed this belief and explained that it is even more of an issue considering the extensive use of video analysis within teacher and professional development. The advancement of technology and adoption of computer-based meeting software have prompted studies to investigate how video analysis can impact teachers. Baran et al., (2023) demonstrated the efficacy of mobile video-enhanced peer observation in facilitating immediate

and specific feedback among preservice teachers. Their study, which employed the Video Enhanced Observation software, underscores the potential for structured video tagging to enhance reflective dialogue and professional growth. These findings reinforced the broader applicability of structured video analysis within in-service peer coaching frameworks. Stoetzel, et al., (2025) found that video-based feedback fostered professional reflection amongst peer coaches and aided with the elicitation of critical reflection of professional practices.

This focus on video analysis has also encouraged research to focus on the use of video analysis and how it can be intertwined with what and how teachers learn using video analysis as a form of professional development (Goldsmith and Seago, 2008). Teachers who can observe and reflect on their own experiences using video analysis may find these catalysts for developing teaching practice within the classroom (Sherin, 2009). Charteris and Smardon (2013) take this viewpoint further and argue that video analysis can be used in professional development and digital tools that empower teachers with innovative ways to support deeper learning within peer coaching. Within the available research, many methodologies focus on the use of video analysis, either as a method of improving the authenticity and validity of discussion and, therefore, opening lines of dialogue to develop (Ben-Peretz et al., 2018) or to investigate the metacognitive approach for improving the peer coaching skills of teachers (Charteris and Smardon, 2013). More research is needed on using video analysis to support the peer coaching process in researching the professional development of teachers.

This continued to highlight the idea of using video analysis and audio recordings to preserve the observations and share these more actively with those not present during the

observation or simply as a reminder to the peer coaching participants. Video analysis can help increase the ownership of the teacher inquiry, enhance coaching skills, and allow teachers to develop innovation within their teaching (Jarvis, 2017). Charteris and Smardon (2013) reinforced this. They found that when pairing peer coaching with video analysis, the teachers could take a second look at their lesson. This allows peer coaching reflective practice to deepen and extend the teachers' dialogue.

Thacker et al. (2022) investigated the use of peer-to-peer learning through video analysis, identifying a nuanced but critical factor: the order of performance significantly influenced the depth and utility of peer feedback received. Specifically, early performers benefited disproportionately, as they received richer, more developed feedback from peers who had observed several examples and accumulated comparative insights. This sequencing effect raises important considerations for the design of video-based coaching frameworks. It suggests that equitable opportunities for reflective growth are not only contingent on the quality of feedback but also on its timing and context within the learning cycle. For peer coaching programmes, this finding underscores the importance of deliberately structuring observation and feedback opportunities to avoid front-loading benefits and to ensure reciprocity and parity in the reflective process. Aligning with the emphasis on dialogic interaction and mutual development, Thacker et al's (2022) findings advocate for rotational coaching roles and staggered feedback cycles that balance experiential learning and reflective insight across all participants.

Kuhn et al. (2023) examined the efficacy of a 'learning-by-teaching' model to foster reflective diagnostic reasoning, the study underscored a critical insight: reflection alone is

insufficient unless it is intentionally scaffolded. Participants who lacked structured guidance struggled to translate experiential teaching into meaningful cognitive insight. This aligns with the foundational premise that effective peer coaching requires more than opportunity; it requires design. Specifically, the structured use of video review within the peer coaching framework mirrors Kuhn et al.'s (2023) call for mediated reflection. By providing concrete artefacts of practice, video enables more focused, layered analysis and facilitates deeper engagement with pedagogical identity and decision-making. This reinforced the idea that reflection must be supported by clear frameworks if it is to yield transformation rather than superficial commentary. In this way, Kuhn et al.'s (2023) findings underline the broader importance of structure in professional development environments.

Video analysis has become an increasingly valuable tool for teacher professional development, supported by technological advancements such as smartphones and mobile applications. Recent research demonstrates that video-augmented coaching and peer-feedback approaches not only simplify the process of teacher interaction analysis but also deepen reflective practice, foster collaboration, and strengthen professional dialogue (Barnhart and Vega, 2024; Baran, et al., 2023; Reisman and Beckwith, 2023). These developments highlight how video analysis has evolved into an integral and practical component of teacher education, contributing to both sustained professional learning and the cultivation of reflective teaching communities.

Charteris and Smardon (2013) discuss the value of video analysis within the feedback cycle of teachers and state that teachers need to be seen as 'agentic co-learners' who are 'co-constructors of knowledge. This contrasts explicitly with the work of Kennedy (2005), who discussed the

‘transmission process’ within continued professional development and looked at teachers as ‘absorbers’ or ‘passive recipients’ of knowledge. This juxtaposition shows how the complexity of teaching has begun to be explored within the research community, where teachers are not simply the products of a social system but the producers themselves. This complexity can reveal the need for using technologies, such as video analysis/audio recording within classrooms, to gather better empirical evidence of teaching practices that can be reviewed and discussed within peer coaching sessions.

Charteris and Smardon (2013) investigated the use of video analysis to develop their coaching skills. Van Es (2010), Cutrim (2011), and Stover (2011) all investigated the use of video analysis within education. Still, they focused mainly on its use for event recall during coaching, as opposed to its impact on teaching improvements. Using video analysis to enable peer coaches to grow within their role is vital (Charteris and Smardon, 2013). Robertson (2005) explained that this can help peer coaches with their questioning ability and teaching within the coaching sessions, and in addition, this can even assist in reflection. Video analysis of a lesson can often be used as a ‘stimulus recall’ to a specific moment within a lesson or during an observation, which has been researched previously (Barclift and MacLeod, 2024; Van Es, 2010; Cumin, 2011; Stover, 2011).

Research has found that through video analysis, teachers have developed their awareness of their learning process (Barclift and MacLeod, 2024; Barhart and Vega, 2024; Charteris and Smardon, 2013). By enabling teachers to have more time to watch and review their practice through a third-person vantage point, they could think further and deeper about their practices and use of dialogue, which gave more insight into their practices. Although Charteris and Smardon

(2013) focused on developing their participants' actual peer coaching skill learning, the idea that teachers can build their professional development aided by video analysis is still relevant.

Many researchers have investigated video analysis as a format to develop dialogic feedback between teachers (Thacker et al., 2022; Kuhn, 2023; Reisman and Beckwith, 2023). This open dialogue has been shown to develop questioning and teacher learning. Charteris and Smardon (2013) used shared sense-making, highlighting teachers' inquisitiveness within a peer coaching setting. Video analysis allows teachers to delve further into their teaching practices with the discussion material at their fingertips. With the ability to rewind, highlight and pause to discuss, teachers can better analyse subtle nuances within their classroom practices that may have gone unnoticed or forgotten if not recorded (Calderhead and Gates., 1993).

As previously discussed, Calderhead and Gates (1993) identified that both new and experienced teachers can be unaware of their classroom behaviours and the reasons behind them. Giving teachers a second chance to observe their behaviours and the impacts they have within the classroom could shed light on their practice and its effect on their students. Charteris and Smardon (2013) identified that the use of video analysis had the potential to shape professional development of a teacher and explained that when the video analysis is paired with peer coaching, it can raise the teachers' awareness on multiple levels.

Barnhart and Vega (2024) examined the function of video clubs as structured professional learning communities, highlighting substantial gains in both the depth and frequency of teacher dialogue, as well as the sophistication of reflective insight. Their findings emphasised how regular,

scaffolded video analysis can serve as a catalyst for collegial engagement and joint inquiry, providing a psychologically safe forum where teachers move beyond superficial feedback to engage in substantive pedagogical conversations. This reinforced the inherently social and dialogic nature of effective video-based professional development, aligning closely with the collaborative ethos embedded within peer collaboration. Notably, their work affirms that video artefacts serve not merely as content to be critiqued, but as relational objects that facilitate shared meaning-making, dialogic reflection, mutual accountability, and the co-construction of teaching knowledge through coaching conversations.

Further supporting the value of structured video analysis, Reisman and Beckwith (2023) examined how online feedback cycles can enhance both instructional design and classroom impact. Reisman and Beckwith (2023) conducted an in-depth study on the use of online video feedback sessions within teacher professional development programmes. Their findings revealed that video-supported coaching, when embedded in structured and iterative feedback cycles, significantly enhanced teachers' instructional coherence, particularly in how lesson objectives, content sequencing, and questioning strategies were aligned to learning outcomes. Moreover, teachers participating in the video-based feedback process reported increased student engagement, attributing this to more intentional planning and greater pedagogical clarity. Crucially, the authors noted that the success of the programme stemmed not only from the video recordings themselves, but from the facilitated reflective discussions that followed, which were focused, time-bound, and framed around clear instructional goals. These findings strongly support the argument that video analysis is most effective when paired with structured peer dialogue and used as a reflective artefact within a coaching framework. Reisman and Beckwith's (2023) design foregrounded

teacher agency, pedagogical reasoning, and critical dialogue, illustrating how video artefacts can serve as catalysts for targeted reflection and evidence-informed practice refinement.

Charteris and Smardon (2013) suggested that video analysis can shape teachers' professional learning. It can raise teacher awareness on two levels when used as a tool in conjunction with collaborative peer coaching. On the one hand, there is a potential impact on classroom teaching as teachers build an understanding of their current practice and plan to enhance it due to their collaborative inquiries (Charteris and Smardon., 2013). On the other hand, video analysis collaborative peer coaching can enhance teachers' peer coaching skills as they become explicitly aware of their own and others' learning processes.

Charteris and Smardon (2013) state that there can be a potential impact on the students within their class due to improved classroom practice. Teachers can develop peer coaching skills, thus improving their classroom practice and becoming better equipped to develop those outside the coaching community. They also state that video analysis enabled teachers to broach areas within a teacher's subconscious and thus 'buried' within their thinking. Teachers were able to identify the complexities of their interactions and practices.

The complex nature of the classroom environment highlights another benefit of using video analysis within a professional development setting. The video analysis can offer an authentic view into a classroom window that conveys the complexity and subtlety of classroom teaching as it happens in real time (Brophy, 2004). This illustrated the claims that video analysis holds many benefits from the opportunities to actively reflect on teaching from an authentic vantage point

shared by all participants. Sherin and Van Es (2009) reinforced this viewpoint and add that classrooms are complex environments where many things happen simultaneously. At the moment, a teacher must choose from within this complex ecosystem, where their attention is best spent, with every situation being different. This is especially poignant when a large proportion of communication within a classroom can be communicated not only through what is being said but also through how something is said. This begins to unveil the true benefit of using video analysis within professional development to revisit these situations and reflect deeply on why certain situations happened, the decisions made, and their impact on student learning. Using video analysis can actively allow teachers to revisit their classroom practices as a form of stimulus recall (Charteris and Smardon, 2013), leading to deeper thinking within peer coaching conversations.

The video analysis has been shown to impact how teachers view their practice and how it's effects can permeate beyond the peer coaching programme participants. Another area where video analysis could prove beneficial is the breakdown of the power imbalance seen through the aforementioned hierarchical difference between peer coaching partners. Video analysis enables teachers to utilise their own 'primary data' (Charteris and Smardon, 2013) and gain their coach's vantage point. This, in turn, removes the power imbalance between the giver and receiver of the feedback (Charteris and Smardon, 2013).

The use of video analysis within peer coaching allows coaches and coachees to leave more time between observations and feedback and rely on the video analysis to keep the observed lesson more transparent within their minds. Feedback can remain thorough and effective, as this additional time can be used to review the footage and allow more reflection and deliberation before

the feedback session. In addition, video analysis helps improve the ownership of inquiry and peer coaching skills and helps practice innovation of peer coaching teams (Jarvis, 2017). Video analysis introduction has also allowed teaching experiences to be revisited, analysed, and compared further into a teacher-coaching journey. It can be considered a virtual library of professional development and critical reflection moments. This introduces the idea of maintaining and tracking development to improve and maintain performance. Thus, the concept of sustainability is crucial once the coaching has been completed. But how can the sustainability of coaching be ensured? Can this level of sustainability be identified in the long term?

2.11 Sustainability of Coaching Approaches within Education

If coaching, as stated by Law (2014), is a short/medium-term approach to long-term performance changes, then changes to teaching impact and classroom practice need to be sustainable. Without sustainable improvement, practices would revert to the original patterns and obtain the original outcomes. Grant (2016) concluded that within longitudinal studies, coaching has been shown to have produced sustained change. The sustainability of coaching impacts has been widely researched, and coaching has been shown to have a sustained effect on various areas.

Nanduri (2018) identified some of the key findings that have highlighted the sustainable changes that have been produced through coaching including: increased self-awareness (Bozer, Sarros and Santora, 2013; Gegner, 1997; Harrington, 2006; Koroleva, 2016; Wasylyshyn, 2003; Whyteco, 2014), sustained behavioural changes such as: feeling responsible for performance (Gegner, 1997; Smither et al., 2003); building better relationships (Wasylyshyn, 2003); openness to new behaviours (Finn, Mason and Griffin, 2006); choice responsibility (Harrington, 2009); change of habits (Outhwaite and Bettridge, 2009); sustained behavioural changes (de Meuse and

Dai, 2009), setting clear goals and action (Finn et al., 2006; Smither et al., 2003) improvement in performance (Smither et al., 2003), better confidence and motivational ability (Wasylyshyn, 2003; Whyteco, 2014). self-efficacy (Finn et al., 2006), changes in thinking (Outhwaite and Bettridge, 2009; Whyteco, 2014), work well-being, general well-being, job satisfaction, and engagement (Hicks, Carter and Sinclair, 2013).

Nanduri (2018) identified the vast array of outcomes that can be produced through coaching, but more importantly, the long-term sustainability of these outcomes. Whyteco (2014) identified that coaching can have indirect benefits, namely long-term personal changes and transformations. Nanduri (2018) concluded that there might be a direct link between the sustained effects of coaching and the level of satisfaction and personal fulfilment felt by the coachee, with the true goal of the coach to reinforce a teacher's passion to ensure a sustained change in produced in their thinking and behaviours.

As discussed, within education, there is a clear need for teachers' professional development to be advanced to develop teaching, learning, and critical reflection within educational practice (Grant, 2016). Professional development is an essential part of all teachers' development. It is not singular to the development of newly qualified teachers, nor should it be used as a performance management technique (Grant, 2016). The sooner teachers can move away from this notion, the sooner educational culture can shift towards a research-based coaching culture (Whyteco, 2014).

Research into advancing professional development is needed to keep up with the fast-paced advancements of technology and innovation (Bozer et al., 2013). The development of teaching

practices will continue to be the driving force of the educational system (Grant, 2016). It will lead to new and practical ideas to promote outstanding practices that benefit schooling. With the pandemic and school closures seen in 2019/2020, more establishments have adapted and moved towards online meeting software to host everyday meetings (Whyteco, 2014). This has helped with adopting online meeting places (Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet), which has furthered research into the use of technology within teaching. In addition, the 2020 national lockdown made society more comfortable with technology and its unique services, such as FaceTime and video conferencing (Bozer et al., 2013). This has had a knock-on effect by which teachers have become more comfortable talking and using technology within their professional lives, thus promoting the practice of utilising this in everyday work. In addition, it has bolstered funding for new technologies for students and parents and identified the need for students to be prepared to move into a more technology-based education in the future.

Peer coaching sits amongst a small group of coaching styles that may mitigate many limitations associated with professional development, thus allowing teachers to develop ownership over their environment and practices (Korthagen, 2017). Peer coaching and video analysis can give teachers a better vantage point for their practice and allow other professionals to observe, discuss, and create new ideas regardless of location (Bozer et al., 2013). This collaborative sense-making could enable teachers to face problems collectively and begin to discuss teaching from a new perspective. In addition, peer coaching can focus on reducing workload and facilitating a 'home-grown' process by which an entire school can benefit from the dedicated work of a few (Korthagen, 2017). This would also enable the development and implementation of peer coaching practices in schools and the ability to share these practices among the different nations and schools easily so

that effective practice can quickly be transferred. This is an opportunity within the current state of research and deserves to be followed up further regarding cooperative work in teacher education.

This study developed and utilised a dynamic model for professional development from the existing synergies of peer coaching methodologies, the application of Korthagen's (2017) reflective practice model, and the integration of video analysis. Nevertheless, it is plausible to offer the following rationale for conducting research on this innovation:

i. Integration Complexity: Peer coaching combined with Korthagen's reflective practice model and video analysis enhance the complex framework. Therefore, further research is needed to understand how these components could be synergistically antagonistic. Teacher development requires that each aspect of the initiated study is straightforward and interrelated to support the overall processes effectively.

ii. Efficacy Examination: Each of the elements: peer coaching, incorporation of reflective practice, and video analysis has been confirmed to have a positive effect on enhancing teaching practices, though the combined effectiveness of all these components is not well studied (Gegner 1997; Smither et al., 2003). The overall efficacy of this integrated model requires research. Does it result in more significant enhancements and evident beneficial changes compared to the individual application of each procedure? To answer this question, one must glean information by reviewing literature, case studies, and consultations with practitioners (Gegner, 1997).

iii. **Optimal Implementation Strategies:** Therefore, the researcher must explore various aspects of implementing these strategies to fully capitalise on this integration approach. However, what conditions would be most conducive for integration to occur? How is it possible to include the above-stated elements within the existing professional development frameworks in schools? The study's findings can serve as a reference and suggestions for improving educational activities by educators and administrators who plan to implement this model (Koroleva, 2016).

iv. **Addressing Potential Challenges:** Like most other tactics embraced under innovation, this mix is full of challenges (Smither et al., 2003). It is essential to be aware of the potential problems that might arise during the time shortage, difficulties in using the technology, or varying competency of the participants in the video analysis (Finn et al., 2006). These challenges can be brought out through research and associated risk handling, guaranteeing sustainable and practical combined model application.

v. **Impact on Teacher Identity and Practices:** The reflective practice framework developed by Korthagen (2017) also posits that it is possible to transform teachers' beliefs, making a difference in their practices. Further study of the combined model can explore how the blended approach affects the teacher's beliefs and practice in the long run (Wasylyshyn, 2003). Knowledge of long-term impact can help determine whether the model remains viable and can bring about sustained and significant changes within the classroom environment.

vi. **Tailoring to Diverse Contexts:** Organisational conditions are diverse and can be positive for a learner if applied to a particular educational environment that requires the individual's adaptation to new conditions (Koroleva, 2016; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Given the

characteristics of the learning environment we identified, the context of students and existing forms of professional development, further research is needed to understand how it may be implemented in various educational contexts.

vii. Empowering Teachers as Researchers: Technology-supported professional development that promotes peer coaching, reflection, and video analysis allows teachers to be involved in a meaningful and positive way within the change process (Finn et al., 2006; Smither et al., 2003). Research can further examine how this empowers teachers with self-efficacy, motivation, and organisational commitment to embracing improvement processes.

Therefore, research must address this significant transformation, which the combined approach of peer coaching offers (Gegner, 1997; Smither et al., 2003). To strengthen its place in various learning environments, future research can focus on describing its features, assessing the effectiveness of this approach, and providing guidance for schools and programmes interested in incorporating enacting methodologies for teacher professional development.

2.12 Research Gap

Despite significant effort being directed towards investigating the efficacy of the numerous approaches to CPD, the effects of reflection, especially when coupled with peer coaching on the sustained self-efficacy and perceptions of teachers in their classrooms, remains a knowledge gap that has not been well researched. Both Korthagen (2017) and Soisangwarn and Wongwanich (2013) have suggested that additional research within this area might benefit teachers and learners in the future. Research generally emphasised short-term effects and particular sorts of CPD while not investigating the long-lasting effects of reflection on pedagogical attitudes, teacher perceptions

or academic outcomes in the long run (Vermunt and Endedijk, 2010; Law, 2014). However, the research on these models must focus more on their applicability and effectiveness across various educational contexts as well as a firmer focus on teachers' perception of their own professional development. A more contemporary, broader, and longitudinal study is required to fill these gaps (Mayer and Salovey, 1997; Charteris and Smardon, 2013).

This research aligns strongly with global trends in education, particularly the shift toward personalised, reflective, and collaborative professional development. Across various educational contexts, there is a growing emphasis on video-enhanced coaching and peer-driven learning as mechanisms for teacher development. The study's integration of video-based peer coaching reflected these international movements, addressing long-standing limitations in traditional CPD models such as top-down delivery, lack of contextual relevance, and limited teacher agency. Moreover, the research supported calls for more sustainable, trust-based, and self-directed forms of professional learning that have been shown to improve teacher satisfaction and retention. By embedding reflective practices like Korthagen's Onion Model (2017) and leveraging video technology, this study mirrors the international push for evidence-informed, context-sensitive, and teacher-led development practices.

Recent research further underscores this gap, highlighting both the promise and limitations of video-based and peer coaching models for sustained professional growth. Studies by Eghterafi et al. (2022) and Baran, AlZoubi, and Bahng (2023) demonstrated that video-enhanced feedback and mobile observation can promote reflective awareness and pedagogical improvement, yet these effects are largely measured over short cycles. Similarly, Canaran (2023) found that online peer

coaching fostered collaboration and professional wellbeing among teacher educators during remote teaching but noted the absence of longitudinal follow-up to gauge lasting impact. Reisman and Beckwith (2023) and Svaricek (2024) both highlight that teacher learning through coaching and reflection is most effective when emotional support and structured feedback are sustained over time. Moreover, Ilgan and Basaran (2023) explained that while teachers participate widely in various professional development activities, reflective and peer-oriented approaches remain underutilised. Together, these findings point to an enduring need for research that examines how video-enhanced peer coaching and reflective practice contribute to teacher efficacy, agency, and pedagogical transformation across diverse educational contexts.

2.12.1 Enhancing Reflective Practices

Early research had identified that reflection is a cornerstone of effective teaching, allowing educators to critically assess their pedagogical decisions and consider alternative approaches (Schön, 1987). In the context of secondary schools within England, where the diversity of student needs and the demands of an ever-evolving curriculum require continuous adaptation, fostering reflective practices among educators is paramount. As an integral component of educational coaching, video analysis offers a unique and immersive tool for reflective engagement (Joyce and Showers, 2002). Unlike traditional modes of reflection, which may rely on memory or written records, video analysis provides an unfiltered and authentic portrayal of classroom interactions (Joyce and Showers, 2002; Knight, 2009). In this way, educators can carefully scrutinise their actions, both teaching and management, assess the learners' response and get an insight into the micro aspects of their teaching that one can easily overlook when engaged in the process (Knight, 2009). However, using video means that the content relies on objective truth, unlike the listening approach, which is based on memories (Barnhart and Vega, 2024). It is possible to review one's

teaching and find aspects that could not be viewed without using the coaching model based only on classroom observation and reflection (Joyce and Showers, 2002). It expanded the awareness of their teaching practices, making it easier to identify the areas that require improvement, thus allowing for more profound and purposeful changes (Joyce and Showers, 2002; Knight, 2009).

2.12.2 Promoting Continuous Professional Development

The requirement for continuous professional development is evident due to the current nature of English secondary schools, where pedagogy is changing, and student diversity is increasing (Svaricek, 2024). Video analysis can contribute to further development when used correctly and in a proper context during educational coaching. The application of video-informed coaching in professional practice entails several elements, including forming a community of practice where educators discuss the analysis and interpretation of instructional videos. Such structure encourages obligatory participation in each teacher's professional development so that the colleagues can develop from the lessons learned by the others. Thus, analysis within a coaching framework is an iterative process that indicates that the learning process is not a generic event but a specific learning process.

In addition, because the feedback provided in videos is bespoke to each individual teacher, especially for teachers, professional development is well suited to individuals' training (Outhwaite and Bettridge, 2009). Coaches can quickly pinpoint development needs and strengths because of the personalised approach compared to general professional development plans. It aligns with the idea of individuality and working conditions; it respects each educator as unique and recognises the complexities of learning environments in secondary schools (Wasylyshyn 2003).

Educators can hold various roles and responsibilities within secondary schools; thus, professional development should never be a one-time event (Sherin and Van Es, 2009). Video analysis can allow constructive, individual learning activities where teachers can watch each other's emerging teaching practices, discuss the performances, and get support from a coach (Outhwaite and Bettridge, 2009). It fosters skill enhancement and helps cultivate a culture of professionalism continually being developed within educational research (Van Es and Sherin, 2008). The application of video analysis in delivering a coaching process contributes substantially to a shift in coaching paradigms within the professional learning context. This contributes to the overall development of emergent patterns of adaptive and reflective educators (Soisangwarn and Wongwanich, 2014), which positions them as capable of managing the existing and developing complexities of education. Discussion is considered a tool for reflection; therefore, combining video analysis for this purpose can be effective (Wasylyshyn, 2003).

2.13 Research Aim and Questions

The research questions emerged from a critical analysis of existing challenges in traditional professional development models, particularly the lack of teacher agency, limited impact on classroom practice, and issues with sustainability and engagement. Through the literature review, these questions were further refined by examining international research on peer coaching, reflective practice, and the integration of video analysis in teacher development. The review highlighted key gaps, such as the need for deeper reflection, trust-building, and context-specific approaches, which informed the development of focused, relevant research questions to guide the study's exploration of video-based peer coaching as a professional development tool. Specifically, these research questions aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of integrating video-based peer coaching within educational coaching practices in secondary schools.

2.13.1 Research Aim

This research aimed to analyse teachers' perceptions of a peer coaching model that utilises video analysis as an approach to sustainable improvement in teaching practices in a secondary school context.

2.13.2 Research Questions

This doctoral thesis aimed to answer these research questions:

1. How is peer coaching perceived and positioned within the landscape of CPD in secondary education?
2. What challenges and enablers do teachers experience during the educational peer coaching process?
3. How do coaching relationships contribute to the effects of coaching and its sustainability from the perspective of teachers

2.14 Literature Review Conclusion

This literature review has examined contemporary research on teacher professional development, with particular focus on reflective practice, coaching, peer coaching, and the use of video analysis within secondary education. The review demonstrates that while professional development remains central to improving teaching quality and student outcomes, traditional CPD models are frequently constrained by limited teacher agency, weak alignment with classroom practice, and a lack of sustained impact. These limitations provide the context within which alternative professional learning approaches have emerged.

Across the literature, reflective practice is consistently positioned as a critical mechanism for meaningful teacher learning. Frameworks such as Korthagen's Onion Model emphasise the need to address not only teachers' observable behaviours but also their beliefs, values, and professional identities. However, this review also identifies persistent challenges in translating reflective theory into practice, particularly in secondary school contexts where reflection is often informal, inconsistent, or insufficiently scaffolded. This tension highlights the need for structured processes that can support reflection in a systematic and sustainable manner.

Coaching is widely presented as one such structure, yet the literature indicates significant variation in its effectiveness depending on design and implementation. Hierarchical and deficit-based coaching models are frequently associated with compliance, resistance, and limited professional growth. In contrast, peer coaching is increasingly identified as a relational and dialogic alternative that positions teachers as co-learners. The reviewed studies suggest that peer coaching can foster trust, professional dialogue, and shared responsibility for development, directly addressing concerns around teacher engagement and ownership. At the same time, the literature acknowledges practical constraints, including time pressures, uneven participation, and the need for clear frameworks to maintain focus and rigour.

The incorporation of video analysis within peer coaching is shown to strengthen reflective dialogue by providing concrete artefacts of practice around which professional conversations can be structured. Video-supported approaches enable teachers to revisit classroom interactions, support evidence-informed feedback, and mitigate issues related to memory and subjectivity. However, the literature also cautions that video analysis is most effective when embedded within

clearly defined coaching structures and aligned with reflective models, rather than being used as a standalone tool.

Taken together, the literature directly informs the focus of this study and aligns with its research questions. First, the review situates peer coaching within the broader CPD landscape, highlighting its growing prominence as an alternative to traditional professional development models. Second, it identifies a range of enablers and constraints, including relational trust, structural design, time, and cultural context, that shape teachers' experiences of coaching processes. Third, the literature underscores the importance of coaching relationships in determining both the perceived impact and sustainability of professional learning, while noting that these relational dynamics remain underexplored in empirical research.

This chapter establishes a conceptual foundation for investigating teachers' perceptions of video-based peer coaching in secondary schools. While existing research supports the individual value of peer coaching, reflective practice, and video analysis, there is limited evidence examining how these elements function collectively and how teachers experience their integration over time. Addressing this gap provides the rationale for the present study and informs the methodological choices outlined in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will consider the research paradigm and research design, the participants, data collection methods, and the analytical processes employed. Additionally, the chapter will reflect on the role of the researcher and the implications of system-wide restrictions on cross-institutional access throughout the 2020/21 academic year. The subsequent sections will elaborate on these aspects in detail, providing an understanding of the methodology and its alignment with the study's aims and objectives.

3.2 Research Paradigms

Researchers have sought to identify notable paradigms within educational research. Lather (2004) identifies four main groups of academic research: Positivist (predictive), Interpretivist (understanding), Critical (emancipatory), and post-structuralist (deconstruction). Each has its place within the research landscape, with each having its strengths within specific areas. Regarding education, using a predictive (positivist) approach can be problematic due to the ever-changing landscape of the educational systems and its processes (Mertens, 2005). Conversely, the deconstructive (post-structuralist) approach has proved useful in research where a process or situation can be reverse engineered to get to the roots of an issue and study it more thoroughly. The interpretivist approach aims to explore and understand the meaning of phenomena within their real-world contexts, and in education, such phenomena are both diverse and abundant (Thompson and Thorne, 2021). Due to the complex matrix of teaching, learning, and behaviour that is ever-present within classrooms, the interpretivist approach is a suitable approach that can be used to gain a compelling insight into these phenomena. In addition to this, the critical paradigm can also

be suitable due to growing evidence of the disparity within education for both student outcomes and staffing within schools.

Cohen et al. (2018) describe the interpretivist paradigm as where researchers start with individuals and aim to understand their interpretations of the world, using approaches like hermeneutics to view the social world through the participants' perspectives. This shows that the interpretivist will aim to see the world through the eyes of the participant and not necessarily through the eyes of an outsider.

Adopting the critical paradigm also allows this thesis to pursue transformative action as an additional supplementary objective. By identifying and analysing the ways in which existing professional development models and educational practices may reinforce or mitigate power imbalances, research can contribute to developing more equitable and inclusive approaches to teacher development. This can include proposing strategies that empower educators from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds and ensuring that professional development initiatives are not only accessible but also responsive to the diverse needs of all teachers. Ultimately, through this lens, the thesis can strive to advocate for systemic changes that promote social justice within the educational system, thereby aligning the research with the critical paradigm's commitment to creating meaningful, positive change.

3.2.1 Research Paradigms Assumptions

Within education, most of what is pursued and absorbed in the classroom is not tangible, being felt and understood rather than held or seen (Cohen et al., 2018). The idea that knowledge is a social construction, with its legitimacy conferred only if all those around believe it exists within

agreed parameters, is pivotal (Cohen et al., 2018). This contrasts with the argument that objects determine, impress, and imprint upon individuals; instead, people actively seek and construct their views and learning, often deeply rooted in their cultural contexts and interactions. For this researcher, there is a critical relationship between the interpretivist and constructionist paradigms, where a person would have to firstly interpret a situation, object, or factor to construct their view of this, and only then would this impact the individual. Interpretivist researchers agree with social constructionists, who recognise that *'[n]o human being can step outside of their humanity and view the world from no position at all, which is what the idea of objectivity suggests, and this is just as true of scientists as of everyone else'* (Burr, 2003. p172).

Social constructionists adopt the understanding that knowledge is embedded in a perspective and a value system, and therefore, no knowledge is value-free (Bates, 2013). Due to this, an understanding is constructed that discourse moulds our vision of the world and all things within it (Burr, 2003). This research has thus focused on the discourse of coaching conversations within the lifting and shifting of complex ideas and human interactions (Foden, 2020), where schools can be seen as a living, complex ecosystem.

Given that the research's paradigm is that of a critical interpretivist, its epistemological position is that knowledge is subjective and constructed through social interactions and shared meanings. Understanding is gained through interpreting the perspectives and experiences of others. Ontologically, reality is multiple and socially constructed, meaning that there is no single objective reality, but rather various realities shaped by individual and collective experiences and contexts.

This perspective emphasises the importance of understanding social phenomena nuanced and context-dependent nature.

In alignment with the chosen research paradigm, it is important to acknowledge the role of the researcher in shaping methodological decisions. As a practitioner-researcher, my position within the educational setting provided valuable insights into the context of the study, influencing the decision to adopt a qualitative approach. This insider perspective allowed for a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences with video-based peer coaching; however, it also necessitated a reflexive approach to mitigate potential biases. Through the systematic maintenance of a research journal, the use of semi-structured interviews to foreground participants' perspectives, and the incorporation of video analysis as an additional analytic lens, this study sought to enhance its credibility and trustworthiness while preserving critical distance from the research context.

3.3 Coaching Programme Design

The coaching programme design stemmed from many facets linked to the researcher's professional experience as a teacher, department lead, and whole-school teaching and learning lead within a rapidly improving secondary school district. Sunnyside Academy (pseudonym) is part of a large multi-academy trust, overseeing thirty-two secondary schools, thirteen of which are within a ten-mile radius of the research school. As highlighted in the introductory section of this chapter, this research adopted a qualitative design with embedded units of analysis. The primary focus within this study was the coaching programme, positioned as the overarching process that integrated embedded units of analysis.

This research aimed to adopt a post-reflective and collaborative design approach, which entails querying professionals within an educational institution to learn from them purposively and obtain multiple perspectives and insights contextual to the effects and sustainability of the coaching programme.

The coaching programme is aimed at constructing a practical, feasible, and thus implementable coaching model. This model is both logical and based on research evidence. The coaching programme aimed to utilise current theoretical frameworks, thus avoiding the potential disadvantages seen within traditional professional development processes. The coaching model consists of three critical elements that aim to maximise the success rate of the coaching as well as the extent of change these are the Training, Coaching, and Review phases (See Figure 3.1).

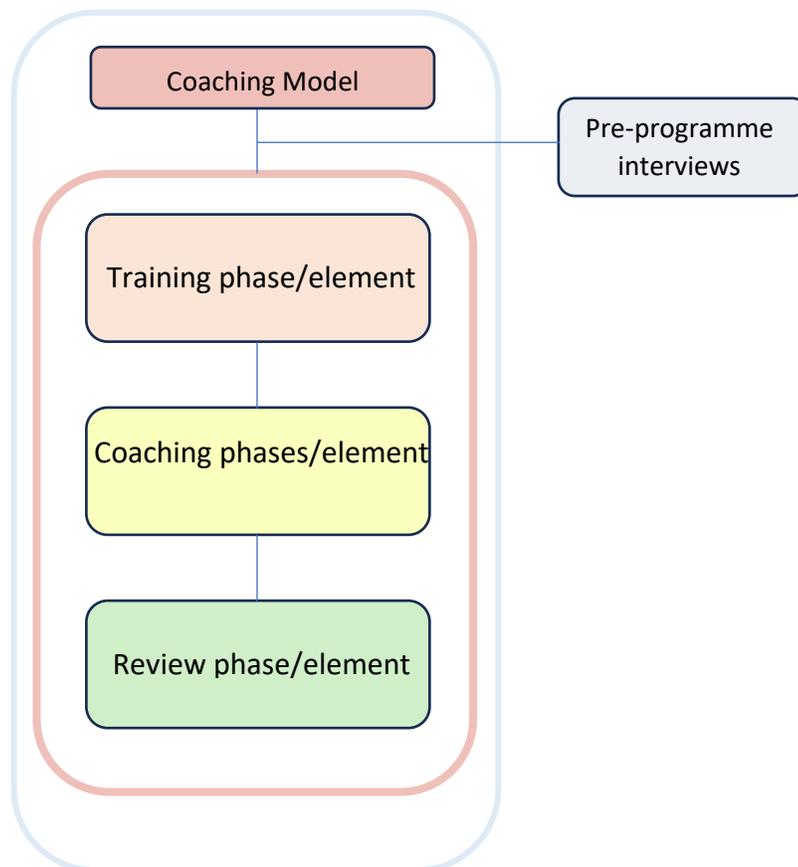


Figure 3.1: Coaching Programme Structure

The study design employed semi-structured pre-programme interviews prior to the commencement of the coaching model, known as 'Pre-Programme Interviews'. These interviews were undertaken with a sample of the participants and allowed participants to share their previous experiences of coaching. The pre-programme interviews were used to set the initial benchmark participants' perceptions of how peer coaching is perceived and positioned within the landscape of CPD in secondary education. This allowed the participants to become comfortable with the process and an additional opportunity to learn more about the participants, which may prove helpful during the evaluation phase. These were also used to set a benchmark for the participants' attitudes towards coaching and past experiences of coaching and professional development. The initial question in the pre-interview was 'Please tell me a little about your career to date?' this was a vital question as it allowed the participant to outline their professional trajectories, and it allowed for the exploration of motivations and goals and helped to identify past experiences. This focused on gathering information related to research question 1.

As mentioned previously, the main part of the coaching model consisted of three phases. Each phase of the model was designed to allow participants to be ready, enlightened, and reassured during the data collection process so that they would share a common understanding of the processes while moving towards a common goal of enhancing professional practice. The rest of this section will describe each of the phases.

The Training phase: The first component of training endeavoured to adopt a single language that was comprehensible to all the participants in the study, thus ensuring quality coaching during the coaching component of the study. From this foundation, the coaching element

could be built. In the training element, every participant went through the programme to better understand who is involved, roles and responsibilities, and what is expected from all when it comes to the programme delivery (see Appendices 2.3 and 2.4). Training for participants included education on the coaching processes and the documents created for this program, ensuring that all participants became comfortable and had a shared understanding of their tasks and activities. More specifically, the part of the training that was focused on identifying the potential client audience was effective, and examples were used during the practical sessions to encourage asking questions.

Pre-coaching training was conducted on the application of Korthagen's Onion Model (2017), as it is essential to build the foundation before going for the coaching phase. The sessions were interactive and involved deliberate practice skills and role-playing to enhance participants' understanding of the layers in the Onion Model, as there is a common language for reflective practice. The purpose of the training was underscored by Korthagen's idea of preparing teachers not only with technical skills but also with reflexive skills necessary for effective professional development.

A closer look into the identified research programme factors for the coaching phase demonstrates a systematic method of practice enhancement. Congruously employing Korthagen's Onion Model, the programme offered the template of reflective practices per se and an opportunity for the participants' meaningful, transformational process. Introducing dyads, audio recordings, transcription, and review interviews helped enrich the procedure and played a crucial role in understanding the effects of coaching on reflective practices. Adopting Korthagen's 'Professional Development 3.0' notion means that these approaches are moving away from these traditional

models, infusing the complexity of teacher-student interaction in the teaching profession. The purposeful inclusion of Korthagen's Onion Model (2017), in the context of the coaching sessions and the training that accompanies it, highlighted the emphasis on a facilitative approach to support teacher agency in working through layers of self-reflection.

The Coaching phase: This phase comprised of participants being placed into a coaching dyad (a partnership of two teachers) and focusing on coaching activities conducted in cycles over an academic year. It was proposed that a highly structured approach be developed to allow the participants to develop professionally and create a supportive community. The relationships between participants aided the sense of interaction and cooperative work, hence promoting the programme's learning-teaching environment where reflective practice is facilitated through teacher collaboration. The distinction between short-term and long-term changes also helped specify the concept of the dyad as a classification criterion, as the use of dyads over several months provided a better understanding of each participant's teaching context and their specific difficulties, thereby lending an element of trust to the analysis of the outcomes of coaching.

The Review phase: Lastly, the review phase created a pretext for the participants to expound on their perception of the effectiveness of the coaching programme. Here, they could express their view on different aspects of the coaching programme in terms of perceived usefulness, user-friendliness, and the observed outcome. The post-programme interview (see Appendix 5) formed the review element of the coaching programme. These interviews consisted of avenues of inquiry focused on the coaching programme and delved into the participants' thoughts and feelings regarding their coaching. A large portion of the questions focused on the

research question areas: How is peer coaching perceived and positioned within the landscape of CPD in secondary education? What challenges and enablers do teachers experience during the educational peer coaching process? How do coaching relationships contribute to the effects of coaching and its sustainability from the perspective of teachers?

These are factors that facilitate the coaching process, challenges experienced within the programme, and the perceived relationship and its effect on sustainability. Each coaching dyad was identified as an individual embedded unit of analysis, and thus, each dyad's interview transcript was analysed individually, and themes were compared. This allowed trends to emerge between individual dyads and how each saw the other as a beneficiary or limiter to the development of themselves.

3.3.1 Coaching Programme Participants

A total of ten teachers from Sunnyside Academy (pseudonym) volunteered to participate in the coaching programme and provided informed consent. To protect anonymity, all names used in this thesis are pseudonyms. Participants represented a range of career stages, subject backgrounds, and professional responsibilities, including classroom teaching, middle and senior leadership. Teaching experience ranged from 1 to 14 years. A summary of participant demographic and information is provided below in Table 3.1 with further information found in Appendix 6, with fuller pen portraits provided in Appendix 7 to support contextual interpretation of participant quotations in later chapters.

Name	Role	Gender / Age	Teaching Experience (years)	Pen portrait summary
William	Middle leader, Teacher	M, 30s	14	Highly experienced teacher and middle leader with a strong presence in the school. Has witnessed significant educational change and values structured, evidence-based practice. Interested in using coaching to refine leadership and pedagogical approaches.
Jane	Teacher	F, 30s	6	Confident in subject expertise and developing classroom management and instructional strategies. Values collaboration, professional learning, and student-centered approaches. Engaged positively with coaching as a reflective opportunity.
Tony	Middle leader, Teacher	M, 30s	5	Emerging leader balancing teaching and leadership responsibilities. Focused on relationship-building and staff development, with a strong interest in peer-to-peer learning through coaching.
Sasha	Teacher	F, 40s	4	Career-changer bringing valuable life experience to teaching. Committed to professional development and curious about how structured reflection could enhance classroom practice.
Rebecca	Teacher	F, 40s	3	Entered teaching later in life and is developing confidence in classroom management and pedagogy. Interested in reflective practice and improving student engagement through feedback and dialogue.
Adam	Senior leader, Teacher	M, 40s	13	Established senior leader with extensive experience mentoring early-career teachers and shaping school policy. Motivated to explore how reflective practice can be embedded within professional learning cultures.
John	Teacher	M, 30s	8	Experienced classroom teacher with strong subject knowledge. Values evidence-based and data-driven approaches and engaged in coaching to refine instructional practice.
Alice	Teacher	F, 20s	1	Early-career teacher in her first year of practice. Enthusiastic and open to guidance, with a focus on building confidence, lesson planning, and managing diverse student needs.
Ben	Teacher	M, 30s	2	Early-career teacher developing classroom management and curriculum delivery. Interested in structured support and the role of student feedback in improving practice.
Emily	Middle leader, Teacher	F, 40s	10	Experienced middle leader balancing teaching and leadership responsibilities. Reflective practitioner who values professional dialogue and collaborative development through coaching.

Table 3.1: Coaching Programme Participant information

Participants were organised into five coaching dyads (see Table 3.2), which served as the embedded units of analysis for the coaching phase of the study. Dyads were paired to support reciprocal peer coaching across the programme, with each participant alternating between the roles of coach and coachee across cycles.

Coaching Dyads		
Dyad 1	Jane	Tony
Dyad 2	Rebecca	Alice
Dyad 3	John	Adam
Dyad 4	Sasha	Emily
Dyad 5	William	Ben

Table 3.2: Coaching dyads used with coaching programme

To further contextualise the relational and developmental patterns evident across the dyads, Appendix 8 provides a short account of each dyad’s dynamics, including how differences in experience, leadership responsibility, and professional priorities shaped the tone and focus of coaching interactions.

Charteris and Smardon (2013) described this process as a structured inquiry where small groups of teachers engaged in collaborative dialogue. McCardel and Coutts (2010) shared this view and advocated for additional elements of sense-making for action and change. This highlighted the need for coaching dyads and the impact that professionals can have on each other when they feel seen and as if they are moving towards a common goal. This was a significant driving force behind implementing the dyads as embedded units of analysis instead of a single group of professionals. The dyads worked together throughout one academic year and met regularly to carry out the coaching cycles of the programme. Coaching dyads were paired

randomly, so experience, leadership level, and subject were random. Throughout the coaching phase, participants were supported regarding training and access to coaching documents shared on their school's secure, shared drive. The training element that took place before the coaching element was recorded and shared with all participants so they could refer to it if they had any questions regarding the finer details of the coaching programme.

3.3.2 Fieldwork Timeline

Fieldwork Timeline	
Month	Fieldwork activity
June/July 2020	<p>General preparation for data collection within school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for UEA ethical approval for research. • Discuss research proposal with school/trust leads. Gain final approval. • Carry out all ethics/consent work with all school stakeholders and University of East Anglia • Approach staff body for volunteers • Meet with volunteers and present brief overview in preparation for roll out in September • Finalise participant list • Send out information and consent documents to parents and students (Se appendix 3 and 4)
September 2020	<p>Training phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out training phase with participants see (appendix 2.3 and 2.4) 3 x meeting (90min each) • Sharing research information with participants, such as the future use of this research and information if they needed to speak with the research supervisors, etc. (Done within initial training session)
October - May 2021	<p>Coaching phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create coaching dyads • Hold coaching clinics to allow opportunities for participants to ask questions within the initial stages of their coaching 6 x 30min weekly through first half term) • Monitor coaching cycles are being completed and uploaded via the coaching documents onto the secure shared drive (Appendix 2.1 and 2.2)
June 2021	<p>Review phases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with each participant and conduct a semi-structured interview (see appendix 5)
July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise all data collection and ensure participants were aware of the future processes for this research. • Feedback to the school on the process and suggestions if more work around future coaching was needed.

Figure 3.2: Research Fieldwork Timeline.

3.4 Data Collection

Throughout the coaching programme, numerous data collection methods were used. Within both the pre-programme and review phases, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data (see Appendix 5). During the coaching phase, data collection instruments were used: audio recordings collected from the coaching conversations. The audio-recorded coaching sessions between the coach and the coachee were transcribed and analysed to gather more nuanced data on the coach-coachee relationship. An analysis was carried out on the transcribed conversations and elements of the coaching sessions, such as conversation focus, conscious self and partner development and collaborative sense-making. Analytical tools, discussed further in Section 3.5, were used to analyse the interview and coaching session transcripts. When the audio-recorded coaching sessions had taken place, this data was collected, and a preliminary analysis was conducted of the data that fed into the review phase of the coaching model.

These data collection tools were selected to gain insight into each coaching dyad and view teacher experience within the coaching programme, both before, during, and after. This allowed data to be collected from a 360-degree perspective of the coaching experience. Due to the complexities within a classroom, especially during the 2020/21 academic year, which had one of the most significant shifts that education has seen within the last decade, a multi-faceted approach worked well to identify all areas of interest. These data collection instruments followed research from Charteris and Smardon (2013), who used audio recordings (referred to as ‘dialogic feedback’) of their coaching sessions to identify themes within the coaching programme. This was seen to help professionals develop their peer coaching practice. For this research, the focus was on investigating the coaching programme and utilising the five coaching dyads as embedded units of analysis. Interviews were used at the beginning and the end of the coaching programme to bookend

the programme and identify changes in perceptions among the participants. The post-programme interviews encouraged participants to reflect on the facilitating factors and challenges encountered throughout (research question 2), as well as the reflection on the aspects of the coach-coachee relationship that affect the sustainability of coaching (research question 3).

Although the research design involved a small sample size, it aligns with similar studies in this area conducted by Nanduri (2018), Soisangwarn and Wongwanich (2013), Cantrell and Hughes (2008), and Charteris and Smardon (2013). The sample size was chosen to maintain manageability and focus within a single school, thereby minimising external variability. Additionally, the constraints imposed by COVID-19 related restrictions necessitated conducting the research within a single establishment, limiting the ability to include a more extensive or diverse participant pool.

3.4.1 Data Collection within Coaching Sessions

The primary source of data collection in this study was interviews, which were audio recorded. These recordings allowed for an in-depth analysis of the teachers' perspectives, capturing their rich and honest insights. Ben-Peretz, Gottlieb, and Gideon (2018) drew upon work from Gawande (2011), which suggested that experts can improve their performance by introducing another expert into their feedback process once they have observed their practice. This work fed directly into the idea of the peer element of this coaching model, and this was a vital part as this study aimed to be one that can be used across any educational environment. Thus, the need for teachers to be able to develop each other without the need for an external agent is vital for this to be a cost-effective, impactful, and reasonable programme to help with the professional development of teachers (Wolfenden et al., 2024). Ben-Peretz et al. (2018) also introduced the idea

of ‘non-hierarchical joint deliberation’, contrasting the traditional ‘mentor-mentee’ interactions often utilised within education. This research identified the dynamic as closely relating to Schwab’s (1982) ‘conception of educational deliberation’. Schwab (1982), although dated, offered keen insight into this and theorised that deliberation deviates from debate, where individuals have already formed their opinion on a subject before entering the conversation. Whereas, in deliberation, professionals make a joint effort to address the issue and actively aim to understand or empathise with the other’s perception of the situation. This lends itself to the data collection tools used as these remove hierarchical labels and allow all participants to take up both the role of ‘coach’ and ‘coachee’ throughout the coaching programme.

The notion is that no matter how long you have been teaching or how high you may be on the leadership scale, no one teacher is ever the finished product, and developments can always be sought. This aligned with Charteris and Smardon’s (2013) research on ‘collaborative sense-making’, where they theorised that professionals could work together to collaboratively ‘make an object, subject,’ thereby adding clarity to classroom episodes. Drawing from this previous research, this study also utilised the use of a collaborative structure of coaching and allowed both parties to take turns to assume the role of coach and coachee throughout the coaching process. One member of the coaching dyad was the coach and led the feedback cycle while the other was coached; once the coaching cycle is completed, the roles will be reversed, and the coach will become the coachee (see Figure 3.3).

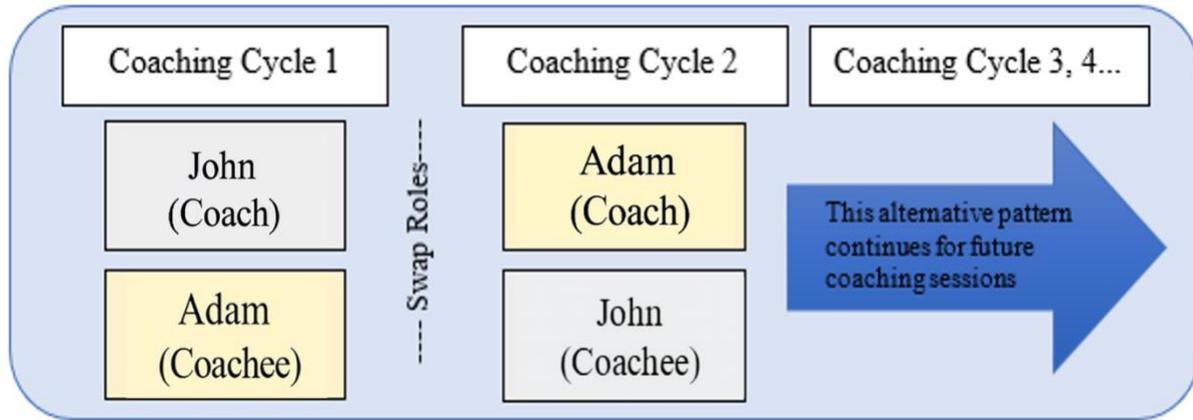


Figure 3.3: Diagram of Coach/Coachee Turn-taking Process During the Coaching Programme.

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Kvale (1996) explained the ‘interview’ as not only a well-recognised method of data collection but noted a fundamental paradigm shift within qualitative research, from the use of interviews as purely a means to generate data from research participants to a means to capture the knowledge generated between humans, often through conversation. This can produce rich data that, when coupled with the stimulus recall of the video analysis, can become an effective tool for developing deep thinking (Charteris and Smardon, 2013). For this reason, semi-structured interviews were used to gain valuable insight into the participant’s perceptions of all phases of the programme (see Appendix 5).

Although the coaching conversations are a crucial piece of data for this research, the semi-structured interviews helped to shed light on the research questions. The interviews were divided into both pre (pre-programme) and post (review) interviews as these were carried out before and after the coaching programme was undertaken and formed the bookends of the data collection process with each participant individually.

There are several approaches that can be used for the interview process. Silverman (2006) and Alvesson (2011) suggest the following as viable approaches to interviews. The positivist approach assumes that interview responses accurately reflect the experiences of interviewees. In contrast, romanticism advocates for more genuine interactions, viewing data as authentic subjective experiences revealed through unstructured, open-ended interviews (Alvesson, 2011). The localist approach argues that interviewees are not merely reporting external events but are producing situated accounts. The interviews were carried out with a mixture of approaches; however, the ‘localist’s approach’ resonates well within education and teaching to define a situation as more than just retelling or reporting (Shibakawa, 2024). As two teachers could teach two identical classes, they could both quickly come away with differing experiences in that similar set of circumstances. If both were to report that experience, they would be almost identical; however, if they were both able to elaborate and interject with their feelings, emotions, and motivations, hence produce situated accounts, then this would give a more thorough depiction of how they each felt the lesson went. Similarly, the interviewing technique used was a combination of ‘romanticism’ and ‘localism’, aiming to connect to the research participants and their experiences while progressing through the coaching programme (Bates, 2013). In addition, critical incidents during fieldwork provided more opportunities for progressive focusing (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011).

3.4.3 Video Analysis

The video recordings of lessons were collected in a prescriptive manner to ensure ethical standards were maintained, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Prior to any recording, explicit consent was obtained from all participating students and their guardians. This consent was a fundamental aspect of maintaining transparency and respecting the autonomy

of participants. Additionally, great care was taken to ensure that no students who had not given consent were inadvertently captured on video. This approach not only safeguarded the privacy of students but also aligned with ethical research guidelines, ensuring that all parties involved were aware of and agreed to the use of recordings for research purposes.

Furthermore, the video recordings were carefully conducted to provide a true and accurate representation of the classroom environment, without manipulation or distortion. By capturing lessons in their natural context, the recordings served as a valuable tool for observing real-time interactions and dynamics, contributing to the authenticity of the research findings. The ethical considerations of confidentiality, informed consent, and accuracy were consistently prioritised throughout the process, ensuring that the data collected adhered to the highest standards of integrity and respect for participants.

Video devices were booked through the school's pre-existing system and used within lessons to record the teacher at the front of the classroom. Due to the COVID restrictions regarding teacher contact/movement around the classroom, the camera could only record the teacher and not the students within the classroom. Coaching dyads were able to observe teacher practices from these recordings and utilise these as a stimulus recall tool during the coaching conversations. Video recordings were saved in a centralised and password-protected shared folder that allowed only the coachee to access them. Once uploaded, coaching sessions were then deleted from the cameras.

3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation (NVivo)

Huberman and Miles's (2014) thematic analysis of qualitative data was used throughout the data analysis process. Collected audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and were analysed

to affix codes. The following steps used to analyse the collected data, as identified by Huberman and Miles (2014), included:

- Affixing codes to the initial set of materials obtained from observation, interviews, documentary analysis, etc.
- Memoing – adding comments, reflections, etc.
- Sorting and sifting through the materials, trying to identify similar phases, patterns, themes, relationships, sequences, differences between sub-groups, etc.
- Isolating patterns and processes, commonalities and differences.
- Gradually elaborate on a small set of generalisations that cover the 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 (2014)

NVivo was used as the primary software to facilitate the systematic coding and generation of themes within the dataset. The software enabled the researcher to assign codes to transcribed interviews, ensuring a structured approach to data analysis. Through iterative coding, patterns and themes were identified, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the relationships and trends within the semi-structured interviews and coaching conversations. NVivo's capabilities, such as query functions and cross-referencing, provided a robust mechanism for identifying recurring themes, tracking their evolution across different phases of the research, and ensuring consistency in interpretation. The dynamic nature of the coding process allowed new codes to be incorporated as fresh insights emerged. By utilising NVivo, the research maintained methodological rigor,

ensuring that themes were grounded in the data rather than imposed externally, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the coaching process.

The essence of the NVivo coding system lies in its capacity to assign labels, tags, and attributes to discrete portions of data. This process was not merely a mechanical exercise but a nuanced interpretation of the content, encapsulating the essence of themes, patterns, and relationships within the information at hand. As codes were diligently assigned to different segments of the data (see Figure 3.4), the NVivo system began to weave a tapestry of interconnected ideas and concepts, providing a visual representation of the underlying structure, which gave light to answering the research questions.

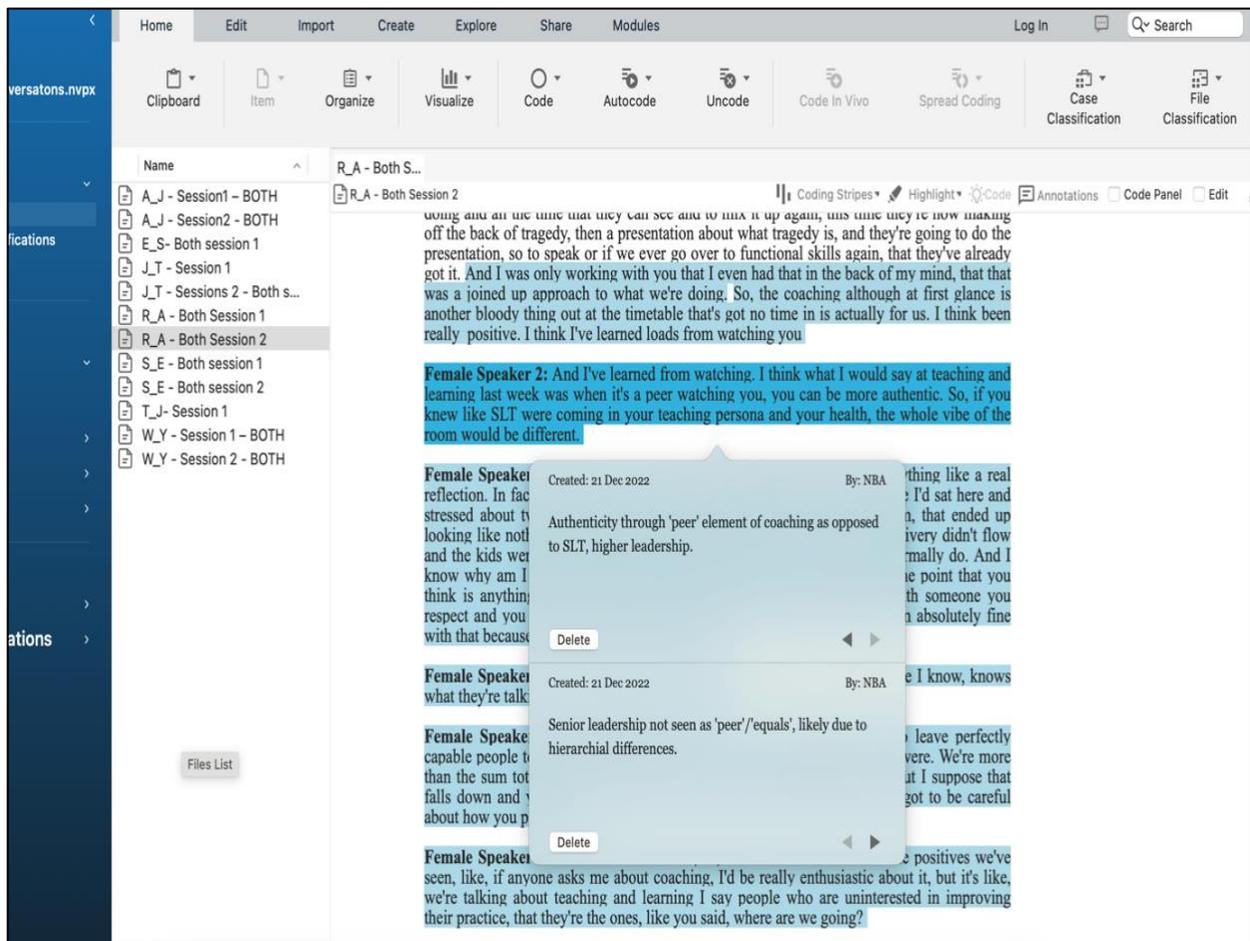


Figure 3.4: Example of Analytical Memos and Codes used for the Analysis of Audio Data (Transcripts).

One of the key advantages of the NVivo data coding system was its ability to identify emergent trends within the data (see Appendix 9). The software enabled the exploration through the coded elements, discerning patterns that might have eluded a primary examination (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). The dynamic nature of the coding process meant that new codes could be added as fresh insights emerged, enabling a real-time adaptation of the analytical framework. Moreover, the NVivo system's capacity to perform complex queries and cross-referencing expedited the identification of relationships and correlations within the data (Woolf and Silver,

2018). This not only streamlined the analytical process but also enabled a more profound understanding of the multifaceted aspects of the research questions.

Utilising the NVivo transcription coding system proved to be instrumental not only in dissecting specific sections of the coaching programme (preliminary, coaching, and review phases) but also in discerning overarching themes that permeated through the entirety of the research project (see Appendix 9). Through the meticulous coding of transcriptions, the software enabled me to encapsulate the essence of individual interviews, focus group discussions, and relevant documents, affording a granular analysis of each component (see Figure 3.5).

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created...	Modified on	Modified by	Color
> ○ _Coaching 1	0	0	20 Dec 2022 at 07:...	NBA	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	Red
> ○ _Language 1	0	0	20 Dec 2022 at 08:...	NBA	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	Blue
> ○ _Relationship 1	0	0	20 Dec 2022 at 07:...	NBA	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	Green
> ○ _Turn-Taking 1	1	1	20 Dec 2022 at 07:...	NBA	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	Cyan
> ○ Coaching 2	3	6	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	21 Dec 2022 at 13:...	NBA	Red
> ○ Language 2	0	0	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	Cyan
> ○ Relationship 2	1	1	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	21 Dec 2022 at 12:27	NBA	Green
○ Sustainability	1	1	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	Brown
> ○ Turn taking 2	0	0	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	20 Dec 2022 at 09:...	NBA	Blue
○ zzz_Collaboration 1 or 2	11	39	21 Dec 2022 at 08:...	NBA	21 Dec 2022 at 14:...	NBA	Blue

Figure 3.5: NVivo System – Identification of Data Trends.

The cross-referencing capabilities of NVivo allowed for the trajectory of specific themes to be traced with a high level of accuracy, identifying their recurrence and evolution throughout

the entire research project. This holistic perspective unveiled connections and relationships that might have gone unnoticed in conventional analysis, transcending the boundaries of individual data points. This approach enriched the depth of the findings, offering a nuanced understanding of the interconnected dynamics that shaped the overarching trends within the research project. The NVivo system, thus, emerged as a catalyst for uncovering not only micro-level insights within specific sections but also macro-level trends that underscored the coherence and significance of the entire study. A table similar to that above (Figure 3.5) was used to highlight the main themes identified within the coaching dyad's coaching sessions. This was used in conjunction with NVivo transcription coding software to code transcripts of the coaching sessions between the coaching dyads.

The researcher engaged closely with the data through an iterative process of familiarisation, reflection, and re-coding. All interview transcripts were read multiple times to identify initial patterns and meaning units before being uploaded into NVivo for systematic organisation. The coding process was both inductive and deductive, allowing themes to emerge from participants' voices while remaining informed by the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. Analytical memos were used throughout to capture reflections, evolving interpretations, and connections across dyads. An exhaustive list of the final codes and themes is provided in Appendix 9.

Participants engaged with the data by reviewing the transcripts through a process of participant-checking, to ensure that the themes identified were an accurate reflection of what was being communicated and verified that the interpretations and themes identified truly reflected their perspectives. By engaging in this thorough process, the research ensured that the final themes were

grounded in the data and reflective of the participants' authentic voices. Initially, they carefully read through each transcript multiple times, ensuring they understood the context and nuances of the responses. They then signed off on each transcript and theme identified to ensure that what was coded was in fact what was meant. Creswell and Poth (2018) describe this as member-checking and identify this as one of the key validation strategies for ensuring the accuracy and credibility of qualitative findings.

3.6 Methodological Credibility and Dependability

In qualitative educational research, methodological credibility is established not through claims of objectivity but through transparent, coherent, and theoretically aligned research practices. Given the complexity of professional interactions and relational dynamics examined in this study, particularly within the context of educational disruption during the 2020 international pandemic, it was essential that data collection and analysis procedures were sufficiently robust to support credible and defensible interpretations.

Credibility within this study is understood as the extent to which the research design, analytical processes, and resulting interpretations are logically connected and theoretically warranted. As articulated by Winter (2000), credibility encompasses multiple dimensions, ranging from the appropriateness of research tools to the degree to which interpretations are supported by an explicit theoretical framework. In line with this position, the study prioritised internal credibility by ensuring that analytical claims were grounded in clearly identified discourse patterns and interactional features emerging from the data. External considerations of credibility were addressed through detailed contextual description, enabling readers to evaluate the applicability of findings beyond the immediate research setting.

Dependability, closely aligned with credibility in qualitative inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), was addressed through the consistent application of methodological procedures across all phases of the research. Audio-recorded coaching cycles, systematic transcription processes, and structured interview protocols were employed to ensure consistency and traceability. These procedures provide a clear audit trail, allowing readers to follow the progression from data collection to interpretation and conclusion.

Transparency and confirmability were further strengthened through the deliberate structuring of the interview process. Interviews were designed using Kvale's (1990) 'traveller' metaphor, positioning the interviewer as an engaged but non-directive conversational partner. This approach reduced the likelihood of leading responses and supported the generation of rich, participant-led accounts of coaching experiences. While acknowledging the historical origins of this framework, its structured yet dialogic orientation remains well suited to contemporary qualitative research contexts.

The collaborative nature of the study also contributed to its methodological strength. Coaching relationships are inherently relational and multi-dimensional; therefore, a collaborative research design enabled the capture of diverse perspectives and interactional nuances that would be less accessible through non-collaborative approaches. Consistent with Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013), this collaborative orientation enhanced the depth and credibility of the findings by incorporating multiple viewpoints and reducing the dominance of a single interpretive lens.

Transferability was further supported through the integration of Korthagen's (2017) Professional Development 3.0 framework as the theoretical foundation of the coaching programme. By situating the study within an established and contemporary model of professional learning, the research provides a coherent basis for considering how its findings may inform similar educational contexts. The alignment between the coaching process and this framework strengthens the potential for the study's insights and recommendations to be meaningfully applied beyond the immediate research setting.

Reflexivity was operationalised as an ongoing methodological practice rather than a purely philosophical stance. A research journal was maintained to document analytic decisions, emerging interpretations, and critical self-reflection throughout the research process (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Tracy, 2010). Participant-checking was employed during the interview phase to confirm the accuracy and resonance of interpretations, thereby reinforcing confirmability. The inclusion of video analysis provided an additional evidential layer, offering an objective record of interactions that complemented interview data and reduced reliance on researcher interpretation alone.

Collectively, these methodological strategies ensured that the study's findings were grounded in systematic, transparent, and theoretically aligned research practices. By foregrounding procedural rigour, reflexive accountability, and analytic coherence, the study demonstrates a credible and dependable approach to investigating professional learning through coaching within complex educational environments.

3.7 Researcher Positionality

This study was conducted by a practitioner-researcher situated within the educational context within this study. This positionality afforded an informed and nuanced understanding of the professional environment, relational dynamics, and contextual constraints shaping participants' experiences. Such insider knowledge enhanced sensitivity to the subtleties of coaching interactions and supported the generation of contextually grounded interpretations. At the same time, occupying an insider role necessitated careful attention to potential bias and assumptions. To address this, reflexivity was embedded throughout the research process, with ongoing critical reflection on how professional relationships, prior experiences, and expectations might influence data collection and analysis. This reflexive stance supported analytic distance while preserving the benefits of contextual familiarity. By acknowledging and actively managing this dual role, the study sought to balance engagement with critical scrutiny, ensuring that interpretations remained grounded in participants' accounts rather than researcher presuppositions.

3.8 Ethical, Personal, and Ideological Issues Raised by the Research

The British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2024) ethical guidelines were followed regarding consent, confidentiality, and research with children. Permission was gained from the principal of the school where the study was carried out, as well as consent from all the participants, parents, and students within the school. All students and parents were also sent an information sheet regarding the research (see Appendix 3.1), so they were aware of the research being conducted within the school; a separate information sheet was sent to every student, which used easy-to-understand language accessible (see Appendix 3.2). This was done using the school's everyday online communication portal, part of their routine communication system. I also rigorously followed the ethical guidelines set out by the University of East Anglia's (UEA) ethical

committee. This included data storage and communication through UEA's email and OneDrive system for enhanced security.

One critical aspect of the research project was using video recordings as a stimulus-recall tool during coaching conversations. This element required thorough deliberation during the research design stages to address ethical concerns, particularly the need to protect students' identities. To ensure privacy, recordings were limited to capturing the front of the classroom, focusing exclusively on the teacher. This approach was facilitated by the school's newly implemented COVID-19 policy, which reduced teacher movement around the classroom, thereby naturally limiting the recording to the teacher and excluding the students. By adopting these measures, the study effectively navigated the ethical complexities associated with using video recordings in an educational setting, prioritising the protection of student privacy.

It is crucial to emphasise that the video recordings of the lessons were not used as research data. These recordings were exclusively for the coach and coachees' use within their coaching conversation, ensuring that only the individuals directly involved in the coaching process had access. The researcher did not view or have access to these recordings at any stage. This strict limitation on access further safeguarded the privacy of both teachers and students, ensuring that the recordings were used solely to facilitate reflective coaching conversations. By implementing these stringent measures, the study upheld high ethical standards, respecting the confidentiality and integrity of all participants involved.

Along with the above ethical implications that were identified and addressed, it was also prudent to note that this study was sponsored research, not in the traditional sense; however, the researcher's doctorate qualification was sponsored by a continuous professional development programme set up through the researcher's school trust. This meant the school had a vested interest in the research and researcher throughout the process. To mitigate any conflict of interests, both the school and trust were aware that the research sat separately from the researcher's professional work within the school and was solely UEA research and would abide by the ethical guidelines of both BERA, UEA and the school. The principal was supportive throughout and understood the need for the research to follow the correct protocols. This included not being used for performance management of the participants and the confidentiality of all data and information gathered as part of the research, regardless of who it was collected for. The research followed additional guidelines from Hammersley and Traianou (2012), who state, '*Sponsored research does not absolve the researcher from ethical behaviour. For example, it may be considered unethical for the sponsor to control the research or to tell the researcher (a) how to conduct the research, (b) what results they should look for and what findings should be suppressed, (c) what should and should not be reported; (d) to conceal who the sponsor is; and (e) what are the purposes of the research.*' These guidelines help set expectations for the researcher and the sponsor throughout the research process.

Participants were also made aware of this to ensure transparency for all stakeholders within this research. Bachkirova et al. (2015) introduced a key caveat for consideration. When organisations sponsor research, it is essential to clearly define who is responsible for evaluating the model's effectiveness. Each level of the research hierarchy could have a vested interest, making it crucial to determine who is in the best position to deem the model successful.

Nanduri (2018) discussed using the practitioner-researcher approach to utilise existing relationships with coachees. This approach allows researchers to tap into their specialisms and enhance their research outcomes. However, Rooney (2005) argued that researchers who are ‘insiders’ due to pre-existing relationships can no longer be perceived as objective. He asserts that the likelihood of the practitioner’s behaviour being influenced by these relationships is too high, leading to potential bias that differs from the conduct of an independent researcher. This tension between leveraging insider knowledge and maintaining objectivity is a central concern in the practitioner-researcher dynamic.

In the research design for this study, the researcher adopted the role of a practitioner-researcher, conducting research within educational establishments where they were professionally involved. While offering certain advantages, this insider status also posed challenges to maintaining objectivity. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, conducting research in familiar environments was unavoidable. However, measures were implemented to ensure high levels of objectivity, mirroring the behaviour of an independent researcher. These measures included excluding participants from areas of the school where the researcher had pre-existing line manager relationships. By addressing these challenges, the research aimed to balance the benefits of insider knowledge with the need for objective and unbiased analysis. While my familiarity with the school’s context facilitated trust and access, it also introduced potential biases and power dynamics that could influence participant responses. To mitigate this, I ensured that no participants were drawn from areas where I held managerial responsibility or influence, thereby reducing coercion risks. Additionally, I remained reflexive about the potential impact of institutional sponsorship, ensuring that findings were grounded by teacher perspectives rather than organisational

expectations. Ethical integrity was further upheld through informed consent, confidentiality safeguards, and participant-checking, allowing participants to validate the accuracy of their contributions. These measures helped balance the benefits of insider research with the need for transparency and critical distance.

Ethical considerations were treated as a priority throughout the research, with strict adherence to BERA (2024), UEA, and school guidelines to ensure transparency, confidentiality, and respect for all participants. The measures adopted, ranging from rigorous consent procedures and secure data management to limiting video use and mitigating conflicts of interest, demonstrated the study's commitment to uphold the highest standards of ethical integrity.

3.9 Methodology Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological framework underpinning the study and justified the research design in relation to the study's aims and research questions. Guided by a critical interpretivist paradigm, the research was designed to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of video-based peer coaching within a real-world secondary school context. This paradigm was appropriate given the study's focus on meaning-making, relational dynamics, and the socially constructed nature of professional learning.

The qualitative research design, incorporating semi-structured interviews, audio-recorded coaching conversations, and embedded units of analysis, enabled an in-depth examination of how peer coaching is perceived and positioned within the wider CPD landscape (Research Question 1). Pre-programme interviews established participants' prior experiences and assumptions, providing

a contextual baseline against which subsequent perceptions could be examined. This approach ensured that teachers' voices remained central throughout the research process.

The structured coaching programme and data collection strategy were explicitly aligned to exploring the challenges and enablers experienced during the peer coaching process (Research Question 2). By capturing data before, during, and after the coaching cycles, the methodology allowed for the identification of practical, relational, and contextual factors influencing engagement with the programme. The use of coaching dyads as embedded units of analysis further enabled comparison across cases while preserving sensitivity to individual experiences.

The inclusion of recorded coaching conversations and post-programme interviews provided a robust methodological basis for examining the role of coaching relationships in shaping perceived impact and sustainability (Research Question 3). These data sources enabled detailed analysis of dialogic interaction, trust, reciprocity, and shared sense-making, offering insight into how relational dynamics influenced professional learning over time. The decision to use video recordings as a stimulus-recall tool, rather than as primary research data, supported reflective depth while maintaining ethical integrity and participant autonomy.

Rigour and trustworthiness were enhanced through the triangulation of data sources, a systematic process of thematic analysis supported by NVivo, ongoing reflexive engagement, and participant-checking with participants. Ethical principles were integrated across all stages of the study, with particular attention to informed consent, confidentiality, researcher positionality, and

the controlled use of video technology in a school context. Collectively, these procedures reinforced the study's credibility, dependability, and transparency.

The methodology adopted in this study was designed to align with the research questions and to generate rich, context-sensitive data capable of illuminating teachers' experiences of video-based peer coaching. By situating the research within an educational setting and employing methods congruent with the study's theoretical foundations, this chapter presents a clear and coherent foundation for the presentation and analysis of findings in the following chapters.

Chapters 4 and 5 will present and discuss the study's results and discuss the meaning garnered from the data in the hope of analysing and assessing the impact of the programme on each of the units of analysis but also take a deeper look into the participants that have progressed through their coaching journey and their thoughts and feelings towards it.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter will present themes identified from analysing audio recordings gathered from preliminary interviews, in-session coaching conversations, and review interviews. The discussion chapter will discuss these findings further.

4.1 Preliminary Interviews

The following section presents the themes identified within the preliminary interviews, this chapter identifies excerpts from the data collected that illustrated insights into the participants' professional journeys and the personal perspectives on continuous professional development (CPD) as well as the previous experience with educational coaching. The recurring themes were: Perception of education, Personal experience of CPD, Previous experience and perception of educational coaching, and Perceived sustainability of CPD and coaching.

4.1.1 Perception of Education

This section will explore teachers' initial perceptions of education and their professional roles within it, offering an insight into the beliefs, assumptions, and priorities that shaped their engagement with CPD thus far into their teaching careers. By capturing these baseline attitudes, the research aimed to contextualise reflections and highlight perceptual shifts that occur as a result of participation in the peer coaching model. This grounding may help to identify the broader cultural and institutional factors that may influence how coaching is positioned and received within CPD.

When Alice discussed her perception of education, she shared how she felt education has started to shift towards a more 'holistic' paradigm where expectations of the teachers are more noticeable. She added that there is a much stronger focus on ensuring the 'diet' of 'culture capital' available to students within schools and how this can lead to higher expectations placed upon teachers: *it's [UK national curriculum] a lot more holistic, it's got higher expectations and I think that's something I've noticed since I was at the college [previous place of employment], the college was very much 'Let's get these kids through' and not always doing the most morally correct things. There's a lot more importance on cultural capital and giving these kids a more holistic understanding of the world. (Alice).* Rebecca also shared her perception of the current educational system and teacher expectations within schools and added how she has found these difficult to maintain in the current educational climate: *I don't know if anything has changed. I think I've changed, but I just think it can still sink anybody. I think the expectations are ludicrous beyond human, and the more you give, the more they take. (Rebecca)*

Jane discussed feelings linked to expectations and trust. She expressed her feelings of trust as a teacher and how this has changed over her career. She explained that there used to be an element of trust within teaching, trust to utilise one's initiative; however, in recent years, this has now been replaced with a more prescriptive approach to teaching: *It's kind of the idea of trusting the teacher and when I first started there was a lot of trusting the teacher you could just kind of do what you wanted. Then it was like, 'Oh no! You need to do it this way!' every lesson must be this way. It felt very much like there wasn't that trust in the teacher. (Jane)* Jane continued and posed potential reasoning behind this perceived shift in levels of trust given to teachers. She describes teaching as a 'game that we've got to play' due to pressures from external educational agencies:

We don't really trust what you're doing, and it's got to be this set way! We're part of this game that we've got to play. Or is it leadership not trusting their staff? Sometimes, I think we deserve to be trusted. (Jane)

This perception of pressure was also explored by Rebecca, who mentions the issue of perceived pressures placed upon her by external standards agencies and feeling as if there is a repetitive nature behind teaching to these agencies' standards but not being able to step away from these due to the pressures placed upon teachers: *I'm sure that we are particularly aware of them here because we are under the cosh of OFSTED, we can't, I just feel like we are on a hamster's wheel that we can't get off of because of those pressures. (Rebecca)*

Tony shared these feelings of repetitiveness within teaching and discussed the 'cycles' he has experienced. He describes education as 'one big wheel' that perpetuates old ideas as new. He used his previous experience to explain this, with his current school's sanction system being 'revamped', but 'underneath it, all the consequences the students receive are all the same': *...you try new things they sort of fade out and something else comes back in from a few years ago, and it's just one big cycle... I suppose it is behaviour management. The sanctions or the systems will be called different things, but underneath it, all the consequences that students receive are very similar. (Tony)*

In the current educational landscape, a shift towards a more holistic approach is emerging, as observed by Alice, who noted the increasing emphasis on cultural capital and the heightened expectations placed on teachers. This shift reflected a broader purpose in education to provide

students with a well-rounded understanding of the world. However, this evolution also brings challenges, as Rebecca expresses frustration with the overwhelming and often unattainable expectations imposed on educators, suggesting that the demands have become excessive and unsustainable. Trust, once a foundational element in teaching, has also eroded over time, as Jane describes a transition from a trusting environment to a more prescriptive and rigid system. This change has fostered a sense of distrust, particularly as external agencies like OFSTED and school leadership exert greater control, reducing the autonomy of teachers. The recurring pressures to conform to specific standards and systems, as discussed by Tony, highlighted a cyclical nature within education, where new ideas often give way to old practices, leading to a feeling of stagnation and repetitiveness. Together, these perspectives underscore the complex interplay of trust, sustainability, and purpose within modern education, revealing both the aspirations and the tensions inherent in striving for a more holistic educational paradigm.

4.1.2 Personal Experience of CPD

Personal experience of CPD was discussed during the preliminary interviews and teachers were asked to reflect on their own experiences of CPD they had undertaken in the past. Alice discussed her perception of the current CPD provision at her current school and shared what she felt to be a common perception of whole-school CPD sessions. Specifically, if they are not specific to her practice, then they are not benefitting her directly and are simply utilising her valuable non-teaching time: *...[H]ere, people are pretty happy to be like, well, it's not benefitting me directly. It's eating into my PPA, so why would I do it? (Alice)*

The impact of generic CPD lacking specificity was echoed by Emily, who shared that CPD

lacking a precise aim can be seen as wasted time. Emily continued to explain that she understands the difference between mandatory and legally required CPD, such as Safeguarding. However, she felt that CPD, focused on teaching and learning, can be more aligned with senior leadership staff simply ‘offloading’ a large amount of information related to their agendas, specifically during the professional development (PD) day that follows a long break, such as the six-week summer holidays: *...[E]verything else had been a complete waste of my life. Like I understand you have to sit there and do the safeguarding stuff. Still, you do so many times and the two PD days at the start of every year where SLTs just stand up and offload everything they’ve been thinking about all summer with no time for you to implement it, think about it, have time as a team. Yeah, I believe CPD is largely wasted. (Emily)*

The perception of how whole-school CPD can tend to lack a precise aim is shared by William, who stated that CPD often used a blanket approach, which is not conducive to effective CPD. He explained that just because something works in one classroom does not mean that this work can be replicated with the same effects in another school. *So, we have a focus on if you have this specific tiny issue in your classroom, here is an incredibly bespoke solution that one teacher found in one of their classes that worked, and then we present the case study as if that’s the panacea, but that’s not how good research ed works. (William).* Jane also broached this point when she explained how she disagrees with CPD that is aimed at everyone, especially when she felt that she does not need to work on that specific element of her teaching (specifically questioning in Jane’s case): *In [subject] one of the things that we tend to cover in CPD, and I think is my strength is questioning. I just hate sitting through another CPD, like, yeah, why do I need to sit through this again? It’s not tailored to me. I don’t know how much better I can be at it! (Jane)*

This need for ‘purposefulness’ was shared by several of the teachers. This purposeful nature of CPD is coupled with the need for specificity when producing effective CPD. William explained his position on the matter and discussed the need for CPD to avoid blanket approaches as he discussed before and instead provide teachers with a wide range of development methods: *There are lots of different frameworks out there, but what we [school CPD] keep consistently falling into the trap of is this is the golden bullet, so instead of saying to teachers, here are four models of excellent lesson design pedagogy, find the one that suits you and adapt it, we are all given a blanket approach that we need to follow, but it doesn't necessarily work for every teacher, and it doesn't work for every pedagogical aim. (William)*

Alice refers to this as needing a ‘differentiated’ menu of CPD options where teachers can pick their CPD focus. She added that this would help with what she sees as a condescending nature of blanket approaches and low assumption of teacher’s starting ability, as mentioned previously: *...it can be irritating that we are all tarred with the same brush...so maybe a better way of saying it would be more differentiated, so perhaps a menu of things (CPD activities) you could pick from. (Alice)*

Rebecca describes this need for specificity through her experience working with her Head of Department on a specific element of her practice. She also alluded to her resistance to whole-school and blanket approaches as they go against this model of high-impact in-house CPD: *I've done CPD training on how to mark with [Head of Department] that has been invaluable to me because I was crap at it. I'd spend hours agonising over the pitch our mark scheme. They've (department leader) made me look at high-level stuff that I don't teach. I think it's much better if it*

[CPD] is managed by your direct line managers rather than as a whole-school approach.
(Rebecca)

Alice discussed potential barriers to good CPD and how generic CPD can be superficial and often restricted by time and financial constraints. She also stated that it can be generic in its delivery due to its school-wide pitch: *I think when we do CPD, like whole-school CPD, I feel that it is so surface level. Whoever's presenting these pitches it to so many different areas. Then people have technical problems, they've got 55 minutes, and then they're trying to shoehorn something that's much longer, and they're cherry-picking what they think is essential.* (Alice)

Others focused more on the everyday CPD seen on a day-by-day basis. William refers to the CPD sessions as a lack of collaboration amongst the staff body. He continued that ideas that are introduced during these PD sessions are old ideas that have been utilised within education for years but are branded as new initiatives that will be beneficial to his classroom practice: *Middle leaders meeting where we are encouraged to listen to an assistant principal read an email at length and occasionally, we nod, we try to somehow gleaned development from that. But recently, we've been allowed to talk and asked to think about curriculum design.* (William)

The need for time to be further considered was identified by Tony, specifically when planning and running CPD sessions. For Tony, deadlines and outcome expectations are unrealistic, which creates disappointment across the teaching body. He also stated that he felt the assumption of teacher knowledge is low, even though teachers are delivering their curricula on a day-to-day basis. This again fuels the disappointment felt by staff: *Yeah, I think one big thing is time. I*

understand the pressures we're all under in terms of outcomes in terms of meeting deadlines, again unrealistic deadlines, but I think one of the most significant factors is giving staff time to go and observe upper professionals and take part in coaching programmes that are not just put on for the sake of it and you feel that you've got to do it. (Tony)

Rebecca shared Tony's perception that CPD is often 'pitched too low' for the teachers attending it. She felt that the CPD could usually be delivered better by the teachers who are observing the session, and this can hurt the self-efficacy of teachers: *I think that even as a trainee, it's always pitched too low...whatever they bring in, we could have delivered it better ourselves, and I think that's really disappointing because it makes us feel less than we should if that's where the assumption is that our knowledge is at. Yet we are delivering day-to-day on that stuff. So that's always quite disappointing. (Rebecca)*

Tony alluded to the benefit of peer-to-peer CPD styles and how this could be beneficial for giving better direction to CPD. He stated that time would still be one of the most prevalent barriers to effective CPD: *I'd say time's the most significant barrier to effective CPD and getting the time to sit down with your partner beforehand [and discuss your plan of action with them]. (Tony)*

When discussing what 'good CPD' is to her, Emily discussed her experience of CPD that she has received and deemed to be excellent. She discussed how this CPD was purposeful and directed and how it has a direct impact on her teaching: *The only good CPD I've really had was my exam board CPD, so being an examiner. That was useful because it was purposeful, directed and has a direct impact on what you're doing. That's professional development! (Emily).* Jane

expresses the need for purpose within effective CPD and explained how this helps to prevent the feeling of simply ‘ticking a box’: *I think the term coaching as well gives more of a supportive idea rather than CPD just feels like another box that I have to tick. (Jane)*

Teachers’ reflections highlighted a consistent concern with CPD that is generic, overly broad, or poorly tailored to individual needs. Across the interviews, staff emphasised the importance of CPD being purposeful, differentiated, and directly relevant to their practice, rather than a generic approach that undermines professional expertise. Meaningful CPD was described as specific, collaborative, and embedded in everyday teaching, with time and resources allocated to ensure genuine professional growth. Ultimately, teachers valued CPD that respected their prior knowledge, built on their strengths, and provided practical, context-driven opportunities to develop.

4.1.3 Previous Experience and Perception of Educational Coaching

Jane discussed her perception of educational coaching versus generic CPD. She explained how coaching can bring the subconscious into the conscious by allowing the time and space to ensure practice reflexivity: *I think giving the label to it as ‘coaching’ helps people become aware of it and perhaps make the conscious effort to take part in it as well. I think putting CPD into a formal coaching programme could potentially have more impact, to allow people to consciously be aware of it rather than it being just at a subconscious level. (Jane)*

William explained how he perceives coaching within education and how he felt that it could

help with communication across the hierarchy within a school. He felt that trust is essential within education and specifically within the CPD process of peer coaching. He likened the concept of coaching partnerships to the 'Lodges' used within the Roman army, where all hierarchy and class were temporarily stripped away to allow soldiers to speak freely amongst each other regardless of military rank, thus allowing for issues and problems to be voiced more openly and issues identified more efficiently: *In the Roman army, hierarchy was everything. You could not break hierarchy. It was a punishable offence by death, and the problem was that it stifled the ability of middle-leader officers to meaningfully communicate upward...The warrior lodge is the approach when you're in the lodge, you are free to talk...it can be acted on, but it can't be acted against. Now, coaching is basically the lodge. Coaching is a sacred space where there could be complete honesty and integrity with the ambition of moving everything forward. (William)* William added to this and explained that he felt the idea of coaching should be in his school and used to construct this 'sacred space' for inter-professional dialogue to be used effectively across the current hierarchy seen with schools. He continued to explain that this could bring about a culture of openness and allow trust to be developed within his school: *I think the role of coaching in our school should be to create that sacred space for dialogue between people of unequal power dynamics, and that's what the best schools have. They have an open culture, but the issue is there's nowhere to build that trust right now. (William)*

Others discussed trust but focused on the trust they perceived to have through continuous monitoring from management. John explained the importance of trust when it comes to repetitive classroom monitoring from upper management: *We don't have time for that, and I don't want managers in my classroom all the time because that goes back to the idea of trust. (John)*

Teachers' reflections suggest that coaching is perceived as a more meaningful and empowering form of professional development compared to generic CPD. Jane highlighted its potential to make practice more conscious and intentional, while William emphasised its role in breaking down hierarchical barriers and fostering honest dialogue built on trust. Both perspectives underscore coaching's potential value from the perspective of teachers as a purposeful and collaborative process that can nurture professional growth in ways traditional CPD often fails to achieve. However, concerns such as John's highlighted the need for trust to be safeguarded, particularly in relation to classroom monitoring, if coaching is to be genuinely effective.

4.1.4 Perceived Sustainability of CPD and Coaching

Jane explained that giving CPD a formal identity within CPD, such as coaching, offers a more formal timeframe to the process, likely from the accountability of the coaching partner. Jane explained the need for this to optimise the longevity of the CPD impacts and how this can be supported by a reflective mindset: *I think giving it a formal name [coaching] with a formal timeframe setting [is beneficial]. I think that perhaps this might help with the longevity of things being remembered and acted upon as well. I think you must be in the reflective mindset to receive that information, for it to sink in. (Jane)*

Alice reflected on her previous use of video analysis software and discussed how she felt it allowed her to turn her teaching into something tangible and sustainable over time. The ability to record and watch her teaching made the recognised critical teaching moments more memorable and more repeatable: *... that [the use of IRIS, the recording and replay software/system] made it so much more...it's like watching film after a football game, isn't it. It stays in your mind more*

long-term because you're actually analysing what you're doing. It's not an abstract idea; it's something tangible, it's something, you can take actual elements from and learn from these. (Alice)

Both Jane and Alice emphasised the importance of sustainability within CPD and coaching. Jane highlighted how giving CPD a formal identity and timeframe can help ensure accountability and long-term impact, while Alice's reflections on video analysis illustrated how tangible, practical tools can embed professional learning more deeply. Together, their insights reinforced the idea that for CPD to be effective, it must extend beyond one-off sessions, offering structured opportunities and concrete practices that enable teachers to revisit, reflect, and sustain their development over time.

4.2 Coaching Conversations

The following excerpts illustrated the themes that were identified within the in-session coaching conversations had within the coaching dyads. The recurring themes were: *self-realisation and deeper thinking, questioning and challenging practice, collaborative sense-making, sharing practice, identifying effective practice, and seeking guidance and curiosity-led exploration*. These sub-themes were ubiquitous within the coaching sessions and constituted much of the discussion time.

4.2.1 Self-Realisation and Deeper Thinking

During his coaching conversation, John shared a realisation regarding his current practice with his coach. He actively accepted his coach's critiques and reflected on his 'heavy' approach to his personal questioning practice. He continued to reflect on his practice and further unpicks an

area of his practice (question with low-ability students): *I've been so focused on instilling [questioning] within the class so that any student could be asked at any time, and they're not opting out. Maybe I went too heavy on that. If I'm asking a lower-ability student a question, I will deliberately pose them a more straightforward question or more straightforward question to answer so as not to overwhelm them. (John)*

The perception of being overly analytical of one's own practices was discussed by Tony, who was able to see his practice more clearly when his coach pointed out his use of wording and how this could be adapted to incorporate more of a positive connotation to them when speaking with students. Tony also explored his tendency to over-analyse what students are saying: *It's not highlighting, 'I did this wrong', it's highlighting, 'I need to work on this thing', but the different words make us kind of see it more positively. (Jane, Tony's coach)* Tony reflected on this and shared that he perceives this as a common issue with his teaching, however Tony showed positivity to Jane's perception of why he does this: *I'm often telling people that I read too much into the words that people use. I've not had that feedback before, but actually, it makes perfect sense, and I am going to work on that too. (Tony).*

Similarly, Sasha has a moment of self-realisation identifying an issue with pace within her online lessons. She explained that she found it difficult to question effectively (use her regular question 'bouncing' technique) while teaching online: *I find it really slow [student's responses to teacher questioning, during online learning] asking the questions. And playing it back [watching the recorded lesson with the coach], it's more evident that the pace was really slow. That's one thing I find difficult: that you can't bounce questions around the room very effectively on remote*

learning. (Sasha)

Emily explored her self-realisation of her tendencies to ‘lead’ her students through work and instead wants to develop higher level of independence in her classes. She explained how she sees this as more of a learning experience for herself, as opposed to the students: *I’m not sure they’re exceptionally well trained for that independent working, so that’s something that we need to improve and build in some more of our lessons because I do have a tendency to lead them too much. I’m trying to step back and take the reins off a bit ... try not to control everything from the front, but that’s more of a learning curve for me, I think, than the students. (Emily)*

Rebecca reflected on how she has developed an environment to push accountability back onto specific students. Alice (Rebecca’s coach) explained how Rebecca has reflected and amended her lesson to best suit a particular student who had missed a large portion of her previous lessons and how she has ‘put the ball back in [the student’s court].’ Rebecca then shared this realisation and showed positivity about receiving this feedback from her coach: *...something that you’ve reflected on and amended the class to kind of give [student name] the best opportunity. It’s kind of putting the ball back in place at school. (Alice). I think perhaps she [student] is just feeling heard again. I’m seeing where they’re playing a bit of a game...thank you, that’s already good feedback. (Rebecca)*

When challenged by his coach about why students without the correct school kit were not incorporated into the activity in another way, Tony realised that this was poor practice and admitted

that he should have had an alternative role for those students to do as opposed to just standing to the side: *But yes, there's no excuse that they shouldn't be given more of a prominent role within the lesson. (Tony)*

The coaching conversations prompted moments of self-realisation for teachers, encouraging them to critically examine and refine their practice. John, Tony, Sasha, Emily, and Rebecca each described becoming more aware of specific aspects of their teaching, ranging from questioning strategies to student independence, pace in online learning, and accountability. These reflections highlighted how coaching fosters deeper professional thinking by creating the space for teachers to confront assumptions, recognise areas for growth, and act on feedback constructively. Importantly, the process was not experienced as deficit-driven but as developmental, with teachers expressing a positive orientation towards change and improvement.

4.2.2 Questioning and Challenging Practice

Whilst coaching Rebecca, Alice questioned her teaching practices. During this questioning Alice helps to develop Rebecca's practice to develop her questioning technique during online teaching: *...do you usually have them all on a Google doc that you're jumping in and out of while you're teaching? I'm thinking next time you do a class discussion, get everyone to write down one idea on their Google doc, then they can just copy and paste. (Alice) Yes, that's an excellent idea! I love that! And they can just paste it in the chat box and it all hits at the same time, but they still have some thinking time. (Rebecca)*

Coaches actively worked to develop good practice through questioning and exploratory questioning techniques. William (Ben's Coach) attempted to find out if Ben was actively trying to further his current practice of getting boys to participate more vocally in his classroom. Ben explained that this may be due to the high-level ability of the girls in his group and not due to his practice as a teacher: *That's something you are actively focusing on. Is that something you think you could push with that class, or is that something where that class are as far as they can come, or is there something you'd like to try maybe to move them on? (William) I'm constantly pushing them...but there are times when I literally just pick on the boys and I'm just asking them to contribute. But I think the task that we observed was a listening task as a higher textbook task as well. So, I think the girls were a bit more confident giving the answers than the boys because it was from the higher textbooks. (Ben)*

Others questioned practices around specific elements of classroom practice. Adam questioned John's practice regarding the use of notes by students when answering independent questions. Adam used a curiosity-led approach to enquire if John was concerned with the students becoming over-reliant on these. This challenge gives John the opportunity to reflect on whether this is seen as an issue from his perspective: *However, their books were available to be used as an aid if needed. I was just wondering, how do you ensure students don't become overly reliant on their books? I noticed a lot of them weren't going straight to their book. So, I was kind of wondering how you embedded that or achieved that. (Adam) I suppose it's the flip side to the question is do I have an issue if they're looking at their books at this stage of their learning process because these are all relatively new skills. (John)*

Adam questioned John's whole class questioning technique. Adam focused on John's tendency to front-load his questioning. Adam challenges this technique and provides an alternative for John to reflect on: *What I saw was if you asked the question and named the person to answer it, what happens to the rest? What could you do by withholding the name? So, you're still asking the question, but if you withheld the name and gave some thinking time to students...could you incorporate that into your other style of questioning. (Adam)*

When the coaching roles are reversed, John questioned Adam's practice and asked him to explain the reason behind the 'overlapping' of his 'instructional and questioning modes', Adam explained the thought process behind this decision: *I looked at the same thing as you [Coaching focus during lesson observation]. The main thing was about how your instructional modes and questioning modes overlapped. I suppose my question was that a decision that you made, or was it something that, in the moment, overlapped? (John) It's all well and good being able to recall the content, but unless you are able to recall the skills to utilise that content within the specific type of question, it's not going to get you much beyond a level one. (Adam)*

Emily discussed Sasha's student-focused classroom practices (seating plans) as an area of interest due to this not following the school's usual seating plan structure. This followed a short conversation regarding Sasha's behaviour management and the evidence of poor student behaviour: *Yeah. I was really impressed with his [student] participation. I was also interested in your seating plan, what your strategy with this. (Emily) I've tried every seating plan under the sun. So, in a way, they've kind of worn me down with this, and they sit where they're comfortable sitting because they're actually quieter with that. And again, it's kind of picking battles. (Sasha)*

Teachers' perceptions in this section revealed that coaching was valued for the way it encouraged deeper reflection and constructive challenge of practice. Through exploratory questioning, coaches helped teachers like Rebecca, Ben, and John reflect on specific aspects of their pedagogy to consider alternative strategies, while reciprocal questioning enabled deeper insight into practice, as seen in John and Adam's exchange. Teachers described how questioning, whether from their coach or reciprocally towards colleagues, created space to reconsider established habits, test alternative strategies, and refine classroom approaches. Importantly, these exchanges were not seen as judgmental but as supportive, allowing teachers to critically evaluate their work while maintaining ownership of their professional growth.

4.2.3 Collaborative Sense-making

Tony and Jane discuss a particular point within Tony's lesson, where a student discloses her reasons for being unable to participate within the lesson (period pains). Tony highlighted that 'being a male', he does not 'understand period pains'; however, after, Jane gives her opinion on the matter from a female perspective. This collaborative sense-making allows Tony to gain confidence about dealing with the situation in the future: *I've had it before and being a male I don't understand period pains. It's always 'Okay, get on with it, try your best.'* But I don't give them that opt-out straight away. (Tony) Well, what I was going to say is that I said to her that the mechanical biology of it is that doing activity helps to alleviate the period pains. So, you get on with it because that will help. As a man, it can be awkward, but you're a PE teacher. You know the science behind that. Actually, the science behind it is if you do have the energy, it releases endorphins, and endorphins can cover the pain, don't they? (Jane) Jane and Tony continue their collaborative sense-making when Jane developed a solution to a concern Tony voiced previously, namely, involving non-participating students during lessons. Jane was able to help Tony reflect

and help co-create a solution for this... *I kind of ignored her. I shouldn't have done that, but when it's lesson after lesson and I'm trying to engage her... (Tony) It's exhausting, isn't it? You kind of lose the will after a while if you're putting a lot in and getting nothing back. I wondered if you could just maybe print a register, and that's one of their tasks, to keep track of rewards and then that gives them another job to do for those that aren't taking part. (Jane). No, I like that idea. (Tony) ...if they decide that they're not really going to do it and you can see that they're not taking part, you can say, 'Okay, you're not taking part. This is your job today', at least then they're engaged with the lesson. (Jane)*

After a coaching session, Rebecca shared her feelings about the collaborative nature of her coaching relationship and distinguishes that working collaboratively can be more beneficial than individually: *So, actually, for me, this is the way forward to leave perfectly capable people to lead each other, into being even more brilliant than they were. We're more than the sum total of the parts, aren't we, if you put us together at work, but I suppose that falls down, and you've got two people who are not doing it right. You've got to be careful about how you pair up. (Rebecca)*

Teachers' perceptions in this section highlighted the value of collaboration within coaching as a means of problem-solving and developing confidence in practice. Through shared dialogue, Tony and Jane demonstrated how collaborative sense-making can generate practical solutions and provide reassurance when addressing unfamiliar or challenging situations. Similarly, Rebecca emphasised the collective benefits of peer-led professional growth, stressing that collaboration can

elevate practice beyond what individuals achieve alone. However, she also recognised the importance of effective pairing to ensure such collaboration remains productive.

4.2.4 Sharing Practice

Tony used anecdotal discussions from his own experiences to help develop Jane's reflection on her own practice of lesson timings and pace. Jane is accepting of this advice: *What you could do here, when you say 'two or three minutes', you need to get that countdown timer up because it focuses you timing it. I'll often say three minutes but it easily turns into five, then five turns into seven and it just drags out when it should just be a three-minute task. (Tony) ...it's another one of those things where I can easily implement and it'll pull the lesson together... (Jane)*

Rebecca also used her own experiences in her online classrooms to share her best practices with Alice. This is following Alice discussing her issues with sharing her screen during online lessons and allowing all students the ability to see her feedback to other students: *What I hadn't realised I was doing is every time I'm sharing my screen, as I'm jumping from child's work to child's work, they can see that if I've shared my screen. So that's something to be aware of as well. But my guys, God love them, they don't seem to mind that. In fact, they're quite proud of the fact that they can have their work seen. They want it. (Rebecca)*

Both Emily and Sasha discuss their retrieval questioning techniques and how these are used across their departments. Emily and Sasha enter a space of co-learning and dissect their practices, questioning each other on the thinking behind their practices: *Okay. Great. So, I really like the way*

that you wrote the questions up. So, they were on the screen as well as saying them verbally. Did you implement that for remote learning? (Sasha) We don't do it in every unit of work, but for [subject content] because we only had five weeks to get through a whole [subject topic]. And so, we felt that recall from the previous lesson was key. (Emily) Oh, interesting. And then do you answer [the related content questions]? Or are they always just from the last lesson? So that next time, write those questions, repeat? (Sasha)

Adam and John also enter into this space of co-constructed idea sharing, where they discuss future practices and how they can develop their teaching in the future. John further developed Adam's idea: *I think for future practice as a sort of test, perhaps try stripping back the different pedagogical choices into singular strategies. That would be really interesting. Here is my teacher instruction, where I'm giving you information about what to do or what to do with information, and then sort of think about that. (Adam). So, have, like, a singular focus that provides the detail and then get them to explain it in relation to a focus or give them an explanation and then ask them to find detailed, supportive answers. (John)*

These accounts illustrated how the sharing of practice within the coaching conversations created opportunities for collaborative learning and professional development. Tony and Rebecca drew on their own experiences to offer practical strategies to colleagues, while Emily, Sasha, Adam, and John engaged in co-constructed dialogue that encouraged experimentation and deeper thinking about pedagogy. This reciprocal exchange was valued not only for the immediate solutions it provided but also for its potential to shape longer-term approaches to teaching.

4.2.5 Identifying Effective Practice

Coaches often shared effective practices with their coachees. William's coach (Ben) shared his fondness for William's ability to support multi-tasking with his GCSE students, a blend of discussion-based tasks during written tasks. Ben explained that this is a practice that he also uses and found beneficial to his student's development of multi-tasking abilities. William shared that his reasons for this practice are due to a discomfort with silence in his classrooms: *They're thinking about what's coming in verbally, but at the same time, they're trying to process that information in real time. I think that's what adults do. Isn't it? (William)*

The identification of good practice was evident within all the coaching conversations. Jane demonstrated this on several occasions and identifies good practice and illustrated *why* this was so impactful for the student in question: *The other thing with her as well is that somebody threw a Frisbee over the thing, and she said, 'Do you want me to go and get that?' And you were quite enthusiastic about your response. You're like, 'Oh yeah, excellent idea,' rather than just saying, 'Yeah, cool.' It was good that you said excellent idea. Because I even saw her doing like a little jog to it. (Jane) It was massive for her. (Tony)* Jane continued to identify Tony's effective practice and identifies the issue and how Tony was able to overcome this: *When I came to the lesson, what was really good to see was there were a couple of girls who were obviously opting out, but you hadn't let them just opt out. You'd given them a specific task to do, which kept them engaged in the lesson. And they were really quite excited about actually being able to do that as well, and they were just sorting out the bits, weren't they? (Jane)*

Rebecca discussed the effective practices that she saw in Alice's lesson. However, she focused more on the personal qualities that lead to these practices as opposed to the practices themselves. *You're so approachable and calm, and you maintain that throughout the time that you're talking, and I've seen it over much longer periods... (Rebecca) It was really clear to me as well how well prepared you were that your lesson was put together with prior thought. You knew where you were in the lesson sequences, you knew where you were with your characters, and you knew where you were very specifically with quotes that you were looking at. (Rebecca)* Rebecca then rounds off her comment with a well-pitch question relating to the planning of Alice's lesson and the questioning that she used: *... you knew how to get them to where you wanted to be. I think that was the main thing that I was picking up on. Am I right in saying that you had planned it knowing what their responses needed to lead to? (Rebecca)*

Similarly to Rebecca, William found effective practice within Ben's lesson and took time to highlight this. William found that the students were held to high expectations, were engaged, and understood the sequence of the lesson, even though the lessons were being given in a different language: *...one of the things that I was really impressed with was the fact that, even though you've given all the instructions [in a different language], the class just knew what they were doing. They were very comfortable with it, even though it was quite quick, it was very fluid [different language], and the class seemed to understand and follow it. (William)* William also rounds this off with a well-placed question based on the regularity of this level of practice: *It was very clear, and they said this was normal for them. If people didn't understand the instructions, they were repeated in English, which I think is really interesting. Is that a normal practice? (William)*

Ben also focused on effective practice and focused on the delivery of the lesson. Ben briefly explained how William's practices allowed students to engage more actively with the content being delivered.... *I came in at a time when students were giving some feedback on a task, or you were taking them through a task. And I came in when you were doing illustrations for each concept to do with [subject content], I believe, and I thought that was absolutely amazing. But what I loved was that it was the illustration of the concept. And the fact that they were very engaged in telling you what needed to be drawn and things like that. (Ben)*

John showed interest and curiosity when he identifies the variety of questions used by Adam during his lesson. He, too, rounds off the identification of these effective practices with a question regarding the planning and setup phases: *I noticed you used a range of methods to question students. In fact, I think no more than twice did you use the same technique for selecting a student for questioning. I was wondering why you did that. Do you find the students respond better to that or do you find maybe if you did, for one particular piece of feedback, one particular type of questioning works better? I was just genuinely interested. (John)*

Teachers highlighted not only specific strategies that enhanced student engagement and learning but also the professional qualities, such as preparation, calmness, and high expectations, that underpinned them. Importantly, the identification of effective practice often led to constructive questioning, allowing colleagues to better understand the rationale behind decisions and consider how such approaches might be adapted in their own contexts. This process of observation,

affirmation, and inquiry reinforced good practice while also fostering professional dialogue that deepened teachers' pedagogical understanding.

4.2.6 Use of Video Analysis During Coaching Conversations

Although teachers did not verbally mention their viewing of the video recordings during their coaching conversations, it was evident that they were using these recordings as a crucial tool for stimulus recall. The videos served as an implicit but powerful reference point throughout the discussions, influencing how teachers recalled specific classroom events and framed their reflections. Teachers actively referred to the practices that they saw and used these to further break down their teaching practices within the classrooms. Teachers would regularly pause and rewind specific elements of the coaching process to re-watch and re-review specific elements of the critical moments within their lessons. This proved difficult to map/show within the audio recordings of the coaching conversations.

4.3 Review Interviews

The following excerpts illustrated the themes identified within the review interviews. These interviews have been designed to gain insight into how the participants experienced the coaching programme. The recurring themes: *Enhancing personal and professional transparency through the peer coaching process; Interpersonal relationship factors evident within coaching pairs; Enhancing meaningful feedback, reflexivity, and perception of professional practice; and Perception of sustainability following coaching.* These sub-themes were ubiquitous within the review interviews and constituted much of the discussion time.

4.3.1 Enhancing Personal and Professional Transparency through the Peer Coaching Process

The use of peer coaching provides a tool for teachers to reflect on professional practice within an environment free from judgement. By closely reflecting on their teaching, they can identify and act upon professional learning and develop roles within the coaching relationship.

4.3.1.1 Authentic Self

Upon reflecting on his coaching conversations, William examined his feelings towards the authenticity of his conversations and how these were able to lead to beneficial co-learning within the coaching relationship: *This is a real authentic conversation between two professionals about something that they love and how we can either learn something from each other or see something that we know someone who would benefit from this. (William)*. Jane draws comparisons between the coaching cycles and those of the performance management currently in place. She noted the focus of her coaching was candid conversations, which maintained a student-focused vision throughout: *We really liked that it could be a really frank conversation, and it wasn't about performance management. It was just about trying to do well for the students. (Jane)*

Upon completing her coaching programme, Sasha discussed her feelings about coaching. She focused heavily on her perception of a low-pressure environment and accredits this to the positive relationship forged with her coaching partner. She continued to explain that the observation element of the coaching was vastly different to her current professional development programme: *Brilliant, actually, in terms of being observed by a fellow colleague in a non-pressured environment, it actually feels relaxed when you are being observed and the relationship that myself and [coaching partner] had was brilliant. And that was because it was a non-pressured*

environment, you could really be yourself. You weren't trying to tick as many boxes as you might have done normally for an observation under your line manager or member of the senior leadership team. (Sasha)

Similarly, Alice discussed her working relationship as being underpinned by respect for her coaching partner, and this enabled her more authentic self to be present. She continued to discuss how this would be a problem for coaching if this were not to be present: *I think it [coaching programme] was beneficial, I think I said to [coaching partner] it was more authentic than other kinds of coaching and CPD that I have done, because it was with someone that I respected. But I can see how that would be problematic for other pairings. (Alice)*. Alice continued to highlight the passion both she and her coaching partner shared through their coaching and how she was better able to see the genuine teaching practices come out from their coaching: *So, it was nice to see something, I felt so passionate about being used and adapted by another teacher, and I think just seeing people teach in a genuine way for a prolonged period of time. (Alice)*

Teachers used their coaching as a space where authenticity could flourish, contrasting it with the formality and pressure of performance management systems. William, Jane, and Sasha highlighted how honest, low-pressure conversations fostered co-learning and student-focused dialogue, while Alice emphasised the importance of respect and shared passion in enabling teachers to bring their authentic selves into the process. Collectively, these reflections suggest that authenticity is central to the effectiveness of coaching, as it builds trust, strengthens professional relationships, and allows genuine teaching practices to be shared and developed.

4.3.1.2 Openness and Honesty

Many of the coaching conversations were identified as open and honest. Jane explored the impact that these conversations had on her relationship with her coach. The ability to be honest with her partner during her coaching was a stark difference from a previous relationship she had with line managers: *It was actually just a nice conversation in which we could both agree and digest our teaching and just have that kind of open, frank conversation with me going to [coaching partner], 'I don't want to do that all the time,' and him going, 'Yeah, I totally get it.'* Whereas I think you know with a line manager you can't say that, can you? (Jane) Jane continued to talk about performance management (which is likely to have been carried out by previous line managers). Jane again refers to her coaching conversations as 'frank'. She refers to having a more student-focused vision around coaching and how she felt more able to focus on the pedagogy and in-classroom practices as opposed to the paperwork related to the observations. Jane makes a clear link between observation for performance management purposes and how she felt coaching offered a more 'honest' and 'non-judgemental' approach to professional development: *We really liked that it could be a really frank conversation, and it wasn't about performance management, it was about trying to do well for the students. It wasn't about trying to prove that I know what I'm doing. I didn't change anything from the lesson. I didn't have to spend time going, 'What does my lesson plan need to look like?' ...So, you could go into the class really honestly, and then we could go into the conversation really honestly and just non-judgementally.* (Jane)

When discussing her relationship, Jane spoke about how her coaching partner was able to focus on her strengths and how this allowed her to better see the positives within her own teaching. She discussed how her coach was able to help her see or remember things that she had done, that

would have previously gone unseen without the video recordings: *It was nice that when [coaching partner] gave me the feedback, he could say, 'Look, you did that really well!' I thought it was going to feel weird watching myself and listening to myself, but it actually was nice to be able to watch myself actually doing quite well. And go, 'Oh yeah, I do do that. (Jane)* Tony saw his relationship as 'relaxed' and attributed this to the ability of his coaching partner to speak more openly and honestly. He compared this to the nature of our interview: *Yeah, it really relaxed. The fact that you sit down like we are now you can talk openly and honestly. (Tony)*

Openness and honesty emerged as central features of teachers' experiences of coaching. Jane and Tony highlighted how the absence of judgement and managerial oversight created a relaxed and supportive environment in which genuine dialogue could take place. For Jane, this contrasted strongly with the performative nature of performance management, enabling her to focus more meaningfully on pedagogy and classroom practice. Both Jane and Tony also noted that honest exchanges fostered recognition of strengths as well as areas for growth, reinforcing professional confidence. These accounts suggest that openness and honesty were not only valued but essential for coaching to be experienced as authentic and impactful.

4.3.2 Interpersonal Relationship Factors Evident within Coaching Pairs

When viewing their own professional practice, teachers were able to observe themselves through an alternative perception, which allowed both the coach and coachee the opportunity to be external reviewers. This introduces ideas that could otherwise be too subjective or clouded by the complex nature of teaching. During this time, teachers were coached on self-identified areas that were observable through video recordings. Teachers recognise certain traits within their

coach/coachee relationships that they elaborate on, as well as identify areas of mutual understanding and the reciprocal nature of these relationships.

4.3.2.1 Relationship

Adam also discussed his relationship with his coaching partner but spoke about the idea of hierarchy within the pairing. He explained that the honest relationship that he had stripped away any preconceptions related to the hierarchical differences between the two coaches: *You know, [coaching partner] might have said something different, and others experience of working with people can be up and down in terms of hierarchy but for me, I feel it is stripped away if you have an honest relationship with a person. (Adam)*

The peer coaching programme followed a non-hierarchical structure of the coaching pods. This was a point of discussion for those within a pod that paired them with a practitioner of a higher leadership status themselves. Jane addresses her initial struggles with coaching a colleague who is 'higher' on the leadership scale in her school. She discussed how her partnership was able to work together and how this affected her. Jane identified that although there was a perceived difference, this did not impact the coaching that was able to take place. Jane found positive feelings due to being able to work with a leader who is already perceived as being a good practitioner: *It's just he [mentions coaching partners leadership responsibilities]. I think I went into it thinking more of the hierarchy because [coaching partner] is professionally above me...but actually, through the frank conversations and just being able to do it together, it was kind of like we're on the same level. (Jane)*

When asked to reflect on his relationship in terms of the hierarchy between John and his coach, John identifies that there was a presence of the pre-existing hierarchy, however, the relationship was grounded in respect. He mentions that he changed his approach to challenging practice, even avoiding specific observed behaviours due to the hierarchical positions of the coaching partners: *At the same time, that is based on respect, that there wasn't an intimidation kind of thing. When I did think, 'I perhaps wouldn't have done it like that' ...I did think, 'Ok, maybe I won't mention that' and I will just comb over this, and I'll focus on this other thing. (John)*

Adam sees this hierarchical imbalance as an experience imbalance. Adam questioned whether a less-experienced teacher would have the ability to critique and develop the teacher areas of those more experienced than them. *So, yeah, that was interesting. I think that is the difficulty with when you've got two levels of experience is, has that less-experienced person got the ability to prompt at the higher level?* Tony discussed the feeling of 'comfort' he had with his coaching partner, so much so that he could freely invite them into his lesson as a form of check-in. This informal relationship allowed for coaching to become more of a check-in, seeing through his 'check-in' style of coaching. He also discussed the non-pressured environment created between the two and how his coach became a sounding board for his professional practice: *...it just felt as if it was a really good informal relationship where you can go to for advice and then and that's a key thing, I feel comfortable... in terms of being observed by a fellow colleague in a non-pressured type environment... the relationship that myself and [coaching partner] had was brilliant. (Tony)*

Experience and respect held for the coaching pairs were discussed by Rebecca. Rebecca found that the respect she held for her coaching partner prior to this coaching programme played a pivotal role in their positive coaching relationship. She discovered that the respect found through their coaching together helped to forge a much more impactful relationship between her and her coach: *I think I just got really lucky in the fact that we really respect each other anyway. I think we're very similar and both take pride in the role we do as well. It's much deeper now and stronger than it was before we did it because we've got more respect for what the other ones doing.* (Rebecca)

Like Tony, Sasha highlighted the importance of her relationship to the coaching process. She highlighted the necessity for trust and confidentiality as well as the need for comfort to feature heavily between coach and coachee to allow a solution-driven environment to emerge: *We get on anyway [prior to the coaching programme], although we don't work that closely together.. I think that's really important. If you're going to do coaching, you need to pair up quite carefully with someone that you feel comfortable with. You can make mistakes and not feel that it's going to be spread around the school or that they're going to judge you.* (Sasha)

Having coached his coachee, Tony reflected on the relationship-building effect of seeing his coachee implement their strategies into live lessons: *Being able to pass on my knowledge of an area to [coaching partner] and it's one thing she's turned around and said that she's tried to do now every single lesson, is build those relationships up.* (Tony). William noted that the authenticity and passion shared within his coaching relationship was a crucial factor in the reciprocal nature of

their relationship: *This is a real authentic conversation between two professionals about something that they love and how we can either learn something from each other or see something that we know someone who would benefit from this. (William)*. Alice reflected along the same vein as William but discussed the authenticity of the entire process through a CPD lens. Her viewpoint focused on the levels of respect prior to the coaching: *I think I said to [coaching partner] it [coaching programme] was like more authentic than other kinds of CPD that I have done because it was with someone that I respect. (Alice)*

Relationships were viewed as the cornerstone of effective coaching, with trust, respect, and comfort underpinning the quality of professional dialogue. While some teachers initially acknowledged concerns around hierarchy or experience imbalances, these were often mitigated through honest, respectful, and collaborative exchanges. Teachers such as Jane, Adam, and John noted the ways in which hierarchical positions could shape interactions but equally emphasised how openness and mutual respect allowed coaching conversations to remain constructive. Others, including Rebecca, Tony, Sasha, William, and Alice, highlighted the deepened respect, authenticity, and sense of partnership that emerged through the process. Collectively, these accounts illustrated that strong relationships not only reduce the pressures often associated with traditional CPD but also create the conditions for genuine professional growth.

4.3.2.2 Mutual Understanding

When asked about her coaching relationship, Emily was keen to discuss its mutual nature. She identified respect and actively seeking out positive elements within each other's practices. This helped to remove judgemental barriers such as criticism and instead used a collaborative sense-

making approach where development areas were identified: *I valued her opinion. I think she valued mine. We both went into it looking for positives, I think, which is key because so many times as a teacher, you feel like being criticised or broken down, and when there were things to develop, we both identified things in our own practice at the other person picked up, so I do think that I got very lucky with how it worked for us. (Emily)*

Like Emily, Jane found the benefit of sharing best practices in the initial stages; she saw changes in not only her own practice but also the student-teacher interactions. However, Jane felt, as the latter coaching sessions took place, that these lacked the spark of the initial sessions, likely due to the revisiting of previously addressed developmental areas: *I think the first session was really good and [coaching partner] and I had some really good helpful tips for each other. The advice I was given on the first one was really useful, and I implemented it with that class specifically that I was seen with, and I did notice a change in the way the class interact with me. The later sessions we kind of did with the same class looking at the same thing, and I felt like that wasn't as useful because it was more like, 'Yeah, brilliant, we've done that'. (Jane)*

Through his coaching, Ben was able to connect with his coach and found common ground. This followed on to sharing practical tips for development: *It was very useful because we found a lot of synergy. We found some similarities in, for instance, the first observation with engagement for boys. We discussed and shared strategies on how to improve that. (Ben)*

Breakthrough moments were evident across some coaching pods. These were often where coaching partners gained an insight into a problem or situation. John identified a time when he had a breakthrough moment while observing his coachee during his coaching session. During an observation, John was able to gain a new insight into an aspect of his teaching that he believed to be a strength within his teaching. Upon observing, John realised that he may not be as good as he thought he was at a specific teaching skill, this was the initial catalyst that John needed to identify questioning as his area of development: *I had one of those Eureka moments... [at the] very beginning of this year, I was really happy with my questioning, and then I just had this level of clarity...it was observing someone else doing it and then talking to them afterwards, and you know when you're suddenly like, 'Oh ok, I'm not actually as good as I think'.* Adam identifies his underpinning ethos regarding coaching and the main goal behind his own coaching: *And I think that's a really important part, isn't it? It's two people connecting on the same level. (Adam)*

Mutual understanding was highlighted as a vital element of successful coaching relationships. Teachers such as Emily, Jane, and Ben emphasised the value of reciprocal respect and the sharing of practical strategies, which helped shift the focus from criticism towards collaborative development. While Jane noted that momentum could fade over time when developmental areas became repetitive, the initial sessions were particularly impactful in shaping both her practice and student interactions. Breakthrough moments, as described by John, illustrated how observing colleagues could trigger realisations about one's own teaching, reinforcing Adam's view that coaching thrives when both partners connect on an equal and collaborative level. Together, these accounts show that mutual understanding created the conditions for growth, clarity, and shared professional learning.

4.3.2.3 Non-judgemental Environment

Having reflected on her coaching conversations and style of coaching, Sasha identifies strategies used to avoid ‘coming across as critical’ during coaching conversations. Enquiries need to be made and shaped in such a way that they are better received by the coachee. To do this, she used deeper thinking, which allowed her to form specific questions to delve into specific areas of the lesson, thus gaining more context around specific decisions made by the teacher: *I think you find that slight hesitation...even with the colleague you got on well with... in our particular case, my personal opinion was that her seating plan didn't work and I know the students quite well so I was quite interested in why she did it like that, but you don't want to come across critical. I think the coaching is really good here, but you need to think about constructive feedback and not just rushing into feedback without thinking about your language or your responses quite carefully.* (Sasha)

Similarly, John discussed feeling more comfortable using questions to reduce the consequences of coming across too critically. This was a strategy that he used specifically as he felt his coaching partner had been ‘more experienced’ and had a ‘much more established skillset’: *I'm thinking in the way that when I speak to [coaching partner] is much more comfortable to go, 'Ok, well, why did you do that?' without any consequences. Whatever the situation happens to be. As opposed to trying to do that to someone significantly higher up with a lot more experience and, you know, a much more established skillset.* (John). Jane specifically says that she felt like judgement was removed from the equation and a more positive tone was set within her coaching sessions: *So, the feedback that we were able to give each other, it didn't feel like I was being judged by [coaching partner] and being told how I was rubbish.* (Jane)

Sasha noted having to deal with the change to the previously held notion of the high standard of her professional practice (believing her lesson ‘starters’ to be of a high standard) and the initial anxiety of facing this realisation within her coaching conversations. Sasha then identified the factor that she felt was most important to her during this moment, the non-judgemental environment: *Also, my starters that I thought were brilliant and actually when I played it back it wasn't very good, that was quite uncomfortable to think that your lesson wasn't as good as you thought it was, but I would do that again, but I think the important thing is to pair up with someone non-judgemental. (Sasha)*

Teachers consistently identified the importance of a non-judgemental environment as essential for effective coaching. Sasha, John, and Jane each highlighted how carefully framed questioning, constructive feedback, and mutual respect reduced feelings of criticism and enabled open dialogue. Even when confronting uncomfortable realisations, such as reassessing established practices, the non-judgemental tone allowed teachers to reflect honestly without fear of undermining their professional identity. This environment fostered trust and psychological safety, ensuring that feedback was received as developmental rather than evaluative, and ultimately strengthened the impact of the coaching process.

4.3.2.4 Reciprocal Nature of the Relationship

William identifies the rewarding element of his coaching was finding a common ground with his coach and being introduced to a new approach to teaching which was previously unseen: *I think one of the most rewarding bits of it for me is finding someone with that same philosophy of what teaching is but a completely different way of approaching how to then do that, what that looks*

like enacted. (William). Sasha also noted that she found a benefit from sharing good practice and seeing this in live action. She added that this is needed more often: *I really found it beneficial, and I always find when I go into other colleagues' lessons that I just love to do it. I always pick up tips, and we should really do it more often. (Sasha)*

Tony used the word 'fellow' several times in reflection of his coaching, identifying the reciprocal nature of his coaching relationship. He added that he felt the non-pressured environment aided authentic feedback and conversations: *... in terms of being observed by a fellow colleague in a non-pressured type environment...the relationship that myself and [coaching partner] had it was brilliant. So, when you get observed by your fellow coach, it just felt like you were being yourself. What I liked was I liked actually recording the teaching and sitting down with your fellow coach and just talking through what you're seeing. (Tony)*

Tony links this sharing and the implementation of ideas to the collaborative discovery of a deeper meaning, which focused on the two professionals seeking improvements on their individual practices: *And when me and [coaching partner] were talking about this, it was, yeah, I like that idea [coach], and it wasn't the fact that I'm a know-it-all; it was just really relaxed informal conversation but actually had a deeper meaning because both of us were improving our practice. (Tony).* Adam refers to his coaching conversations as 'equal conversations' where he and his coach are 'present' in the moment. Where he is not asking anything of his partner, nor is it based on performance management or punitive strategies. *But, you know, the thing is, we sit together, and when we talk, we are in that space in the present, so I think that's been really good to have that*

time. Even if it's ten minutes, having that time to be present in the conversation. I think it's an equal conversation. It's not one where I'm asking someone for something or having to tell someone off. Actually, it's just a conversation of equality where we're reflecting upon pedagogy. Which is what we should do more. (Adam)

Rebecca labels her relationship as a 'partnership of equals', where both were able to speak freely when coaching and reflecting. *[Coaching partner] and I have a really good working relationship anyway, so it was just a partnership of equals. We just spoke freely with each other. (Rebecca)* Others didn't label it but were able to explain how they felt it developed them on a professional level. Emily noted how mutual respect shaped her coaching experience and how she felt that all parties valued her opinions. She refers to the idea of seeking out positive elements, as opposed to criticising practices, and how this contradicts the more common practices within CPD: *Mutual respect...I valued her opinion, and I felt she valued mine. We both went into it looking for positives, which is key because so often as a teacher, you feel like you're being criticised or broken down when there were things to develop. (Emily)*

John discussed his feelings of comfort in pointing out positive elements of his coachee's teaching and avoiding critiquing. This type of positive seeking was not shared by his coaching partner, who highlighted both positive and negative elements of his teaching. John explained that he felt his partner was more comfortable with this critiquing style. John added that through his coaching, he also identified reasons behind his partner's teaching strategies so he would be able to implement these within his own teaching. John also highlighted the impact of the pre-existing

hierarchical impact on his coaching relationship: *I think the relationship was positive I certainly had no regrets working with him. I do think I found it did affect the kind of mutual coaching side, as in, naturally, he was much more comfortable pointing out things he felt could be improved with my practice. Whereas I found myself naturally pointing out things which I really liked about this practice. (John)*

Teachers described their coaching relationships as reciprocal and characterised by equality, mutual respect, and shared professional growth. For William, Sasha, and Tony, the opportunity to observe, share, and reflect with colleagues created an authentic space for learning where both partners benefited. Adam, Rebecca, and Emily echoed this by emphasising coaching as an ‘equal conversation’ or ‘partnership of equals,’ shaped by trust and a focus on positives rather than critique. While John noted that pre-existing hierarchies could influence the balance of feedback, he still valued the process as developmental and informative. Overall, reciprocity was seen as central to coaching’s effectiveness, enabling teachers to learn with and from one another in a supportive, collaborative manner.

4.3.3 Enhancing Meaningful Feedback, Reflexivity and Perception of Professional Practice

Teachers were asked to reflect on areas they felt were crucial to their coaching through the duration of their coaching programme. Teachers reflected specifically on the facilitating factors that were present that they deemed imperative. Teachers identified general facilitating factors, the importance of meaningful feedback and the reflective nature of their coaching relationship.

4.3.3.1 Facilitating Factors of Coaching

William shared his feelings about the quality assurance of coaching and how he used it as a tool to develop himself and maintain his perceived ability as a teacher. William identifies his relationship, and coaching conversations were less focused on the pedagogy of each other's teaching. He explained that both his and his coach's experience levels have helped them to shape pedagogy around their styles of teaching as opposed to having to fit their teaching around the pedagogy: *So, I found that very freeing, and I really enjoyed the quality assurance aspect of it, but I also enjoyed just watching [coaching partner], it wasn't so much the pedagogy thing again I don't think we learned a lot about that from each other because we've been doing this for so long., we've seen it all, but we have both curated pedagogy to fit us rather than fitting us around prescribed pedagogy. (William)*

William noted that he found the coaching process interesting and how he was able to use it as a tool for learning in a variety of ways: *No, I think genuinely, it's a really interest process, and it was actually a really good opportunity to learn. If not, perhaps in the way, maybe, you anticipated, at least a way that I think you can appreciate. (William)*. Jane explained some unexpected motivating factors throughout the programme and refers to the sharing of good practice and this permeating through the school and that praise coming back to her through different members of staff: *That was really nice as well, so here, like, other people come up and say [coaching partner] has just said he's he really enjoyed that, and he got a lot out of it and so that really motivated me. (Jane)*

Many coachees, such as Jane, found video analysis to be a helpful tool for developing self-awareness as a practitioner. Jane continued, highlighting her use of video recordings during coaching conversations. She relates its use to re-reading a book and thus having another opportunity to experience the event and a second chance to digest the finer details, despite some early apprehension: *You could pick out different things, and I think perhaps if you watched it again, you then pick out different things. It's like reading a book again, isn't it?, I just remember feeling a bit awkward about being filmed...it was nice to just watch it back and go, 'I don't seem too awkward there.'* (Jane)

Jane continued to expand her thoughts into the use of video analysis and its use in identifying key elements of a lesson that are commonly missed during teaching time. *I found that [rewatching recordings of lessons] useful when it came to giving the feedback because [coaching partner] was like, 'Oh, yeah, that kid just walked into the cupboard, and like, I didn't even spot that during the lesson.'* The video recordings gave us the opportunity to discuss what he could do with that student in future practice and how he could approach that. So, that was useful; otherwise, we would have missed things that happened in real time. (Jane)

Alice shared her initial fears regarding the video recording, which included uncertainty around the purpose. Alice noted that this quickly became part of her teaching practice. She added that her initial self-consciousness dissipated quickly: *I thought that [coaching] was going to be really intrusive and just another layer of 'For fuck's sake, really, do I really need to be doing this?' and it was nothing at the end of the day we just got to the point where we have to check that would*

actually remember to switch it on because you forget that it is going. You don't feel self-conscious at all, actually. Yeah, it was alright. (Alice)

Through the coaching, Sasha notices the ability to see good teacher practice and observe students from a new viewpoint. Through giving coaching the time it needs, the simple things, those often missed through standard lesson observations, are easier to observe: *We have an open-door policy, but it's more time, isn't it? You think you'll do it, and you don't, but whenever I go in, I always find it really helpful to just watch the little things that other teachers haven't thought of or see the kids in different lessons and then to get that feedback from one of your colleagues on your lesson also made me a bit tighter of course on my own lesson as someone was coming in so it makes you focus on the attention to detail perhaps a bit more than you otherwise might. Some things you see that's just simple, and I think, why didn't I think of that? (Sasha)* Ben also stated that a key facilitating factor for his coaching was the introduction of continuity and accountability through the relationship and the ability to both listen and be heard: *I think the coaching aspect was beneficial because obviously there's a need to have accountability as there's somebody that's definitely there to check up, to kind of sound off, especially in that teaching aspect, that's very important to me. (Ben)*

Adam identifies the need to allocate time to coach and allow for reflection throughout the process; he added that this is what teachers, who allow others into their lesson to help with development, deserve: *I think that taking the time to stop and pause you know go in sit down and watch someone teach, don't be rushed take your time do it properly and actually be reflective of*

what you've seen because I think people deserve that. (Adam). Emily also noted the benefit of coaching being allocated time to work collaboratively and reflect, as opposed to independently. She continued that the coaching programme allowed for this professional development time to be earmarked specifically for coaching: *I think it's things that you could do ordinarily by yourself with a fair degree of success, but you never find time to do it because there is always something more pressing and more important. So, I think having time set aside and completely earmarked for professional discussion and reflection think that was part of the main benefit of it. (Emily)*

Emily highlighted the need for an ongoing dialogue around professional development and a need to move away from a top-down approach. A move towards a staff culture where teacher development and learning is seen as a continuum or spectrum that teachers move along throughout their career: *I think there's a lot to be said for the coaching element, and I think if you want to move to a school culture where staff see teaching as continuous improvement and progression, there needs to be an ongoing dialogue not just a senior leader feeding back on a learning walk. It's got to be a cultural shift, and that's part of it. (Emily)*

John shared his experience with his questioning. He stated that he had eureka moments that were initiated through his observations of others. Clarity was gained through reflection and realisation of his own practice and sharing practices with his coach: *With the questioning, definitely! That, as I said, that was something. I had one of those Eureka...I was really happy with my questioning, and then I just had this level of clarity earlier on...it was observing someone else doing it [questioning]and then talking to them afterwards, and you know when you're suddenly*

like, 'Oh ok, I'm not actually as good as I think,' yeah, that could be loads better at this, once I realised that, there was just something that I wanted to run with. (John)

Teachers identified a range of factors that facilitated meaningful coaching, from the value of accountability and allocated time to the use of tools such as video analysis and peer observation. For many, these elements enhanced self-awareness and encouraged greater attention to detail, while also allowing space for professional dialogue that might otherwise be overlooked in the busyness of teaching. The sense of continuity, trust, and collaboration within coaching relationships further supported teachers in reflecting deeply on their practice and identifying areas for improvement. Collectively, these reflections suggest that creating the right conditions; time, trust, accountability, and purposeful tools, is crucial for coaching to move beyond surface-level exchanges and foster genuine professional growth.

4.3.3.2 Meaningful Feedback

Adam noted his process of quality assuring his feedback during coaching. Reflecting to ensure that his perception of the event matched the reality of the event: *...when I was giving him feedback, I was also asking myself, very carefully, whether that's what I saw during the observation. (Adam)*. Jane refers to an open, non-judgemental practice-sharing feedback process that was evident in her coaching. Utilising alternative perspectives within her coaching from a colleague who she would not normally work with to reflect on key elements of her teaching: *It felt like somebody there giving me some ideas of what I could do, but if I didn't want to do them, I didn't have to do them. And also just a different perspective, [coaching partner]'s not somebody*

who would ordinarily come into my classroom. I wouldn't ordinarily have much conversation in terms of teaching with [coaching partner's subject] staff. (Jane)

Jane continued to note the effective use of the video recordings to allow her coach to identify areas of strength accurately and solidify these points within her own mind. Jane points out her initial anxiety with being recorded but came to find its usefulness later in her coaching feedback sessions: *It was nice, actually, when [coaching partner] gave me the feedback, he could say, 'Look, you did that really well!' I thought it was going to feel weird watching and listening to myself, but it actually was nice to be able to watch myself actually doing quite well. (Jane)*

Sasha also noted the benefit she found from using the video recordings as a way of developing her into new areas of teacher development. However, she is firm in the idea of keeping the recordings confidential and used only within the confines of coaching feedback: *I didn't feel [coaching partner] was going, 'Yeah, that was rubbish.' She was really supportive in that, and I said, 'Actually, now I've looked at that. Next time, I'm going to change that.' So, as long as you know it's not something that the whole staff will see, I think videoing is really good to push yourself outside of your comfort zone and go for it. (Sasha)*

Tony identifies the importance of high-quality feedback and the value that this is held between the coach and coachee. He also identifies the need for feedback to be meaningful and not simply completed 'for the sake of it': *I want to focus on questioning, and you know by asking [coaching partner] to come and see you that there's going to be no pressure involved and you can*

teach by being yourself and you're going to get feedback that you're going to value because you know that she's not just giving you feedback for the sake of giving you feedback. It's going to be meaningful feedback. (Tony)

Adam noted points of self-reflection during his coaching feedback. These points of mutual reflection came during times of challenging his coachee on points identified from observed teaching. He noted this form of mutual reflection as a supportive tool that allows him to 'hold a mirror up' to his own practice: *Today, we did our final coaching conversation, and there was a point where I was challenging him on some points but simultaneously reflecting on my own practice, while listening to him. This dual reflection was insightful and allowed for both challenge and support by holding a mirror up to your own practice. I think that's good in itself. (Adam)*

Teachers described meaningful feedback as central to the success of their coaching experiences. Feedback was most valued when it was non-judgemental, constructive, and rooted in trust, allowing teachers to reflect without fear of criticism. Video recordings strengthened this process by making observations more accurate and by highlighting both strengths and areas for growth in tangible ways. Importantly, feedback was not seen as one-directional but as mutually reflective, with teachers like Adam using it to interrogate their own practice as much as their partner's. Across accounts, meaningful feedback was seen as supportive, authentic, and instrumental in driving professional development.

4.3.3.3 Reflective Nature of Coach/Coachee Relationship

William noted that he used his coaching sessions to discuss complex elements, such as the essence of teaching, from his and his coach's interpretation. This deeper reflection leads to William discussing his coaching partner's style of teaching, although struggling to quantify, *what it is that makes his partner's teaching such high quality: ...there is something in [coaching partner's] teaching that is excellent, and it's not the pedagogy. The pedagogy is great, but there's something beyond that, but I don't know how you would unpick that (William)*. William refers to his coaching conversations as 'reflective conversations' and expresses his enjoyment of these and added that he found the whole coaching process natural and liberating: *I think I guess coaching is reflective conversations, but these conversations specifically focusing around that reflection was really lovely and it's something that, you know, I've been through a lot of coaching cycles before, but this one was really quite natural and actually quite liberating. (William)*

Alice noted the accountability derived from coaching enabled (forced) her to take time and reflect on her teaching practices; in addition, Alice was able to discuss more broad elements of education. She points out her tendencies to not address areas that need developing and failing to regularly address these to improve moving forwards: *I think it's giving me or forced me into having to stop and self-assess. Actually talking about education is lovely. Just me and [coaching partner] just sat and spoke for ages about what we're meant to be in the game for rather than people cringing or being like, 'I have no time. I never have any time!'* (Alice)

When asked about the process of her reflective practice, Emily discussed how comfortable she became with this and how she was able to gain perspective through another subject's lens: *I*

found it really enjoyable. It's a bit like going around somebody's house, isn't it, because you live in your own bubble, so just observe [subject] lessons, so to go and to go and see a different subject that's taught completely differently, like, it felt quite alien to start off with. (Emily)

The reflective nature of coaching was seen as one of the most valuable elements, providing teachers with the time, space, and dialogue to interrogate their practice more deeply. William, Alice, and Emily each described how coaching encouraged them to pause, self-assess, and explore perspectives that extended beyond day-to-day pedagogy. For some, this reflection was liberating and natural, allowing them to consider the broader purpose of teaching, while for others it provided accountability to address areas they might otherwise overlook. By creating opportunities for shared reflection, coaching fostered both personal insight and professional growth.

4.3.4 Perception of Sustainability Post-Coaching

Teachers reflected on these aspects and drew attention to the areas that they felt enabled them to embed the coaching elements they were introduced to. They also discussed their perception of the sustainability taken from their coaching. Some coaches believed that the coaching would hold a high level of sustainability following the programme. William noted a firm belief in the sustainability of the developments he made during his coaching. He further explained that insights gained through engagement with his coaching partner had become integrated into his professional identity, prompting a renewed alignment with his personal teaching philosophy: *This coaching is sustainable, I'm absolutely committed to taking the bits that I've taken from [coaching partner], they'll be a part of my teaching again now. It's kind of reawakened that willingness to just do what I know is right, as opposed to doing what I've been told should be right. (William)*

Jane also stated that the coaching had taken her away from her 'natural state of being', and this was something that she found tiring in the long run: *Yeah, it just, it really worked, it's just so tiring, so tiring to be so nice all the time it's not my natural state of being. (Jane)*. Sasha also noted that the additional layer of accountability helped her to keep focused on her teaching standards and prevent old habits from re-emerging. Sasha noted the need for the coaching to continue for a further duration to maintain the developments she has seen: *I think there's a real benefit in continuing it [coaching programme] just to... keep focused and to have a different pair of eyes reviewing what you're doing... You believe it's [personal teaching practices] good, but is it? And have you maintained that focus that you said you were going to or just slipped back into old habits? I think the continuation of it [coaching programme] would actually be a really good thing. (Sasha)*

Tony expresses the need for coaching to be embedded into the school's culture and timetable structure. Thus, giving sufficient time for the coaching to effectively take place: *If I done it again next year, the only thing that I'd like is that you have sufficient time, a slot on your timetable every other [week]. I don't know. It might be once a half term, and you must use your free lesson to go do your coaching. (Tony)*. Emily also discussed the long-term impact coaching would have if embedded within the culture of her school and formed part of a cultural shift towards coaching. Making the coaching more visible to the school community and in terms of a wider CPD potential. *I think there's a lot to be said for the coaching element, and I think if you want to go to a school culture where staff see teaching as continuous improvement and progression, there needs to be ongoing dialogue, not just feedback on a learning walk. It's got to be a cultural shift, and that's part of it. (Emily)*

Ben shared his concerns that if coaching ceases, he will miss the ability to share his opinion and share positives between staff members through the coaching community: *The aspect of being able to sound off and share wins and if the coaching were removed, that would be the part I would miss, because it's very useful. (Ben)*. Reflecting on the sustainability of her coaching impacts, Emily noted the desire to continue coaching on a more frequent basis. She noted that this would have a beneficial influence on her coaching relationship and the feedback that would be generated: *I would have liked to do it over a longer time. I think I had a really positive experience with it. I liked working with [coaching partner], and if we were to continue, I think you could really build a good relationship in terms of feedback. (Emily)*

John commented on the sustainable nature of the coaching he undertook. He compared it to his perception that teachers who are OFSTED-ready work to an unsustainable level of work, 'polishing everything,' and 'gone hell for leather.' John explained the need for more time to be spent on coaching to maintain the levels of sustainability of the impacts found from the coaching programme: *As opposed to receiving feedback from an OFSTED inspector, you've gone hell for leather. Sometimes that's not necessarily sustainable for five lessons a day, five days a week, four weeks a month. Whereas this was [sustainable]. I like that, so to go back to the formal answer, maybe a few more [coaching] cycles would be beneficial. (John)*

Teachers expressed varied but generally positive views on the sustainability of coaching beyond the formal programme. For some, such as William and John, the practices and philosophies

explored during coaching were seen as directly transferable and naturally sustainable, shaping long-term approaches to teaching. Others, including Sasha and Emily, emphasised the need for continuation and cultural embedding of coaching to prevent regression into old habits and to build stronger professional relationships over time. Practical considerations, such as time allocation highlighted by Tony, were also seen as crucial for ensuring sustainability. While Jane noted the personal challenge of maintaining behaviours outside her ‘natural state,’ most participants recognised coaching as a valuable process that, if extended and embedded into school culture, could develop lasting professional growth and collaboration.

4.4 Identified Areas of Tension

John identified some difficulties in his coaching relationship due to a pre-existing hierarchy. John found that due to a pre-existing hierarchical relationship between himself and Adam, he was less comfortable questioning Adam’s classroom practice during their coaching sessions: *The relationship was positive; I had no regrets about working with him (Adam). However, it did affect the mutuality of our coaching, as in, naturally, he was much more comfortable pointing out things he felt could be improved with my practice. I found myself naturally pointing out things I liked about this practice that I would include in my own and finding out more about why he did it so I could implement it.*

Jane stated that she felt a reflection diary would have been beneficial to her reflection throughout the coaching process and felt that repetition had crept in as the coaching came to its final stages. She felt that her excitement for the coaching began to reduce towards the latter stages of coaching: *I feel like what would be more useful would have been session-1 completion and then*

a self-reflection diary and then session two looking at something different, and then again, a self-reflection diary. I gained loads in the initial sessions but not as much in the later sessions. I was buzzing after the first one. (Jane)

While the coaching programme was largely experienced positively, teachers also highlighted areas of tension that limited its effectiveness. John pointed to the influence of pre-existing hierarchy, which constrained his ability to challenge his partner's practice and affected the balance of mutuality in their relationship. Jane, meanwhile, reflected on the diminishing returns she felt in later sessions, suggesting that greater structure, such as the use of a reflection diary, might have helped sustain momentum and prevent repetition. These reflections indicate that, although coaching may have fostered professional growth, issues such as hierarchical dynamics need to be addressed to maximise its long-term impact.

4.5 Research Findings Conclusion

This chapter has presented the empirical findings arising from the analysis of preliminary interviews, in-session coaching conversations, and review interviews. The purpose of the chapter was to report how teachers experienced and made sense of video-based peer coaching, rather than to interpret these findings theoretically. Taken together, the findings provide a detailed account of teachers' perceptions, relational experiences, and reflections across the duration of the coaching programme.

In relation to Research Question 1, the findings indicate that peer coaching was consistently positioned by participants as a more meaningful and professionally relevant alternative to

traditional CPD. Teachers' prior experiences of CPD were frequently characterised as generic, performative, and insufficiently responsive to individual needs, whereas coaching was perceived as purposeful, dialogic, and embedded within classroom practice. These baseline perceptions provided important contextual insight into why participants engaged with the coaching model.

Addressing Research Question 2, the findings identified a range of enablers and constraints shaping teachers' experiences of the peer coaching process. Enabling factors included allocated time, structured dialogue, the use of video as a stimulus for recall, and the creation of non-judgemental spaces for reflection. Conversely, challenges emerged in relation to time pressures, repetition in later coaching cycles, and the influence of pre-existing hierarchies, which at times were found to constrain mutual challenge and openness. These findings highlight the contextual and structural conditions that influence how peer coaching is enacted in practice.

With respect to Research Question 3, the findings emphasised the centrality of coaching relationships in shaping both perceived impact and sustainability. Trust, respect, reciprocity, and authenticity were repeatedly identified as critical to enabling honest dialogue, meaningful feedback, and professional risk-taking. Where these relational conditions were present, teachers reported deeper reflection, increased self-awareness, and greater confidence in adapting their practice. However, the findings also demonstrate that sustainability was not automatic, participants consistently identified the need for continuity, time allocation, and cultural embedding, if coaching practices were to be maintained beyond the formal programme.

This chapter has established a detailed empirical foundation that captures teachers lived experiences of video-based peer coaching. It has demonstrated how coaching was perceived, enacted, and sustained within a specific secondary school context, while also identifying points of tension and limitation. The following chapter builds on these findings by situating them within existing literature and theoretical frameworks, enabling a deeper interpretation of their significance for professional development policy and practice.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will discuss this study's findings and focus on the emergent themes identified from the data collected. Additional themes of special interest that may highlight alternative insights into the participant's feelings or responses will be discussed later in the chapter. This chapter will be divided into three sections that align with the data collection phases: preliminary interviews, coaching conversations, and review interviews. Each section will identify and explore the emergent themes in detail, with existing research to further explain the study's findings and align these with the current research landscape. The following sections address the research questions empirically, through participants' accounts of peer coaching within CPD contexts.

5.1 Preliminary Interviews

During the preliminary interviews, participants answered a series of questions to allow reflection on their experience of continuous professional development (CPD) within their secondary education experience.

5.1.1 Perception of Education/CPD

5.1.1.1 Experience in Continuous Professional Development

Participant perception of CPD was predominantly negative; participants used common phrases such as '...eating into my PPA time...', '...not directly benefitting me...', and '...complete waste of my life.' to describe their varied prior experiences with CPD. Participants voiced their displeasure with CPD not because they did not want to develop as a professional but because they believe it to be too generalised and needed more time to implement these changes. This meant that participants were pressured into making changes that required more time than they

had available. When discussing the professional development days held within her school, Emily voiced her frustration of having no time to implement the ideas shared during these sessions: *SLT (Senior leadership team) stand up and offload everything they've been thinking about all summer with no time for you to implement it, think about it or have time as a team. Yeah, CPD is largely wasted. (Emily)*

Participants mentioned that perceived issues with CPD can stem from an amalgamation of not only the lack of time to implement the ideas from CPD but also the use of unrealistic deadlines to make significant changes to teaching practice, while still having other significant responsibilities such as pupil outcome to contend with. Korthagen (2017) illustrated a potential reason for this, stating that teachers are rarely offered time to reflect, and this will often cause an over-focus on action-oriented reflection (what to do or do better). Korthagen's assertion highlighted the pervasive challenge educators face due to the limited time allocated for reflective practice within professional development. Mentoring, as well as coaching, a process by which the knowledge of the specific domain and continual improvement of teaching techniques can be fostered, requires introspection and critical evaluation of certain aspects of the teaching process, such as strategies, attitudes, and behaviours within the class. However, given the continual and heavy calls on the profession, the teachers and faculty need more time to engage in this all-important process.

Time is also likely needed for critical verbal reflection to happen so that the educator will be better placed to see the areas that require improvement in their teaching practices and make decisions that will help improve on these aspects. This is because teachers may lose visionary meanings behind the situation and may feel involved in professional development when, in

essence, no professional development of any form or manner is taking place with any specified aims or even developments. These conclusions were mainly drawn from what the participants observed or experienced about their CPD. Thus, the participants realised the necessity for the statutory CPD training, which concerned a learner's safety and welfare, including the 'Safeguarding and County Lines'. Legal and procedural measures are highly relevant to teachers, and teachers must keep themselves updated on these aspects to support their students. However, alongside mandatory training, educators expressed a desire for CPD initiatives beyond compliance-driven mandates, seeking professional growth and development opportunities more closely aligned with their specific instructional needs and aspirations. This distinction underscores the nuanced nature of CPD within education, where balancing legal obligations with broader professional learning goals remains an ongoing challenge for educators and school leaders alike. Participants that previously worked in schools they perceived to be from a 'difficult' background felt encouraged to want to develop. However, they felt this can be the cause of frustration due to the cycle of low-quality CPD yet needing/wanting high-quality CPD.

Many participants desired to work with their peers, observe, and reflect upon practice collaboratively. However, as mentioned before, their perception of CPD from a broader perspective was negative. Recent studies have emphasised the value of social learning and collaborative inquiry in professional development. For example, Kamali and Javahery (2024) showed that structured peer coaching facilitated knowledge-sharing and reflective engagement, enabling teachers to reframe their practices. Similarly, Barnhart and Vega (2024) found that video club participation fostered professional relationships and reflective dialogue, supporting teachers in refining their approaches to practice.

Fullan (2007) highlighted the importance of collaborative professionalism, where educators work together to solve problems, share expertise, and support each other's growth and development. In this context, peer observation and collaborative reflection become effective tools for enhancing teaching practice and student outcomes. By fostering a culture of collaboration and collective inquiry, schools can create opportunities for meaningful professional learning experiences that empower educators to take ownership of their professional growth and contribute to the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Participants showed a keen desire to have peers come and see elements of their practice that they felt were an area of self-development. This aspiration for high-quality CPD differs from an external company or a highly skilled practitioner to come in and share their experience, but an ambition to work and develop within their community.

Various studies have documented educators' frustrations with CPD programmes, particularly regarding their perceived lack of relevance, applicability, and effectiveness (Canaran, 2023; Reisman and Beckwith, 2023; Barnhard and Vega, 2024). Korthagen (2017) emphasised the importance of providing educators with adequate time for reflection, as a lack thereof can result in an overemphasis on action-oriented reflection, leading to surface-level improvements rather than more profound understanding and growth. This aligns with the sentiments expressed by participants, who feel pressured to implement changes without sufficient time for reflection and integration.

William's reflections highlight the perceived superficiality of collaborative time within schools, suggesting CPD often functions as an administrative formality rather than a catalyst for professional growth. His description of these sessions as 'the reading of a long email' underscores a lack of dialogic engagement or critical exchange, key elements of effective professional learning (Desimone and Garet, 2015). This perception reflects a broader issue within school-based CPD, where top-down delivery models inhibit teacher agency and fail to translate into meaningful pedagogical change (Cordingley et al., 2015).

Moreover, William's critique of curriculum initiatives based on dated frameworks such as 'Hinterland' and 'Disciplinarity' reveals a tension between institutional reform and practitioner expertise. His experience illustrates how policy-driven professional development can inadvertently undermine existing teacher knowledge, echoing Korthagen's (2017) argument that authentic professional growth must emerge from teachers' lived experiences rather than imposed theoretical constructs. This disconnect between leadership-led innovation and practitioner understanding exposes a performative culture of CPD, one that prioritises visibility of change over genuine reflection or collaboration.

Findings also identified an issue of departmental fragmentation within the current format of CPD within the study school, which corresponds with research on the importance of cohesive school-wide CPD initiatives (McKenzie and Meisner, 2025). Imig and Switzer (1996), although dated, emphasised the significance of a unified approach to professional development within schools, as fragmented efforts can hinder collective progress and cohesion. Research indicates that departmental fragmentation in CPD efforts can lead to a lack of alignment in instructional

practices, goals, and expectations across the school community (Hord and Tobia, 2012). When departments operate in silos, each pursuing its professional development initiatives without coordination or collaboration with other departments, it can result in a disjointed educational experience for students and a lack of coherence in the overall school improvement efforts. Louis and Marks (1998), although dated, discussed how fragmented CPD efforts may exacerbate disparities in teacher effectiveness and student outcomes across different departments within the same school.

School fragmentation can impede the dissemination of best practices and innovative instructional strategies throughout the school community (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). Without a unified approach to CPD, teachers may miss out on opportunities to learn from their colleagues, share expertise, and collaborate on school-wide initiatives to improve teaching and learning outcomes. Further, the logical fragmentation of departments as an index noted in the findings accords with the literature concerning effective school-based CPD. Imig and Switzer (1996) stress the need to adopt a coordinated or coherent approach to professional development in schools, as disconnection and fragmentation will lead to a disconnect and break schools' organisational cohesiveness.

Moreover, it is argued that school leaders share specific responsibilities for developing a culture that supports collaboration and distributed accountability for professional learning (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). By being specific about what will be accomplished, offering resources and assistance to foster cooperation on joint endeavours, and acknowledging and

praising collective achievements, school leaders can develop a sense of community and purpose among the teachers.

CPD has traditionally been conceptualised as the dissemination and sharing of best practice among teachers, and such approaches continue to be widely implemented. However, a persistent limitation of this model is the assumption that practices proven effective in one classroom context can be readily transferred to others, despite variations in teachers' beliefs, experiences, and working environments. This theory-to-practice model of CPD, in which externally generated theories and strategies are presented to teachers with the expectation of uniform enactment, has been embedded in educational practice for several decades (Imig and Switzer, 1996; Sprinthall et al., 1996). Research suggests that such approaches have had only modest impact on sustained changes in teacher behaviour, highlighting the need for more contextually responsive and practitioner-centred models of professional learning (Korthagen, 2017). Furthermore, Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) stated that earlier literature focused on the problems of translating existing knowledge in the field of teacher education with practical applications. They discuss that gaining knowledge, whether through formal or informal training, and the subsequent application of that knowledge to teach fails to ensure the practical application of such theories in the classroom setting. This is in line with the observations made by the participants. They commented on how the theoretical content of CPD sessions lacks transference to real-life practice settings.

Specifically, the study results indicate teachers' preference for community and partnership approaches to CPD, reflecting theoretical research centred on peer learning and teacher observation as significant elements of professional development (Sprinthall et al., 1996). These

studies indicate that teachers are in a better position when they collaborate during their CPD, as this will help them create better environments where such professional learning is carried out.

When the results are placed within the framework of the topic as it is currently explored within the literature, frustrations voiced by educators are not merely unique, idiosyncratic instances but rather representative of the systemic problems within the field of CPD in education. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach prioritising meaningful reflection, collaborative learning, and cohesive school-wide initiatives, ultimately contributing to educators' professional growth and effectiveness.

Participants were invited to reflect on their perspectives regarding high-quality CPD, drawing on prior professional development experiences. During this phase of the interviews, participants identified a range of features which, if incorporated into CPD provision, were perceived as having the potential to enhance its relevance and acceptability for teacher professional learning. These reflections were subsequently conceptualised as participants' perceived benchmarks for CPD.

5.1.1.2 Timing and Advanced Planning

One of the most prominent points was the need for time and advanced planning for CPD. Emily noted that for CPD to be effective, time needed to be built into the initiative. These initiatives should be planned into department calendars so the appropriate amount of time can be given for teachers to reflect on their CPD. *It would be planned with time to embed because you often get ideas. You think, 'That's good; when's our next department time? Oh, it's in a month!' well, you've lost the momentum. (Emily)*

Almost half of the participants remarked on the benefits of having a clear and coherent overview at the beginning of the year. Hence, they knew when CPD was being delivered, and they could ensure that they were available for this, for example, educational workload marking. CPD could even be planned so that specific CPD foci were given throughout the year. An example Jane gave would be to have CPD focused on ‘The classroom basics’ such as entry routines and behaviour management earlier in the year. This style of coherent CPD mapping would help develop skills closer to where they are needed and aid with teacher workload to match current trends already in place.

In research exploring educational change through the lens of distributed leadership, Harris (2015) defines the concept as the decentralisation of roles and authority across various levels of an organisation. This approach aligns well with effective CPD mapping, as it empowers educators to take ownership of their professional learning. By decentralising control, CPD can be better tailored to individual and team needs, reduce unnecessary workload, and ensure alignment with wider organisational goals and leadership strategies, ultimately making professional development more purposeful and sustainable.

Jane also noted that it is crucial to grant teachers the flexibility to not only have enough time to triage but also for professional development practices like peer observation. Additionally, Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) posit that collaboration in professional learning is significant, pointing to the effectiveness of peer coaching and sharing in handling various classroom practices. Lesson observations, usually conducted by line managers, can fuel

perceptions of being spied/checked on and therefore, create negative sentiments in organisational departments. Support for this is found in Hattie's (2009) and more recently, Barnhart and Vega's (2024) study, where it is established that for feedback to promote improvement in teaching quality, there must be trust and collegiality for development. As Jane has pointed out, providing teachers with the opportunity to observe other teachers and the freedom to spend appropriate time doing so means promoting a renewed focus on the importance of collective progress among teachers.

Tony builds on this perception by encouraging formalised opportunities for focused work, such as learning walks in twos or coaching trios. These approaches correspond to the shared leadership and professional work perspectives outlined by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), which are based on collective responsibility for school change and learning and Continuous Professional Development as collective inquiry and learning.

Additionally, while pointing out the necessity to move faster and cover more material, William also underlines the value of having more time for self-study and exploration. This approach relates to Fullan's (2007) study of professional capital enhancement through focused learning and development. In effect, this can validate professional development by inspiring educators to research fresh materials or engage in fresh material appraisal more often, and schools can achieve culture changes, thereby compensating for the inflexibilities given by conventional CPD methods.

5.1.1.3 Individualised and Specifically Tailored

Reflecting on others, the participants described how CPD must be individualised and much more focused on the teacher, in consonance with literature that has supported the idea that personal

and professional development is essential (Guskey, 2009). The use of generic approaches can be demoralising due to their lack of practical goals or challenges, as supported by studies highlighting the need for differentiated and meaningful CPD experiences (Opfer and Pedder, 2011). This would also incorporate William's ideas that instead of 'searching for the golden bullet', which would lead to blanket approaches, teachers could find strategies that work specifically for the teachers: *There are lots of different frameworks out there, but what we keep consistently falling into the trap of is this is the Golden bullet, so say to teachers here are four models of great lesson design pedagogy, find the one that suits you and adapt it. (William)*

Participants' discussions regarding departments' autonomy in CPD planning reinforced the findings that emphasised the benefits of decentralised decision-making in professional development (Hord and Tobia, 2012). Allowing departments to utilise their specialisms for CPD aligns with the principles of distributed leadership, fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility for teacher development (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). Thus, shifting towards departmental planning for CPD could provide a more dynamic and responsive approach to professional learning. By enabling departments to change their focus every term and work collaboratively towards specific goals, schools can enhance group cohesion and engagement among teachers (Louis and Marks, 1998). This approach also empowers department heads to leverage expertise within their teams and bring in specialists as needed, ensuring that CPD initiatives are relevant, impactful, and aligned with the school's broader educational goals (Fullan, 2007). Such an approach allows departments to address their unique needs effectively and harness the collective expertise of their members, ultimately leading to more meaningful and sustainable professional growth.

5.1.1.4 Honesty and Professional Trust

William discussed the concept of trust, and how he felt this should be at the core of all CPD. William likens the CPD that he has experienced, specifically coaching, to the ‘Lodges’ of the Roman Empire. He explained that within these lodges, all hierarchy was removed, and soldiers were able to speak freely to the higher-ranked officers regarding the running of the battalion without any repercussions for these comments.

William saw peer coaching as similar to the concept of these Roman lodges, whereby any teacher could voice their honest opinion without the threat of repercussions through the conflict and egos of senior leadership team members. Meyerson, D, et al. (1996) explained that trust and safety are fundamental needs within any development relationship. They discuss the idea of ‘swift trust’ referring to the rapid development of trust in temporary groups or teams and how trust is crucial for effective collaboration and performance in such contexts. This highlighted the importance of creating a sense of safety and psychological security within developmental relationships, whether temporary or short-term. From William’s perspective, CPD should be a process of honesty and openness where teachers are free to voice their perceptions with others, all for the greater good of teacher development. CPD should be seen as a sacred space where development can be discussed, and deeper thinking can be done with the pure intention of progressive thinking and promoting better practice across all aspects of teaching within the school. Bolam and McMahon (2004) discuss the importance of creating meaningful and impactful CPD opportunities and emphasised the need for CPD initiatives to provide a space for reflective practice, critical inquiry, and collaborative learning to promote continuous improvement in teaching and learning practices. This would allow more teachers to come forward with their ideas

and participate in the discussion within the safety of the ‘lodge’. This format would also ensure that higher levels of thought are being put into initiatives to be rolled out to the school, would aid in holding all school stakeholders accountable for initiatives introduced into the school, and would ensure a robust monitoring and review system.

5.1.2 Personal Experience of CPD

5.1.2.1 Positive Perceptions of Continuous Professional Development

While exploring the participants’ perception of what ‘gold standard’ CPD meant to them, the participants ventured across several additional facets on their perception of effective CPD. These could be organised into three main themes: Delivery of CPD, Perceived rationale of CPD, and Logistics of CPD processes.

Some participants had prior experience with the use of video recordings within lessons as part of their CPD training. They found this to be a useful method of learning due to the ability to watch and re-watch their practice, allowing them to analyse classroom practice critically. In addition to this, participants stated how re-watching recordings helped with other teaching factors previously unnoticed, such as movement around the classroom and body language, which made the training more memorable by making an abstract idea more tangible.

Teachers discuss the concept of feeling valued numerous times during the preliminary interviews. Participants explained that CPD can be generalised at times and can become ineffective, where teachers can lose their individuality by using undifferentiated approaches. Levett-Jones, T. (2007) discussed how generic approaches to CPD can hinder reflective learning and fail to address individuals’ specific needs and experiences. They continue to highlight the

importance of personalised and contextually relevant CPD initiatives to promote meaningful professional growth and development. A generic developmental cycle does not offer enough variation or choice on what teachers can or want to focus their development time on: *A better way of saying it would be more differentiated [CPD] so maybe a menu of things you could pick from.* (Emily)

The higher levels of inspiration and ‘stickability’ of in-person training were noted, and this was seen as being even better when the person delivering the CPD was a well-respected practitioner. Garet et al. (2001) discuss the effectiveness of in-person training and the influence of the credibility of the CPD facilitator. They highlighted the importance of in-person training and emphasised the role of the facilitator’s credibility and expertise in influencing the quality and impact of CPD initiatives. These findings underscore the value of well-respected practitioners in delivering CPD programmes that inspire and engage participants, ultimately enhancing the ‘stickability’ of the training content.

Participant reflections illustrate the role of trust and subject expertise in shaping teachers’ engagement with professional development. Positive responses to CPD were often led by school trust’s subject lead, which suggests that credibility and contextual understanding are critical to perceived value. By situating learning within authentic, subject-specific processes, such as exam moderation, teachers are better able to connect training content with practical classroom application. This aligns with Joyce and Showers’ (2002) argument that effective CPD integrates modelling and feedback directly related to teachers’ existing practice, thereby deepening pedagogical understanding rather than offering generic strategies. Alice’s ability to identify

tangible improvements in her assessment literacy demonstrates how CPD grounded in professional expertise can foster a sense of purpose and professional growth.

In contrast, participants such as Rebecca highlighted how the mode of CPD delivery shapes accountability and engagement. Online formats were often perceived as less impactful, lacking the immediacy and professional pressure that in-person sessions generate. Her observation that online CPD is easier to defer reflects Garet et al.'s (2001) findings that sustained, interactive learning environments encourage greater follow-through and reflection. The sense of external accountability present in face-to-face coaching or collaborative CPD appeared to motivate participation and subsequent practice change. This contrast underscores the importance of both relational and structural factors in CPD design, trust in the facilitator and the social accountability embedded in delivery format, as determinants of teachers' professional commitment and learning transfer.

The teachers' reflections highlighted that effective CPD must balance credibility, personalisation, and accountability in order to be impactful. Participants consistently valued CPD that was tangible, relevant to their practice, and facilitated by respected practitioners who brought authenticity and expertise. The importance of differentiated opportunities was emphasised, with a preference for CPD that recognises individual needs rather than adopting an undifferentiated approach. Video analysis and in-person training were particularly valued for making learning memorable and actionable, while online CPD was perceived as less effective without mechanisms to ensure accountability.

These findings echo Levett-Jones (2007), who emphasised the importance of personalised and reflective CPD, and align with more recent evidence that sustained, practice-focused professional learning has a stronger impact on teacher growth (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Kraft, Blazar and Hogan, 2018; Kraft, Simon and Lyon, 2023). Video-based methods, highlighted by Barclift and MacLeod (2024) and Baran, et al., (2023), demonstrated how recordings can deepen self-reflection and provide evidence-based dialogue, reinforcing teachers' appreciation of tangible and re-watchable CPD tools. Similarly, Kamali and Javahery (2024) and Barnhart and Vega (2024) show that structured peer coaching and video clubs support collaborative reflection, egalitarian relationships, and sustained engagement. Moreover, Ilgan and Basaran (2023) underline the link between participation in collaborative PD and greater teacher job satisfaction, which resonates with participants' preference for face-to-face, interactive models.

Collectively, these insights demonstrated that teachers perceive the most meaningful CPD as that which is contextually relevant, practically applicable, and rooted in professional trust, while also offering opportunities for collaboration, reflexivity, and long-term growth.

5.1.2.2 Negative Perceptions of Continuous Professional Development

As well as reflecting on the positive elements associated with CPD, participants were forthcoming with their negative perceptions of CPD they had faced in the past. These came through in three emergent themes: *i) inappropriate pitch for the audience, ii) non-personalised approach, and iii) lack of teacher accountability.*

Pitch, relating to the level of content delivered within CPD, was identified as an area of contention amongst the participants. Many participants felt that the regular level of content could

have been higher, with many feeling that they could deliver a better session for their colleagues. This was associated with the use of external CPD providers who needed to be made aware of the teacher's ability or the school culture and climate. Desimone and Garet (2015) explored the association between external CPD providers and their need for more awareness of teachers' abilities or school culture and climate. They examine best practices in teachers' professional development, including the role of external providers. They identified challenges associated with external CPD initiatives, mainly when providers need to familiarise themselves with teachers' abilities or the context of the school. This supported the findings of this study and emphasised the importance of aligning CPD efforts with educators' and their schools' specific needs and circumstances to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

Participants shared that they had been asked to attend CPD sessions that focused on a whole-school development need. However, they felt this was a strong area of their practice. Some participants had delivered specific CPD to their department (due to their high practice levels) yet were asked to attend the same whole-school CPD sessions of that same professional practice. This feeling of a lack of up-skilling meant participants were very switched off to the idea of developing and felt that CPD was wasted time that could have been better spent elsewhere. Participants shared their experience of routine CPD within their school, which consisted of meetings where middle leaders (departmental leadership) would be led through concepts and research that was dated and lacked inspiration. This made William and many other middle leaders feel unmotivated and stuck in a cyclical process of reusing old information to guide current practice.

William continued to explain that he would be okay with being taught something within his current knowledge base if it improved the effectiveness or efficiency of this practice. Still, if it does not, then he sees it as a wasted opportunity for development: *It's not that I mind being taught to suck eggs if I'm being trained to suck them better, but I'm being trained to suck them with the same methodology. Is there a more efficient way to get that egg open? Then I'm all over it, but there isn't, or at least what we're being shown isn't, and a lot of it isn't transferable necessarily in the way that people think it is. (William)*

Participants discussed how CPD within the school could often have a blanket approach where the practice is adjusted to fit in with current research, what Korthagen (2017) calls 'Professional development 1.0'; this can lead to feelings of discouragement and a lack of personalisation that can be ineffective for implementing change within teaching practice. Participants commented on the use of blanket approaches and where they are acceptable within CPD, such as for safeguarding training (a statutory requirement within schools) and when rolling out whole-school initiatives, such as seating plans. However, participants noted that a blanket approach would be less effective when attempting to impact classroom practices as they depend so heavily on the complex dynamics of individual classrooms. Thus, whole-school CPD delivery can only effectively tackle the problem of poor teaching practice across every classroom when blanket approaches address these issues. Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) examined the different professional development paths, including whole-school approaches like peer coaching. They discuss how blanket approaches to CPD, characterised by contrived collegiality and lack of genuine collaboration, may fail to effectively address the diverse needs and challenges in every classroom. This supported these findings and illustrated the importance of fostering a collaborative

culture and providing tailored support to educators to promote meaningful professional growth and improve teaching practice. Jane explained how this can be demoralising for teachers: *Suppose for all different things or all different topics, safeguarding [for example]. I understand that, at times, you have to use that blanket approach, but for me, it would be one where you spend a certain amount of time in a department and develop as a department.*

Many participants voiced their concerns about the accountability of school-wide CPD delivery methods. This was often associated with a need for more robust monitoring of the impact of CPD and how teachers were held to account. The aspects that impacted students' learning extensively were recognised by Hattie (2009). While not explicitly focused on CPD monitoring and teacher accountability, Hattie (2009) emphasised the importance of evidence-based practices in education and the need for robust monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure that educational interventions, including CPD initiatives, effectively improve student outcomes. Hattie's (2009) research supported the broader conversation within educational research about the necessity of accountability mechanisms to gauge the impact of CPD on teaching practice and student learning.

Similar to this study, Timperley and Parr (2005) examine whole-school CPD initiatives. They discuss how implementing a professional learning programme across the entire school facilitated collaboration among staff members, promoted a shared understanding of teaching practices, and enhanced the collective capacity of educators to improve student outcomes. They underscore the beneficial use of whole-school CPD initiatives and how these can foster a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration, leading to positive changes in teaching and learning practices across the school community.

Alice explained how a vicious cycle was common within her school, with teachers attending CPD, the results not being monitored within lessons, and the teachers seeing that they do not have to embed these changes. Then, they return to the next school-wide CPD session. They do so with the knowledge that they will only be challenged if changes from the session are made, and, therefore, they do not see the CPD as meaningful or impactful: *And people who don't do it feel like they have got away with it, so they don't listen the next time, and people who are doing it realise that no one is coming around to check or look or praise them, so they don't bother again... I'm a total teacher's pet, so I wouldn't do that. Still, it would be so easy to be like, well, no one's going to cheque, so I'll look into this, and I'll be do something else, or, you know, do it working hard and it is never getting any feedback thinking well why have I just put so many hours. Then people are pretty happy to be like, 'Well, it's not benefitting me directly. It's eating into my PPA, so why would I do it?' (Alice)*

Teachers' reflections highlighted that CPD is often undermined when it fails to account for teachers' prior knowledge, individual needs, and classroom contexts. Sessions that were pitched too low, overly generic, or disconnected from teachers' practice left participants disengaged and sceptical about the value of CPD. This aligns with Desimone and Garet's (2015) findings, which emphasised the need for CPD to be contextually relevant and responsive to the professional expertise of participants. Similarly, Korthagen (2017) warns that generic approaches, what he terms 'Professional Development 1.0', risk reducing CPD to compliance rather than growth. Teachers also pointed to a lack of accountability and feedback mechanisms, echoing Hattie's (2009) call for robust evaluation systems that ensure CPD translates into improved classroom practice and student outcomes. Without meaningful monitoring or recognition, CPD can create

cycles of disengagement, where teachers perceive little incentive to embed learning into their practice (Timperley and Parr, 2005).

5.1.2.3 Perceived Impacts of Continuous Professional Development

A majority of participants explained that they felt they were going through the motions of CPD. Some participants felt their statutory responsibilities were met, but very few improvements were being made to their teaching practice: *I'll be honest with you: I have eight years of teaching, and at the moment, I'm just going through the motions. (Tony)*

Others felt that CPD needed to come away from a whole-school approach and for the responsibility for CPD to sit firmly within departmental areas. Thus, given more specific training opportunities for their teachers and the opportunity to explore teaching practices with like-minded subject specialists: *I've done CPD training on how to mark with [Head of Department] and the seconds in [subject], that has been invaluable to me because I was crap at it. I'd spend hours agonising over where to pitch, but I've been trying to do that better. They (dept leaders) made me look at high-level stuff I need to teach better. It's much better if it [CPD] is managed by your direct line managers rather than the whole-school approach, and that's been different. (Rebecca)*

Some participants disagreed and felt it was necessary to undertake CPD with other departments that were further ahead in specific areas, such as curriculum planning, to gain a better understanding of how others develop their own subject and, thus, help to build their own. This idea of a cross-curricular CPD can work well and enable teachers to learn from various colleagues and schools, developing their practices differently. Donarski (2016) explored the importance of cross-curricular CPD and provides practical insights into its implementation. They discuss how cross-curricular CPD initiatives can facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration among teachers

from different subject areas, enabling them to learn from diverse perspectives and approaches to teaching and learning. This supported the idea that cross-curricular CPD can effectively enhance professional development and promote innovation in teaching practices. Some participants discussed this theme of peer development as they reflected on prior occasions when they felt that working one-on-one with a colleague was advantageous and encouraged them to think deeply about their practice.

Teachers' perceptions of the impact of CPD illustrated that while statutory responsibilities may be fulfilled, the perceived influence on classroom practice is often limited unless CPD is tailored and context specific. Participants emphasised the importance of subject- or department-led CPD, which resonates with findings by Cordingley et al. (2015), who stress that professional development is most impactful when embedded in teachers' immediate practice and linked to subject-specific pedagogy. Others pointed to the benefits of cross-curricular CPD, highlighting opportunities to learn from different disciplines and gain fresh perspectives. This echoes Donarski's (2016) argument that cross-curricular collaboration can foster innovation and knowledge-sharing across departments.

Equally, teachers highlighted the positive impact of peer-led development and mentoring, which aligns with Kraft, Blazar, and Hogan's (2018) evidence that coaching and peer collaboration can produce meaningful, sustained improvements in teaching practice. Experiences of mentoring and coaching encouraged deeper reflection and the co-construction of practice, supporting Hargreaves and Fullan's (2020) notion of professional capital, whereby teacher learning is maximised through trust, collaboration, and collective responsibility.

5.1.3 Previous Experience and Perception of Educational Coaching

5.1.3.1 Perception of Coaching

One purpose of these preliminary interviews was to determine the participant's perception of coaching, either pre-conceived or experienced. Many participants had yet to complete any coaching in their professional career, but most had an element of training or working (buddying) with a newly qualified teacher (NQT). However, although many participants had not taken part in an official coaching programme, many had a firm idea of what constituted coaching. Participants could recognise elements of their professional practices that could constitute coaching or at least aspects of coaching. Many of these elements involved teachers relying on peer feedback or informal group discussions about their practice. Askill-Williams and Marra (2015) explored the role of peer observation, feedback, and reflection in professional development among educators. The authors discuss how informal peer discussions and feedback can contribute to the development of teaching practice. They also address these informal practices' potential challenges and benefits, highlighting the importance of creating structured peer collaboration and reflection opportunities. They support the idea that teachers often rely on peer feedback and informal discussions to enhance their professional practice. However, they note that the impact may vary depending on the structure and consistency of these interactions. The importance of a structure to peer coaching design is supported by the work of Kamali and Javahery (2024), who utilise Galperin's stages within their peer coaching model design.

However, findings showed participants had mixed feelings around this, with some finding solace within their informal conversations about practice and others finding them unhelpful potentially due to their unstructured and inconsistent nature. Jane emphasised the value of informal staffroom conversations, where teachers could share immediate problems and receive quick,

practical advice from colleagues. These spontaneous exchanges once played a vital role in collaborative problem-solving, but she noted that such opportunities occur less frequently now, highlighting a loss of organic peer support within schools. Alice reflected on how informal support with an NQT functioned as a form of coaching, even if it was not formally labelled as such. By sharing her own struggles and solutions, she provided practical advice that the NQT could implement, demonstrating the power of peer-to-peer learning. She also stressed the importance of proximity in enabling such exchanges, showing how collaboration often thrives when teachers are situated close to one another. Sasha, however, raised a cautionary point, noting that informal conversations could sometimes be unhelpful or even damaging. Flippant or dismissive remarks, such as ‘They never behave like that for me,’ made her feel unsupported and undermined. This highlighted the risks of unstructured dialogue, where comments lacking sensitivity can negatively affect teacher confidence and development.

Teachers’ perceptions of coaching revealed both recognition of its potential and uncertainty due to limited formal exposure. While many had not engaged in structured coaching, they drew parallels with mentoring NQTs, peer discussions, and informal feedback, illustrating that elements of coaching were already embedded in their professional practice. Informal exchanges, such as staffroom conversations, were valued by some for their immediacy and practicality, yet others found them inconsistent or even damaging without structure or sensitivity. This tension underscores the importance of designing coaching with clear frameworks that balance openness with consistency, as suggested by Askill-Williams and Marra (2015) and reinforced by Kamali and Javahery’s (2024) structured peer coaching model. Teachers’ experiences suggest that while

informal collaboration can be powerful, its impact is maximised when supported by a structured process that ensures reflection, mutual respect, and constructive feedback.

5.1.3.2 Coaching and Deeper Thinking

Other research has also identified the creation of more profound thinking opportunities through coaching. Sullivan-Watts, et al., (2019) support the connection between coaching and deeper thinking. They explored the impact of cognitive coaching on teacher reflective practice and discuss how coaching encourages deeper thinking by prompting teachers to reflect critically on their assumptions and instructional practices. Sullivan-Watts, et al., (2019) highlighted the role of coaching in promoting metacognition and self-awareness, which are essential components of deeper thinking and professional growth. This supported the idea that coaching can facilitate deeper thinking among educators, leading to enhanced teaching practices and student outcomes. Teachers' reflections highlighted how coaching not only facilitates professional development but also encourages a deeper level of metacognition and self-awareness. By engaging in coaching or mentoring roles, participants became more conscious of their own practice, often reflecting critically while supporting colleagues. This echoes Sullivan-Watts, et al., (2019), who identified coaching as a catalyst for deeper thinking, enabling teachers to interrogate assumptions and refine instructional choices. Jane's experience illustrated this, as the process of guiding an NQT required her to carefully consider and reassess her own teaching, reinforcing the reciprocal benefits of coaching. Recent research further supported this, with Kraft, Simon, and Lyon (2023) emphasising that coaching generates sustainable improvements through incremental yet meaningful refinements, while Hargreaves and Fullan (2020) highlighted its role in fostering professional capital by embedding reflective habits across school cultures. Overall, coaching provides

structured opportunities for critical reflection, supporting professional growth that extends beyond surface-level improvements towards more meaningful and sustainable practice.

5.1.3.3 Coaching and Collaborative Sense-making

Berg and Hodgkins (2006) discuss the role of coaching and explored how coaching fosters collaborative sense-making by promoting open dialogue, shared problem-solving, and collective reflection among educational leaders and their teams. They highlighted coaching as a skill facilitating communication, collaboration, and the co-construction of meaning within school communities. This finding supported that coaching contributes to collaborative sense-making processes, leading to more effective leadership practices and organisational outcomes. Teachers' perceptions emphasised the importance of coaching as a means of transforming informal exchanges into purposeful, collaborative sense-making. While Emily noted that everyday conversations often led to sharing useful ideas, she also suggested that these moments could easily be lost without the structure and intentionality of coaching. Embedding coaching into formal programmes ensures that dialogue becomes more deliberate, reflective, and sustained, leading to stronger retention of ideas and shared professional growth. This aligns with Berg and Hodgkins (2006), who argued that coaching fosters collective reflection and the co-construction of meaning within professional communities. More recently, Kamali and Javahery (2024) highlighted how structured peer coaching models, when built around frameworks, can deepen collaboration and ensure that sense-making translates into actionable practice. Similarly, Kraft, Simon, and Lyon (2023) stress the long-term value of coaching for building sustainable professional cultures, where collaboration develops incremental but lasting improvements.

5.1.3.4 Non-judgemental Environments that Support Professional Development

Hord and Hall (2004) discussed the importance of creating a culture of inquiry in teacher professional development. They emphasised the value of non-judgemental environments encouraging open dialogue, reflection, and collaborative learning among educators. They propose a model of collaborative group reflection as a framework for fostering professional growth and enhancing teaching practices. This supported the idea that non-judgemental environments can support professional development by promoting a culture of inquiry and collaboration among teachers. These elements were minor themes but show how teachers are social creatures that often find solace in like-minded professionals who are each trying to develop their practice for the good of others. The idea of peer development, which emanated from the participants' comments, showed their preference for collaborative working within a non-judgemental environment.

The preliminary interviews explored participants' perceptions of continuous professional development (CPD) within secondary education. Most participants expressed predominantly negative views towards CPD, citing concerns such as encroachment on personal planning and preparation time, lack of direct benefits, and perceived lack of a precise aim or robust monitoring of the implementation of the newly learned practice. Participants highlighted challenges in implementing CPD-driven changes due to time constraints, the lack of reflection time, and overemphasis on action-oriented reflection. The pitch of CPD sessions was a significant concern among participants, who often needed to find the content more relevant to their expertise. Those teachers who worked in settings different from the school or were unfamiliar with the school context believed the sessions could have been more beneficial for the participants in enhancing their teaching practice. One of the issues arising from the research was that middle leaders felt that suggestions given to them were condescending as if they were being led through ideas they already

knew, or even, they had previously presented to their managers. This back and forth proved to stagnate CPD and left workers feeling that they had been placed on a never-ending carousel.

Critique of the blanket delivery of CPD was also discussed as inadequate and too generic in reframing individual classroom practices. This did, however, help some topics, such as safeguarding, which had already adopted a more standardised approach to training, while other issues likely needed less of a mechanical approach. Some participants stressed the importance of decentralising CPD in that the needs of a department or section in terms of training and enhancing teachers' capacity, as well as their interests, may diverge from those of the whole institution.

The participants suggested basing the continued professional development of the academics on a 'gold standard' that would entail a more centralised and planned approach that is personalised and self-governed at the department level. This belief is shared by Ilgan and Basaran (2023) who's research identified a link between personalised PD and job satisfaction, bolstering the argument for peer coaching's ability to improve staff retention and morale.

A positive relationship of trust and honesty was emphasised as vital for relevant CPD; recommendations were made on offering a secure environment for discussion and sharing ideas. Furthermore, participants shared their views on various approaches to the delivery of CPD, with one of the most significant benefits identified in the direct face-to-face coaching facilitated by recognised experts as opposed to online CPD training platforms. Participants also noted frustrations stemming from the lack of accountability in the delivery of CPD. Some mentioned that CPD sessions were not effectively supervised, and this short-sighted process made teachers indifferent towards the sustainability of the CPD sessions. With review mechanisms seldom

followed or provided, teachers did not show motivation for applying changes to their existing practice. They stressed appreciation for professional worth and offered a greater choice of non-traditional, more individualised CPD possibilities. Participants appreciated the possibilities highlighted by coaching, which are closer to individual learning than other traditional approaches. While few reported participating in formal coaching programmes, several reported their participation in informal discussions with peers where they discussed and even challenged classroom practice. This form of unlimited and non-judgemental learning environment was more beneficial for professionals than the conventional CPD approaches.

These concerns were evident during the initial interviews with the participants. The participants expressed apprehension regarding CPD in their schools but preferred enhancements in advanced planning, individualised approaches, and trust and believable delivery systems. Participants emphasised the need for CPD initiatives to be meaningful, relevant, and accountable to promote professional growth effectively. Most participants advocated more tailored approaches to CPD delivery, greater departmental autonomy, and increased emphasis on coaching to encourage meaningful professional development.

5.2 Coaching Conversations

Emergent themes were identified from the coaching conversations. Four main facets of each coaching conversation re-emerged throughout these: i) self-realisation and deeper thinking; ii) questioning and challenging practice; iii) sharing and identifying effective practice; and iv) collaborative sense-making.

5.2.1 Self-realisation and Deeper Thinking

Findings highlighted the opportunities that coaching unveiled for deeper thinking and self-realisation. This was done through several facets, such as identifying and sharing good practices to enable realisation, as seen during the coaching conversation between Rebecca and Alice. Here, Alice was able to see a solution to an issue she has been having within her online classes. Self-reflection brought about this in-depth coach questioning. This can be seen between Adam and John, where Adam explored John's classroom questioning practices, which allows John to reflect and identify his practice development area.

During the coaching sessions, several participants used the alternative perspectives provided by their coach to self-critique and reflect on their practice. This often came in the form of acceptance of a coaching critique offered by their coach and enabled them to 'see' an area of development within their practice that had previously gone unnoticed (Ruhl, Philpot, and Lisette, 2017). Several coachees then continued to unpack the reasons behind their specific classroom processes and explored this in much greater detail with their coaching. This process of deep self-examination aligns with Svaricek's (2024) study, which documents teacher transformation from scepticism to professional growth through structured peer reflection. His findings highlighted how meaning-oriented dialogue, when scaffolded carefully, can shift entrenched beliefs and foster a more reflective professional identity. Law (2002) explained this as taking the coachee through the landscape of action, thus allowing the coach to help their coachee develop their sense of self and personal identity. This also reflected Korthagen's (2017) model of coaching (The 'Onion' model) that the need for coaching to examine deeper into not just the environmental factors of teaching practices (What happened within the classroom?) but further into the core qualities and identity of the teacher (How did your core identity impact your teaching practices in that instance?) to coach

for meaningful change effectively. Korthagen (2017) also explained that this coaching reflection must be meaning-oriented as opposed to action-oriented, allowing the coach to explore deeper into why teachers use a particular teaching practice may enable teachers to have the opportunity to think deeply regarding why they teach in a certain way and provides for more opportunities for self-realisation that were seen within the participant group. Wagenheim et al. (2009) explained that teachers might have to change their 'way of being, 'not just their 'way of doing' about teaching practices. The importance of this structured approach to reflection is further reinforced by Kuhn et al. (2023), who found that deliberate reflection only led to meaningful professional insight when guided by a scaffolded process. Their study showed that without such structure, teachers often defaulted to surface-level review, whereas guided reflection promoted deeper reasoning and conceptual development, findings that align closely with the reflective processes observed in this thesis.

Coaching not only acts as an outlet for personal self-fulfilment but also encourages metacognition and reflexivity among the educational faculty. Such changes occur through engaging in balanced discussions focusing on the coaches' input and considering the perspective offered by the others (Ruhl, Philpot, and Lisette, 2017). According to Law (2002), facilitators must navigate the terrain of action with coachees to gain a renewed perspective on their teaching and sense of self. Likewise, in Korthagen's (2017) Onion Model, the coach needs to focus beyond the observable behaviours and better understand the objects in which the educators' practice is grounded.

Wagenheim et al. (2009) also noted the necessity of assuming what could be referred to as a paradigm shift in practice for educators to bring about positive change, with coaching playing a crucial part in the process. So, coaching is understood as a tool that helps educators to reflect, reconsider their perceptions, and broaden their views on teaching practice and personal development.

5.2.2 Questioning and Challenging Practice

Othman (2018) explained that to achieve changes through coaching, one would have to move away from the comfort zone and gain a vantage point that emanates from curiosity-based inquiries. Coaching is seen as being effective through marginal gains, with the premise that it is used as a vehicle for change but one that prioritises evolution rather than revolution (Lawrence and Cadman, 2017). This process of improvement through the evolution of practices was evident during the coaching conversations, for example, between Rebecca and Alice (when discussing the use of Google Docs during an online class): *...do you usually have them all on a Google doc that you're jumping in and out of while you're teaching like I was doing? (Rebecca). I think the next time you do a class discussion, get everyone to write down one idea on their Google Doc, and then when it comes to sharing it, they can copy and paste it. (Alice). Yes, that's an excellent idea as well. So that's a really good idea, I love that.* Rebecca becomes inquisitive regarding a comment made by Alice, her coach, about seeing students work online and, in turn, questions the coach about her practice to overcome a problem (searching multiple windows to see students' online work). In response to this, the coach shared a potential solution, which was simple and effective. The coachee saw this solution as a good idea and was keen to try it. This showed a reverse situation where, through effective coaching, the coachee could pick out the solution from the coach without the coach having to push their practices onto their coachee. This allows the coachee to feel like

they came up with the solution with the coach, positively affecting the exchange of high-quality practice through collaborative solution development and knowledge sharing (Maglio and Jorgensen, 2003).

Teachers must be aware of their capabilities and allow themselves to become agentic co-constructors of their professional development (Othman, 2018). A cornerstone of the coaching process is allowing another professional to encourage reflection and self-assessment without the negative aspects of what can feel like a heavily critical process. Due to this, questioning and challenging practice is vital within a coaching cycle yet should be handled with great care and attention. Questioning and challenging practice was an emergent theme within the coaching conversations. This idea of questioning and challenging practices within the coaching pairs occurred multiple times across most coaching conversations. This process of challenging pre-existing practices and helping to develop these, instead of continuing with old practices that have ossified in teachers' minds, can allow new and more effective ideas to be designed and used within teaching (Kampa-Kokesch et al., 2001). By confronting entrenched practices, coaches facilitate a process of reflection and adaptation that encourages educators to explore alternative strategies. This iterative process of inquiry promotes professional growth and cultivates a culture of innovation in teaching (Costa and Garmston, 2015). As educators engage in reflective dialogue and collaborative problem-solving, they gain new insights and perspectives that challenge conventional thinking and inspire creative solutions (Killion and Harrison, 2006). This transformative journey from reflection to action empowers teachers to break free from stagnant practices and embrace continuous improvement.

Moreover, the supportive environment of coaching pairs provides educators with the encouragement and guidance needed to experiment with novel approaches (Knight, 2007). Through ongoing feedback, coaches help teachers navigate educational practice's complexities and the path toward meaningful change (Showers, Joyce, and Bennett, 1987). By fostering a climate of trust and collaboration, coaching promotes a sense of shared ownership and accountability for professional development (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011). This collaborative endeavour enhances individual teaching effectiveness and fosters a collective commitment to excellence in education (Hattie, 2012). In this way, coaching catalyses transformative change, empowering educators to realise their full potential and unlock new possibilities in teaching and learning.

Within the coaching conversations, participants questioned each other's regular classroom practice, using common phrases such as 'I noticed that you...' and 'Can you tell me more about your decision to...'. Soisangwarn and Wongwanich (2014) refer to these as 'transformational learning questions'. These familiar troupes allowed coaches to explore areas of coachee practice in more detail and hold the coachee accountable for their responses and procedures within their classrooms. This form of questioning and challenging behaviour is vital in effective coaching for teacher change. Wagenheim et al. (2009) stipulates that reflection on and questioning deeply held assumptions is needed to become a better teacher. The optimal environment is one of experimental trials of inquiry and, therefore, developing new strategies and testing teaching practices.

The relationship of mutual inquiry between the participants allowed for a shared sense of responsibility in the coaching. It allowed the coach and coachee to focus effectively on the task

instead of feeling confrontational due to the critical element of coaching. Sherin (2004) aligns with this understanding, explaining that teachers may feel uncomfortable when asked to explain their actions and can interpret this more critically than initially intended. Othman (2018) discussed a solution to this potential feeling of criticism and explained that a good coach must be able to challenge and never blame their coachee and ensure that responsibility is shared between the coach and coachee. This allows for an experience of shared responsibility to overcome the problem. The most effective nature of a coaching relationship is one built on the foundations of mutuality, in which the relationship favours both the coach and coachee equally in all matters as well as promoting independence and accountability while working effectively together (Zeus and Skiffington, 2002; Kvalsund, 2005; Moen, 2010).

However, feedback and support are also needed, among the core elements of positive and challenging environment coaching. The coachee utilises feedback as a way of helping them learn how one needs to improve in the areas that seem difficult. Hattie and Timperley (2007) explained that feedback one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement and is indispensable in determining the specifics of teaching practice regardless of whether it is positive, to congratulate one on the job well done or constructively critical (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). Further, it is imperative to continuously encourage the coachee to guarantee the availability of adequate enabling conditions that will enable the proper execution of recommended alterations.

The coaching process may embrace the goals and intentional strategies for the coachee's development. These goals act as clear referent objects that helped to identify areas for specific development and help address short-term goals aimed at achieving results (Joyce and Showers,

2002). Coaching, with the help of identifying the goals together with the involvement of the coachee, the professional development process becomes a shared responsibility of both the coachee and the coach, and the process of goal setting and its consecutive stages allow achieving improvements based on the feedback and reflections in the further iterations.

Besides the growth of the coachee, effective coaching encompasses organisational development and increase. In this sense, coaches have the crucial approach in determining the institutional changes required within the educational organisation and ensuring that the subtle barriers present are addressed at the individual and higher structural levels, continuously learning and improving the system (Fullan 2007). By fostering a climate of innovation and collaboration, coaches contribute to the overall enhancement of teaching and learning outcomes at the institutional level.

Effective coaching is characterised by a multifaceted approach that combines positivity, challenge, feedback, ongoing support, goal setting, and advocacy for systemic change. Coaches empower educators to enhance their teaching practices and achieve their full potential by creating an environment conducive to reflection, experimentation, and inquiry. Through collaborative dialogue and mutual respect, coaching fosters a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in education, benefitting individual teachers and the broader educational community.

Teachers' reflections on questioning and challenging practice emphasise its pivotal role in fostering growth while maintaining trust and respect within the coaching relationship. The evidence showed that effective questioning allows coachees to critically analyse and reconsider

entrenched practices without feeling judged, creating a balance between support and challenge. This aligns with recent studies that highlighted the power of inquiry-led dialogue and reflective questioning in promoting teacher learning and sustained change (Barclift and MacLeod, 2024; Kamali and Javahery, 2024). Importantly, participants recognised that feedback delivered in a non-judgemental, collaborative manner encouraged them to trial new strategies and build ownership of their development, echoing findings by Ilgan and Basaran (2023) that collaborative PD enhances teacher efficacy and job satisfaction.

Research has shown that revisiting practice through video recordings enables deeper reflection, reduces defensiveness, and fosters the kind of metacognitive inquiry that teachers in this study found valuable (Barnhart and Vega, 2024; Baran, et al., 2023). Such approaches align with teachers' descriptions of questioning that was exploratory rather than critical, enabling co-construction of solutions and professional agency. Moreover, the emphasis on gradual, iterative improvement reflected broader evidence that sustainable professional learning is achieved through marginal gains, embedded over time, rather than through one-off interventions (Kraft, Simon and Lyon, 2023).

Ultimately, questioning and challenging practice within coaching can be seen as both a catalyst for individual teacher development and collective professional learning. By situating inquiry in a supportive, reciprocal relationship, teachers are empowered to reflect, adapt, and experiment with new strategies, cultivating a culture of innovation and continuous improvement across the profession (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2020).

5.2.3 Collaborative Sense-making

The participants frequently entered periods of collaborative sense-making, whereby participants would be seen to work together to discuss previously observed situations or pre-conceived ideas to understand the deeper-rooted reasons for these better. These periods, referred to as ‘collaborative sense-making’, allowed the coach and coachee to talk equally, as neither were experts in the specific situation.

This was mirrored within the research by Charteris and Smardon (2013), who reported that teachers noted that their thinking was enhanced by the collaborative lens given during the dialogic feedback in their peer coaching environments. Lee (2017) agrees that coaching can develop teacher engagement with their practice and increase the collaborative nature of their professional development. This was brought about through teachers actively and openly discussing and thinking more deeply regarding others’ classroom practices. Thacker et al. (2022) added to this by highlighting the importance of sequencing in peer observation, noting that the order in which participants give and receive feedback can influence the depth and impact of their learning. This strengthens arguments for designing balanced feedback schedules within coaching cycles to ensure equitable cognitive engagement across all participants. Lee (2017) found that the collaborative approach to professional development was beneficial not only for the teachers but also for entire faculties, where collaboration and openly sharing ideas were maintained to a high level.

McArdle and Coutts (2010) asserted the necessity of expanding reflective practice beyond individual introspection to include shared sense-making and collaborative engagement for effective professional development. Their advocacy for integrating additional dimensions into reflective practice resonates strongly with the principles underlying peer coaching. By its very

nature, peer coaching encourages participants to engage in shared sense-making processes to identify actionable insights and foster transformative change within educational contexts. This notion of shared sense-making underscores the importance of collective reflection and dialogue in driving meaningful improvements in teaching practice.

These common factors, such as trust, collaboration, and candidness, are the foundations for the collaborative sense-making moments that are evident within the coaching conversations of this study. The research findings highlighted some of these factors. For example, *this is the way forward, leaving competent people to lead each other into being even more brilliant than they were. We're more than the total of the parts, aren't we?* Here, we see an instance when Rebecca shared her feelings of her and Alice being 'more than the total of the parts'; hence, they are more effective at reflecting and developing their practice together than if they were to do so individually. However, she points out that this may not be the case if she were to work with someone else, someone who may not enter the coaching relationship with the same level of trust, collaboration, or candidness that Rebecca and Alice share.

A moment of collaborative sense-making can be seen within Tony and Jane's conversations, where Jane and Tony discuss the impact of students complaining of pains from menstrual cycles and how, being a male teacher, Tony felt unable to challenge this. However, Jane helps Tony with her own experience of this and her knowledge of the situation, thus giving Tony some time to reflect and discuss how he can handle this situation in the future.

This example showed how participants collaborate to co-construct an understanding by piecing together individual knowledge to solve problems and create new knowledge to help future practice. Soisangwarn and Wongwanich's (2014) research showed similar interactions between peer coaches, whereby coaches listened and validated colleagues' practices in line with their experiences and expertise, asked colleagues to share their understanding and perceptions following observations, and could implement the newly acquired knowledge to future practice. They used a collaborative problem-solving style closely represented by the collaborative sense-making used within this study.

Brookfield (1995) suggests using alternative lenses to consider our pre-conceived assumptions. What they call collaborative critical reflection allows peer coaches to enter a 'dialogic community of peers' who can safely explore their assumptions and ideas within an open, solution-oriented platform. This lends itself heavily to the collaborative sense-making that can be seen within the findings of the study and gives reason to why participants have naturally gravitated towards this within their dialogic community of peers (coaching dyads). Brookfield (1995) suggested that by utilising different lenses on our thinking, we can critique our assumptions and critically examine the aspect of reflection. This can be integral to teachers' learning. Collaborative critical reflection can enable a dialogic community of peers committed to exploring their assumptions.

In essence, peer coaching serves as a vehicle for operationalising McArdle and Coutts' (2010) call for shared sense-making in professional development. Through peer coaching relationships, educators collaboratively analyse teaching experiences, exchange perspectives, and

co-construct knowledge to inform their practice. This co-constructive process facilitates personal learning and enriches wisdom within the embraced professional culture of the cooperating parties. Peer coaching is a peer collaboration approach that relies on support from other teachers to enhance a shared learning environment and increase readiness to improve and innovate in teaching. Therefore, concern with developing meanings and interpretations by and for the community members, as expressed in McArdle and Coutts (2010), conjoins perfectly with the principles and goals of peer coaching, thus underlining pathways of reflective practice and educational improvement.

According to Thomas and Smith (2009), coaching relationships should serve as a context where educators can test their capacities and discoveries and enhance both micro-cultures of practice. It also helped to explain why participants seek collaborative sense-making opportunities amidst the moments of coaching interactions. Lee (2017) explored this collaborative model in greater detail, stressing how transformation in communication, collaboration, and relationships among teachers where peer and coach have occurred in all three institutions. This positive development continued beyond sharing new knowledge and understanding among teachers. Still, it spreads out in the school community, affecting multiple tiers to produce ripple effects. This collective issue-solving orientation not only assists in mitigating the emergent difficulties but also encourages educators to reflect on the complexity of interactions among learners and professionals in their practice, as Stegall (2011) pointed out.

These applications of shared sense-making processes observed within the identified research data demonstrated mutual learning processes between the participants. King and Winn

(2017) referred to this dynamic process as one in which teachers build competence in reflection and in which the learners of both the profession and of teaching develop a culture of learning for all the participants. Eghterafi et al's., (2022) findings also reinforced the increase in teacher self-efficacy observed and directly linked it to video-supported peer coaching.

It is possible to conceive of this as a domain of members' co-construction of meanings, where they are free to discuss different facets of what they do while ensuring their disclosures are protected by confidentiality provisions. From the literature, Hefferman (2004) noted the need to embrace trust in the coaching relationships as the key to enhancing the outcomes for educators and learners because the relationships must maintain mutual regard, active participation in critical discussions, and accessible communication. Cox (2012) further supported this finding by keenly arguing the importance of trust in peer coaching based on the principles of confidentiality and vulnerability.

Thus, regarding Thomas and Smith (2009) and Lee (2017), one can state that the analysis of the specific issues brought attention to the importance of coaching relationships in fostering the desirable professional development climate. Such a model of practice enables the teachers to share knowledge and experience, which creates a shared pool of knowledge, supports the teachers in their reflective practice, and enhances the variety of strategies in teaching and training. The mutual feedback also presents coachees and coaches at equal standing: knowledge sharing in collaborative sense-making ultimately results in the enhancement of improved strategies and techniques in teaching and learning.

However, the idea of collaborative sense-making as a haven for confidential co-learning, this notion corresponds to Hefferman's (2004) and Cox's (2012) ideas in elements of trust that underpin masterful coaching relationships. This focus signals the need to establish spaces where educators can feel free to search, reflect, and transform without the potential threat of critique or undermining from others.

The thought of joint interpretation is similar to the idea of communities of practice, where members support each other and share experiences and knowledge. According to Wenger (1998), engagement in such communities entails the processes of learning that are regarded as collectively constructed, including the construction of knowledge for practice application. Similarly, in the context of coaching relationships, collaborative sense-making is a microcosm of these communities as it accommodates the suitable setting that allows educators to discuss the subject matter, reflect, and collaborate in a work-like setting.

Understanding the practice of teaching and learning similarly helps educators expand their metacognitive abilities to judge personal performance critically. Through such discussions with their colleagues, educators learn new ideas and become aware of ideas they had not previously thought about in different ways. It gives an iterative knowledge-strengthening sense-making process that fosters learning development and empowers educators' knowledge-based practice.

Integrating these ideas details how these perspectives may shift the understanding of collaborative sense-making by creating coach-coachee relationships. By developing relationships with professionalism and professional values such as trust, openness, and collaboration, educators

can effectively use the wisdom of the many to improve themselves and, thus, increase students' positive learning outcomes. Education practitioners can, therefore, engage in more elaborate sense-making of teaching and learning, constantly developing as research-informed educators dedicated to learners' success.

The in-coaching conversations highlighted emergent themes from coaching sessions, focusing on four main facets: Self-actualisation and critical thinking, which involves skills in questioning and reflection, exploration of good practice through discussion and evaluation, and sense-making. Awareness and critical reflection were also noted during coaching conversations, where participants used the analysis of their coach's perspective. Korthagen (2017), in agreement with Law (2002), as observed at the onset of this research, defines effective self-reflection as the core mechanism identified within the coaching process. The interdisciplinary nature allowed the teachers to engage in reflective practice and inquiry with themselves, raising awareness of external conditions and personal interests.

The key area many described was critical probing, which involved challenging practice and making teachers think. Using transformational learning questions fostered a critical and, more importantly, self-reflective climate among the coaches as professionals who are always in the process of improvement. One of the most important objectives was to select and promote examples of the best practices. At that, participants shared their information in several ways; for instance, they shared their experiences, described what they had witnessed and learned, and employed techniques that encouraged the exchange of knowledge. Through peer coaching, participants promoted knowledge increase, idea exchange, and attitude dissonance that beneficially impacted

professional development and teaching practices. Cooperative interpretive processing appeared as participants endeavoured to make sense collectively to promote comprehension and solving. Such behaviours as trust, collaboration, and the virtue of this being done without barriers where parties can discuss and arrive at knowledge together were key in these moments. In an effective knowledge-building approach, participants used their joint understanding as the basis for questioning and brainstorming terms and concepts, all of which contributed to forming an effective, constructive, collaborative learning atmosphere.

5.2.4 Identifying and Sharing Good Practice

Due to the similarity found between participants' ability to identify good practice and to share this, this section will look at both aspects together.

During the coaching cycles, participants were seen to spend a considerable amount of time focusing on their observed and planned practice, specifically the identification and sharing of good practices. This can be seen in Jane and Tony's conversation about why coaching works so well for them through the new positive collaborative lens they see. Othman (2018) identified peer coaching as a form of 'supported self-work' and explained that peer coaching creates new opportunities for cross-pollinating ideas between professionals and enhances teachers' understanding of the role of knowledge within their practice. McArdle and Coutts (2010) investigated the ideas of this reflective practice seen within peer coaching and support the idea for the added dimensions of shared sense-making and collaboration within the reflective partnership between professionals. As discussed previously, this area of shared sense-making is seen as a self-monitoring and self-monitored social process that extends the concept of reflective practice. Developing practice with

trusted professionals can give the confidence needed to test and trial new ideas and experiment to create one's levels of practice within the classroom.

Charteris and Smardon (2013) examine the role of peer coaching in relation to the support of educational work, teachers' dialogue, and the co-authoring of new educational ideas and practices. Akin to the discovery of this research on how coaching dynamics might be used in offering possibilities for critique on the pedagogy, their research supported this postulation. First, in professional partnerships, educators are supported in sharing their practice-based insights while addressing teaching ideas through peer coaching. Such co-construction of knowledge empowers teachers to benefit from other educators' experiences, thus creating unique ideas or exemplary teaching methods.

Wegeriff (2018) explained that these dialogic relationships can consist of two perspectives, which are not only about the learner but also about the peer coach. This means that teachers will be provided with the time required to analyse ideas or conventional perceptions that they bear to other specialists (Carnell and Lodge, 2002) and the chance to listen and ask questions while keeping an open mind to the opportunity of a significant shift in one's paradigm (Nehring et al., 2010). This showed that teachers not only engage in the construction of their learning curriculum but also learn as co-constructors of meanings as opposed to the concepts of teachers as 'vessels' who passively receive knowledge that is produced elsewhere (Charteris and Smardon, 2013). In other words, peer coaching is an innovative model for professional development that supports practice-based learning and collegial discourse in the educational context. By promoting a culture of practice, group participation, and sharing ideas and knowledge, peer coaching allows educators

to help each other enhance their practices and develop new approaches to teaching that can positively impact student learning.

The in-coaching conversations highlighted the transformative potential of coaching in promoting self-awareness, critical inquiry, and collaborative learning among the participants. Coaching facilitates deep reflection and dialogue and nurtures a culture of continuous improvement and shared responsibility for professional growth. Through collaborative sense-making, teachers are empowered to challenge assumptions, experiment with new ideas, and collectively elevate teaching practice.

The findings show that identifying and sharing good practice within coaching provided teachers with both affirmation and opportunities for growth. Teachers valued feedback framed through a collaborative lens, where areas for development were recognised as shared challenges rather than individual failings, reinforcing trust and openness in dialogue. This reflected Othman's (2018) idea of peer coaching as 'supported self-work' and aligns with McArdle and Coutts' (2010) view of shared sense-making as a co-constructed process. Recent research also highlighted that such reciprocal dialogue enhances professional agency and ownership of development, contributing to sustainable school improvement (Kraft, et al. 2023; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2020). Similarly, Kamali and Javahery (2024) stressed the importance of structured peer coaching models in creating consistent opportunities for reflection and deeper learning. Participants' experiences also echo findings by Barnhart and Vega (2024), who identified that collaborative peer observation fosters egalitarian relationships that reduce hierarchical barriers to honest critique.

5.2.5 Video Analysis of Coaching Observations

The ability for teachers to re-watch recordings of their own classroom practice can have profoundly transformative effects on their professional development. The teachers engaged in video-based reflection and gained a unique opportunity to observe their teaching methods and classroom interactions with a critical eye. This self-review process allowed teachers to identify and analyse specific moments in their practice that may have previously gone unnoticed. For instance, they regularly scrutinise their instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, and student engagement levels, which enabled them to recognise patterns and pinpoint areas requiring improvement. This heightened awareness fostered a deeper understanding of their pedagogical approaches and their impact on student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, re-watching classroom recordings provided teachers with a tangible and objective form of feedback. Unlike traditional observation methods, which can be influenced by the subjective perspectives of external evaluators, the video analysis offered an unfiltered view of classroom dynamics. This objectivity ensured that teachers receive a clear and accurate representation of their practice. It also facilitated a more nuanced discussion during coaching sessions, as teachers can refer to specific segments of the video to illustrate significant moments or concerns. This evidence supported a more targeted and effective coaching process, as it allowed for precise and actionable feedback and thereby enhanced the overall quality of professional development. The feasibility and impact of mobile-based video tools are similarly highlighted by Baran et al. (2023), who found that handheld video devices enabled teachers to integrate reflective observation seamlessly into their workflow. Their findings reinforced the practicality of using such tools in time-constrained educational settings, further validating the technological design choices made in this study.

The iterative nature of video-based reflection could contribute to continuous improvement in teaching practices. Teachers can compare their recordings with previous ones to assess their progress and identify the effectiveness of any changes they have implemented. This iterative process not only supports ongoing professional growth but also reinforces a culture of reflective practice. Recent studies indicate that video-enhanced feedback and observation deepen teachers' self-awareness and improve instructional decision-making over time (Baran, AlZoubi, and Bahng, 2023; Reisman and Beckwith, 2023). Similarly, Eghterafi et al. (2022) and Barnhart and Vega (2024) found that teachers who engaged in structured video reflection cycles developed stronger pedagogical insight and confidence in their instructional approaches. As teachers regularly engage with their recordings, they develop a more sophisticated understanding of their instructional practices and become better equipped to make informed adjustments. This reflective practice strengthens the coaching process by providing a robust foundation for discussion and development, leading to more effective and sustained improvements in teaching and learning (Canaran, 2023; Svaricek, 2024).

This subtle integration of video into their thought processes allowed educators to anchor their observations and insights in concrete evidence from their teaching practice. By mentally revisiting the video content, teachers could more accurately discuss their instructional decisions and classroom interactions, demonstrating the video's role in shaping their reflective and analytical skills. This indirect use of video recordings highlighted their value as a foundational element in the coaching process, even when not overtly acknowledged.

5.3 Review Interviews

The review interviews invited participants to reflect deeply on their time in the coaching programme. The emergent themes from these interviews were: i) enhancing personal and professional transparency through the peer coaching process; ii) interpersonal relationship factors evident within coaching pairs; iii) enhancing meaningful feedback, reflexivity, and perception of professional practice; and iv) perception of sustainability post-coaching. This data analysis will examine these themes, discuss the participants' reflections and findings, and link them to relevant research to align findings with the current research landscape.

5.3.1 Enhancing Personal and Professional Transparency through the Peer Coaching Process

Similar to Hamel., et al. (2019), using video analysis of classroom practice, participants were able to display a more honest viewpoint of their practices, a version of their 'authentic self'. Eyre (2017) discussed elements of 'authentic self' referring to personal coherence, one's sense of who one is, and one's most authentic identity. Within education, these are true intentions without the impact of pre-existing 'faces' that are believed to be necessary within the professional environment. Mutual respect and shared understanding were key ideas that allowed teachers to have open and honest coaching conversations. This authenticity allowed teachers to understand the motives behind their classroom practices better and, thus, reflect on their 'core qualities' (inner level of the 'Onion' model; Korthagen, 2017). Teachers also noted that they could better reflect on the feedback through a more honest lens created with video analysis and coaching. This supported the notion that teachers are not simply passive recipients of knowledge but agentic co-constructors of their understanding (Charteris and Smardon, 2013).

5.3.2 Interpersonal Relationship Factors Evident within Coaching Pairs

The authenticity of the coaching conversations may be due to the reduced hierarchical impact perceived by the teachers through the coaching programme. Ben-Peretz, Gottlieb, and Gideon (2018) referred to this as ‘Non-hierarchical joint deliberation’ in which both the coach and coachee treated each other as equals, both responsible for developing the coaching conversation and identifying areas for development as well as the next steps. Although not all the teachers agreed with this, a large majority identified the role-reversal approach of the peer coaching process as instrumental to the reduction of pre-existing preconceptions of differences in leadership status, pay, or experience between the coach and coachee. Inevitably, this meant an aspect of the pre-existing hierarchy still present within coaching pairings. The term ‘hierarchy’ was used to represent differing levels of leadership teachers held within the academy. Most Teachers noted this throughout their final interviews and found that their perception of the hierarchy was non-existent during their coaching interactions. In many of the coaching pods, teachers observed the removal of perceived pre-existing hierarchy was significantly minimised through the adoption of ‘honest’ and ‘equal’ relationships where they felt they were able to focus more on the development of teaching without having current leadership status impact their ability to remain honest with each other. There were instances where this was not the case, and hierarchy interfered with the dynamics of the coaching relationship. This observation aligns with Barnhart and Vega’s (2024) findings, where participation in video-based coaching clubs led to the development of egalitarian relationships and reduced the perceived power dynamics among teaching peers.

Peer coaching was also seen as a move away from performance management, often used by schools to assess teacher performance, and can be directly linked to annual pay review outcomes (Gribbling and Duberley, 2021). Peer coaching moved towards a more teacher-centred approach to

professional development, where teachers could see the direct impact of this professional development, which allowed them to become agentic co-learners moving towards a shared goal. Teachers recognised that the dialogic feedback process enhanced professional learning and allowed them to see the immediate impact of the feedback on their teaching.

By being authentic, honest, and open, teachers could reflect more deeply on the aspects of their teaching that had previously been hidden. In addition to this, the use of video recordings of their lesson was also identified to uncover the hidden elements of teaching, especially when the recording became a natural part of their teaching observations. Teachers could maintain more consistent levels of focus during observations and feedback sessions as they could use the video recordings as an objective display of their true teaching nature. In addition, teachers could refer to specific areas of their teaching to highlight areas of strengths and areas for development closely. This allowed teachers to focus on finer details that would otherwise remain hidden or could easily be missed in the initial teaching environment. Sherin (2004) explained a similar occurrence within their research, where teachers who watched video recordings of their teaching could focus on nuanced layers, such as potential reasons behind their classroom practices, instead of simply planning for the next steps within the specific situation they had viewed. This ability to revisit and focus on finer details allowed teachers to develop increasingly complex ways to examine students' ideas raised within the lessons, which could help break down misconceptions and teaching practices that led students to this idea.

The commonality encompassed by the peer coaching structure allowed teachers to feel positive about their abilities to develop teachers from all levels of the 'leadership ladder'. This

tended to be with coaching pairs that were close regarding leadership responsibilities. Teachers who were paired with much higher leaders within the school (i.e., a teacher paired with a member of SLT) noted the presence of hierarchy. Although they felt the relationship was one of respect, there was a tendency to avoid critiquing areas of developmental needs and instead focus on positive elements of their teaching.

Participants identified that, above all else, the relationship between them and their coaching partners was by far the most important factor in the impact and effectiveness of their coaching. Each relationship was identified as being positive through having one of the following attributes: i) respect between partners; ii) comfort with partner within the coaching process; iii) non-pressured environment; iv) trust between partners; and v) ensuring confidentiality. Respect was identified as a key component of many of the coaching relationships, with teachers pinning this as a main cornerstone for the productivity of their coaching conversations. Teachers could utilise their shared respect to overcome other issues efficiently and professionally, such as dealing with conflicting ideas or criticism. Respect was seen to develop within the coaching pairs as they progressed through their coaching. In addition, teachers who built their relationships on respect from pre-existing relationships found that their coaching had deepened and strengthened their new-found respect for each other. Recent studies reinforce the centrality of relational trust in coaching effectiveness, showing that mutual respect and psychological safety are foundational to reflective dialogue and professional growth (Canaran, 2023; Kamali and Javahery, 2024). Similarly, Barnhart and Vega (2024) found that peer coaching grounded in trust-based relationships fosters deeper professional reflection and sustained engagement, particularly when dialogue is collaborative rather than evaluative.

Teachers who reported high levels of respect found that feelings of judgement were removed from feedback sessions. Instead, collaborative sense-making was used as the main mode of problem-solving. This allowed teachers to focus on more student-centred problem-solving without losing energy tackling criticism issues. Teachers who felt ‘comfort’ and ‘low pressure’ within their coaching pods identified that their coaching became a regular part of their professional routines. Good practice-sharing benefitted not only the professional practice of teachers but also impacted intrapersonal teaching skills, such as student-teacher interaction. Live action sharing was deemed as an effective tool for demonstrating new practices, and this would happen when teachers would utilise lesson video-recordings to demonstrate good practice or an exciting element of their lesson to their partner. This allowed coaches and coachees to see good practice in action, either as a ‘how-to’ example or as a comparison between alternative practices. This worked well as teachers could instantly give feedback on what they saw and could also consider student engagement and progress. Again, this can heighten the feeling of trust and understanding between the coach and coachee.

Pairings that identified their ability to co-create and share good practice found improved levels of trust and the reciprocal nature of the coaching. Co-creation allowed for the self-discovery of deeper meaning around feedback and constructive points brought to coaching sessions. Some pairs reported a feeling of ‘authenticity’ between themselves and their coach. This authenticity allowed for conversations based on common ground that led to a deeper understanding of each other and areas of development addressed within coaching conversations. This feeling of authenticity was also linked to the reciprocal nature of the coaching relationship. The reciprocal nature of coaching relationships was identified as a crucial part of the coaching programme. This

links to recent studies have reinforced these observations, finding that reciprocal, trust-based coaching fosters authenticity and sustained professional learning through joint problem-solving and shared ownership (Reeves and Sandretto, 2024; Barnhart and Vega, 2024). Furthermore, Davies et al. (2023) emphasise that peer observation and live lesson sharing can deepen reflective practice and promote collective efficacy when feedback is framed through collaboration rather than evaluation.

Teachers identified that discovering a common ground, be it a practice or teaching approach, was highly rewarding. This common ground allowed teachers to identify with their partners and gave a shared understanding of where other ideas and practices could be compared. A general feeling of being able to help each other and enable co-development led to teachers being agentic in developing themselves and others. A relationship's reciprocity enabled the perception of highly authentic feedback, reduced pressure during coaching, and made the importance of coaching more explicit amongst the participants. This reciprocal nature has been referred to as a partnership of equals where mutual respect, co-creation of practice, and a solution-oriented environment have become commonplace. Teachers have coined the phrase 'equal conversations' when referring to the coaching conversations, which highlighted the sense of equal ownership over the direction of their coaching.

Authenticity was a key focus within the coaching conversations, even for those who did not notice it. Teachers labelled this facet as 'connecting' and made reference to a feeling of 'connecting' with their coaching partner. They felt that coaching was an effective way of ensuring this happened regularly and through the coaching process, teachers could use metacognition to

think deeply about the feedback they were giving. This increased reflexivity during feedback sessions ensured teachers asked themselves, ‘Is that really what I saw?’. This adds a layer of thought to the feedback, ensuring that only the ultra-filtered feedback returns to the coachee. This means that coaching will only need to focus on this carefully curated reflection point, thus removing additional ‘noise’ from the coaching process. In addition to the feedback cycle, deeper thinking was present within the classroom observations. Teachers noted that they actively avoided immediate criticism to give more time to gather the context of the lesson. This allowed for the question-based inquiry to flourish within the coaching sessions, where teachers would use their curiosity to delve deeper into specific areas of an observed lesson to find the ‘why’ behind the practice. This allowed teachers to discuss and elaborate on the ideas behind why they do what they do in their classrooms. Authentic coaching relationships have been seen to enhance teachers’ metacognitive awareness and self-regulation, enabling them to refine feedback through reflective questioning rather than evaluative judgement (Dawson and Milton, 2024; Canaran, 2023). Similarly, McGill and Turner (2025) argue that this form of guided inquiry promotes deeper professional learning by encouraging teachers to interrogate the reasoning behind their classroom decisions, supporting sustained pedagogical improvement.

Teachers consistently highlighted that the strength and quality of their interpersonal relationships were central to the effectiveness of the coaching process. While hierarchy occasionally shaped interactions, most participants experienced coaching as a levelling process where mutual respect, openness, and authenticity reduced pre-existing power dynamics. This reflected Barnhart and Vega’s (2024) findings that peer dialogue in video-based coaching helps diminish hierarchical barriers and promote egalitarian learning communities. Key relational

attributes such as trust, comfort, confidentiality, and respect enabled teachers to engage in honest dialogue, co-create practice, and reflect more deeply on their teaching. The reciprocal nature of these relationships fostered a sense of equality and partnership. Further to this, work by Kraft, Blazar, and Hogan (2018) also supported this, demonstrating that trust-based coaching relationships have a measurable impact on teacher growth and retention. Ultimately, it was the relational dimension of coaching, marked by authenticity, shared respect, and equal conversations, that allowed the process to move beyond surface-level feedback towards meaningful professional growth.

5.3.3 Enhancing Meaningful Feedback, Reflexivity and Perception of Professional Practice

Teachers found that the peer coaching process opened an avenue for quality assurance within their teaching practices. With appropriate feedback and the process of coaching conversations, teachers could gather meaningful input from a relatable source that focused solely on the coachees' needs. Identified as a tool for self-development, teachers were able to utilise peer coaching to reflect on their practice. This enabled teachers to firmly grasp their perception of the situation and align their interpretation to reality. Teachers not only used this as a tool for aligning reflection and perception but also for learning; some teachers reflected much deeper than the surface-level pedagogy of teaching. They delved deeper into their ideology of what the 'essence of teaching' means to them, which relates to Korthagen's (2017) 'Onion' model of critical reflection by exploring multiple elements of teaching practice, including their core identity. This showed that teachers are using peer coaching to better shape their understanding of teaching and their practices through the experiences and understandings of others. This deeper understanding of others and shared goals allowed for a deeper meaning from conversations. Teachers better understood each other's motives and motivations and were able to guide and shape their reflection

and feedback through an empathetic lens. Studies have found that teachers who took part in coaching worked together to overcome problems and share problem-solving skills they each possessed, all to support each other's professional development (Joyce and Showers, 2002; Trautwein and Ammerman, 2010).

Video recordings allowed teachers to view their practice in a clearer light, thus ensuring accuracy for both parties to reflect accurately and give an objective viewpoint of the problem. This led to teachers being able to remove themselves as the object of reflection and place themselves as part of the collaborative sense-making process. Charteris and Smardon (2013) found that teachers similarly use video analysis to distance themselves from the event, thus allowing them the space to be more objective with the feedback approach. They found that some teachers could identify elements in their recorded practice, such as processing times, and utilise the video recordings to reflect on this identification process objectively.

The video review process also allowed teachers to engage in dialogic feedback and co-learning through a stable platform they co-created. With both an accurate account and an improved perspective, teachers were better able to address the problem collaboratively. One teacher referred to this process as 're-reading a book', showing the sense of taking another perspective on the situation and looking deeper into previously unseen meanings and solutions to their teaching. In addition, coaches were able to use video recordings as a form of self-checking to ensure that they were confident with what they saw, and they took a second opportunity to reflect on their reflections. Charteris and Smardon (2013) investigated the development of coaching practices by utilising in-coaching video recordings. Teachers identified this higher accountability and

consistency as a positive relationship factor. Consistent pairings allowed for consistent momentum within coaching and gave a better understanding of their teaching and learning narrative. This level of accountability was identified as both self and partner accountability, where teachers held themselves accountable and their partners. The unaltered dynamics were a stark difference to the current model of CPD, which saw numerous leaders observe lessons, each looking from a different perspective at the teaching they were reviewing, but without the rich context that shapes the teacher and classroom dynamics.

Many teachers identified the high quality of feedback as one of the most significant benefits of their coaching during the programme. This level of feedback is supported by the reciprocal relationship forged and each partner knowing they would receive equal quality feedback. This refers to a 'partnership of equals' having equal conversations. This equality found within the coaching dyads allowed more profound feedback to be given and then allowed for the participant to reflect on their practices through the feedback that they were given to others.

It was identified that the high-quality feedback and dedicated time taken removed the feeling of 'hoop-jumping' generally associated with previous models of CPD. This allowed teachers to invest more of their time into the coaching process, knowing they would receive rich feedback from their coach. Between some of the more experienced teachers, there were elements of deeper reflection that surpassed the surface layer of pedagogical discussion and dived deeper into more complex topics, such as their understanding of the 'essence of teaching' and what this meant to them. This level of reflective discussion showed that teachers could reflect deeply during their sessions, address complex topics, and dissect deep assumptions surrounding these. This

proves beneficial for the coaches as they have an even better understanding of their partners and the motivations that push them forward in their regular teaching. These outcomes align closely with findings by Reisman and Beckwith (2023), who demonstrated that structured coaching sessions using scaffolded feedback cycles enhanced teacher engagement and deepened reflective inquiry. Their research emphasised how intentional design in coaching conversations can elevate feedback quality and lead to richer pedagogical insights, echoing the feedback dynamics reported in this study.

5.3.4 Perception of Sustainability Post-coaching

An emergent theme was the necessity for a culture shift as a key concept behind the sustainability of peer coaching impact. Teachers identified their excitement of positive feedback permeating the school and allowing others to share their positive lesson practices and teaching styles. In a similar vein, the idea that the removal of coaching, the ability to share positive (wins) and opinions through the coaching community would be lost. This highlighted the need for coaches to work school-wide and share outstanding practitioners' work wherever possible. There is a need for ongoing collaborative dialogue around professional development to remove the top-down approach many CPD programmes adopt. This emphasis on sustained, collaborative dialogue is supported by Canaran's (2023) research on online peer coaching among teacher educators, which highlighted how the success and sustainability of coaching rely heavily on shared purpose, mutual accountability, and the relational trust built between participants. Even in remote environments, coaching partnerships thrived when underpinned by structured reflection and consistent communication. These findings reinforced the argument that coaching can be a durable and adaptive professional development model when its core values, trust, reciprocity, and contextual relevance, are preserved across formats and contexts. This gives the participants ownership of the

coaching. A culture shift in a logistical sense is also needed, with teachers identifying that time is required and must be 'protected' for coaching, hence building timetables to ensure its practical use. Charteris and Smardon (2013) also distinguish this by identifying that teachers can utilise peer coaching to develop sustainable practices.

Peer coaching relies on many factors to ensure its suitability in the long term. These elements vary from person to person, but each element is necessary for the long-term impact found through coaching. Teachers identified that the coaching took them out of their comfort zone and shined a light on areas of development, particularly if teachers are asked to explain their actions, and related questions may be interpreted as criticism (Sherin, 2004). This meant that teachers were held accountable and had to work to develop these areas; they needed to be in their natural state of teaching, and they found this tiring throughout the programme. Others saw the coaching as a 'reawakening' of the willingness to do what is right according to their teaching ideologies and not simply teach pro forma that they disagree with. Others stated that they needed coaching accountability to prevent the old habits from returning, fearing that the impacts of coaching would not remain in place after the coaching had ceased. Teachers identified that the coaching was a more natural form of professional development and encouraged the maintenance of their new higher levels of practice, thus reducing the worry and strain of presenting a false front if external professionals observed their lesson.

Teachers identified the need for more structure around the reflection process by adding journals to help them with 'meta-reflection' (reflecting on their reflective practices). The use of journals can be an effective method of logging emotions and ideas live in the moment, especially

within complex environments such as classrooms. Similarly, Kamali and Javahery (2024) provide compelling evidence that a theoretical structure, such as their Galperin's structured stages of mental action, can serve as a scaffold for reflective teaching and peer learning. In their study, peer coaching sessions were explicitly designed around this progression, enabling teachers to externalise their pedagogical reasoning, receive targeted feedback, and gradually internalise more nuanced professional knowledge. This structured cognitive sequencing mirrors the peer coaching framework presented in this thesis, where staged reflective dialogue supported by video analysis allowed participants to first describe, then interrogate, and finally reframe their instructional decisions. By anchoring reflection within a clear developmental pathway, Galperin's model avoided the pitfalls of unstructured or purely intuitive coaching, promoting instead a disciplined inquiry into teaching practice.

The sustainability of the coaching itself was seen by many teachers as manageable, with teachers placing themselves along a spectrum of 'the changes are sustainable long-term' to 'they are sustainable, but continued coaching is needed.' As discussed in previous chapters, coaching is intended to be a short-term, high-impact, sustainable process. These elements are needed for the process to be considered 'coaching'. The short-term element is essential as longer-term programmes lean more into the mentoring category, which, as discussed previously, may be less effective compared to peer coaching due to higher financial costs and the need for more training time.

The following are some key observations made. One of these was the level of authenticity and the degree of transparency that was seen to be promoted by peer coaching. The teachers

described the discussions as informative, fresh, and not rigid based on the typical hierarchal structures in learning institutions. There is no doubt that both parties respected each other, and they embraced similar values, which helped to foster a positive perception of feedback and reflection.

While some participants felt there were still leadership-based hierarchal undertones to their relationships, the coaching approach reduced this notion among the participants and avoided situations where someone felt fixed in that specific role. Trust, respect, and comfort were also identified as key factors within the coaching relationships. Teachers observed that the trusting nature of the relationships was vital as they supported collaborative working and honest communication. This was true with respect as it was seen as a foundation for positive discussions that make coaching possible and allow teachers to deal with differing self-organisational assumptions and criticisms professionally. The comfort and low pressure are consistent elements conducive to coaching integration.

Meaningful feedback and reflexivity were identified as crucial when delivering peer coaching. One thing observed was that teachers used video recordings to facilitate a form of analysis that allowed for more critical reflection as they began to probe deeper, seeking to understand the fundamentals of what they believed in as teachers. Coaches noted that the application of video analysis helped create the proper vision of the context and increased the overall responsibility and reliability of relationships within the coaching process.

In addition, teachers stressed the need to develop the school's culture, enabling them to sustain the results garnered from the coaching programme. They noted that partnerships continued

to discuss staff development issues and insisted on preserving direct coaching time in the teacher's plans. Another common concern identified by the teachers was the need for self-analysis procedures, such as writing in a journal. The information and perceptions gained from the review interviews further strengthen their understanding that peer coaching can provide teachers with a highly effective professional development strategy to cultivate a culture of improvement. They focus on factors such as credibility, rapport, and constructive feedback in coaching and how ongoing coaching tools, and support may be needed to maintain the effects.

5.4 Identified Areas of Tension

Jane's experience underscored a crucial dimension of the coaching programme: the necessity for variety and progressive cognitive engagement. As the programme evolved, she reported an emerging sense of repetition that gradually eroded her initial enthusiasm. This perceived monotony implies that the structure may have lacked sufficient dynamism and adaptability to sustain long-term professional engagement. Her reflections align with recent findings that professional learning must be developmentally responsive, offering new challenges, differentiated stimuli, and evolving inquiry foci to maintain teacher motivation and agency (Asmare et al., 2025; Brugha et al., 2024). The waning excitement Jane described highlights the risks of static coaching design, where repetitive content limits the perceived relevance of sessions and curtails reflective depth. Ensuring that coaching cycles are iterative, continually integrating fresh perspectives, emerging evidence, and participant-led inquiry, has been shown to strengthen teacher engagement and deepen reflective learning (McGill and Turner, 2025).

Jane also noted that a reflective diary could have been an effective tool in addressing this issue. By incorporating self-reflection between sessions, participants could actively process their learning, recognise their progress, and identify areas for further development. This would not only enhance the effectiveness of each session but also ensure that the learning experience evolves rather than stagnates. For future deployments of the coaching program, it is crucial to consider how the structure can avoid repetitiveness, perhaps by diversifying session content, integrating reflective practices, and tailoring sessions more closely to the evolving needs of participants

John's reflections illustrate how pre-existing hierarchical structures can inhibit the reciprocity and openness central to effective coaching relationships. Although he described his partnership with Adam as positive, he acknowledged that the professional hierarchy between them constrained his ability to engage in equitable dialogue. This dynamic reduced the mutuality of the coaching process, positioning John as a learner rather than a co-inquirer. His hesitancy to critique Adam's teaching practice, contrasted with Adam's comfort in offering feedback, highlights how power asymmetries can shape conversational balance and limit reflective exchange. Recent research supports this observation, noting that hierarchical relationships in instructional coaching often suppress psychological safety, diminishing opportunities for authentic professional dialogue (Reeves and Sandretto, 2024; Liu and Nuttall, 2023). Furthermore, Barnhart and Vega (2024) argue that peer-based coaching models, grounded in trust and shared expertise, are more conducive to reciprocal reflection than those embedded within line-management structures. John's adaptive strategy, emphasising learning from Adam's practice rather than challenging it, reflects a pragmatic response to hierarchical dynamics, yet also underscores the need for coaching cultures that prioritise equality, shared agency, and reflective partnership.

Currently, research is limited to the impact of professional hierarchy within secondary school professional development and the effect of this on coaching outcomes. Some participants referred to the hierarchical status as an experience gap and questioned if teachers with lower levels of teaching experience would be confident enough to critique the teaching of a senior teacher. John's experience illustrates the subtle but significant ways that pre-existing hierarchies can influence the coaching dynamic. Although he had a positive relationship with his coach, the hierarchy between them introduced a power imbalance that hindered the mutuality that is crucial for effective coaching. John found himself in a difficult position where he was less comfortable offering constructive criticism or questioning Adam's classroom practices. The existing hierarchy made it challenging for John to engage in open dialogue, as he felt a natural inclination to highlight the positive aspects of Adam's teaching rather than critique them. This dynamic ultimately limited the depth of their coaching interactions, as John's feedback was constrained by the respect, he felt he owed to Adam's higher status and greater experience.

This issue highlights a broader concern about the impact of hierarchical structures on professional development within educational settings. The reluctance to question or critique a senior colleague's methods could potentially undermine the effectiveness of coaching programmes, as it limits the opportunity for genuine, two-way feedback. For future deployments of the coaching programme, it is essential to address these hierarchical challenges. One approach could be to pair coaches and participants who are closer in rank or experience level to foster a more egalitarian relationship. Additionally, training could be provided to both parties on how to create a safe space for feedback, regardless of the hierarchy. This would encourage more open and honest exchanges, ensuring that both participants can benefit fully from the coaching experience.

As Svaricek (2024) noted, coaching that creates space for vulnerability and trust can enable even initially resistant teachers to reconsider assumptions and engage in deep reflection. This underscores the importance of designing coaching with emotional and relational scaffolds.

5.5 Discussion Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the findings presented in Chapter 4 by interpreting them through relevant theoretical and empirical literature. The purpose of the discussion was to examine how teachers experienced video-based peer coaching, to explore the factors shaping those experiences, and to consider the implications of these findings for professional development practice within secondary education. In doing so, the chapter has addressed the study's research questions by situating teachers' accounts within established research on coaching, reflective practice, and collaborative professional learning.

In relation to Research Question 1, the discussion has demonstrated that peer coaching was consistently positioned by participants as a meaningful alternative to traditional CPD. Teachers' accounts revealed dissatisfaction with generic, compliance-driven CPD models and a preference for professional learning that was dialogic, contextualised, and responsive to individual and departmental needs. Interpreted through the literature, these perceptions align with critiques of transmission-based CPD and reinforce the value of collaborative, practice-embedded approaches that support teacher agency and ownership of professional development.

Addressing Research Question 2, the chapter has examined the enablers and constraints that shaped teachers' engagement with the peer coaching process. Key enabling conditions included structured dialogue, protected time, the use of video as an evidential stimulus, and the

creation of non-judgemental spaces for reflection. Conversely, the discussion highlighted persistent challenges, including time pressures, repetition across coaching cycles, and the influence of pre-existing hierarchies. Interpreting these tensions through existing research underscored that peer coaching is highly sensitive to organisational context and requires careful design and cultural alignment to sustain reflective depth and professional engagement.

With respect to Research Question 3, the discussion has foregrounded the centrality of coaching relationships in shaping both perceived impact and sustainability. Trust, reciprocity, authenticity, and psychological safety emerged as decisive factors in enabling honest dialogue, meaningful feedback, and professional risk-taking. The chapter has shown that where coaching relationships were experienced as egalitarian and non-evaluative, teachers reported deeper reflection and greater confidence in adapting their practice. However, the discussion also demonstrated that relational dynamics were vulnerable to disruption where hierarchy remained salient, reinforcing the importance of relational design in coaching models.

Across all three research questions, the discussion has highlighted the potential for an integrative role of video analysis in supporting reflective practice. When embedded within structured peer coaching, video functioned as a catalyst for evidence-informed dialogue, enhanced metacognition, and reduced defensiveness. Interpreted through the literature, these findings reinforce the argument that video is most effective not as a standalone tool, but as part of a coherent reflective framework that supports shared sense-making and professional inquiry.

This chapter has synthesised the study's findings with existing research to provide a nuanced understanding of how video-based peer coaching is experienced within a secondary school context. It identifies that peer coaching holds potential as a sustainable professional development strategy, while also acknowledging the contextual, relational, and structural conditions required for its effectiveness. The following chapter builds on this discussion by drawing out the implications of these findings for practice, policy, and future research.

Chapter 6: Thesis Conclusion

The overarching aim of this research was to explore teacher perceptions of peer coaching as a tool for professional development. This thesis is structured to provide an analysis of teacher perceptions of peer coaching as a tool for teachers' professional development, utilising video analysis in secondary schools.

This thesis aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of a peer coaching model that incorporates video analysis to facilitate sustainable improvement as a mechanism for professional development. The research outcomes explored an enhanced understanding of the impact that coaching relationships have on the sustainability of teaching changes brought on by peer coaching, as well as research data that could contribute to alternative perceptions of both coaching and the use of video analysis from an educational perspective. The research questions were:

1. How is peer coaching perceived and positioned within the landscape of CPD in secondary education?
2. What challenges and enablers do teachers experience during the educational peer coaching process?
3. How do coaching relationships contribute to the effects of coaching and its sustainability from the perspective of teachers?

Recognising the potential hurdles in adopting educational peer coaching and video analysis, this research endeavoured to identify challenges and the facilitating factors of the integration of coaching. By acknowledging and addressing these factors, educational institutions

could develop strategies to maximise the benefits of utilising peer coaching as a tool for continuous professional development (CPD). In addition to this, this study aimed to draw attention to understanding the nuances of coaching and its impact on teacher development while ensuring sustainability.

6.1 Synthesis of Key Findings

6.1.1 Study Response to Research Questions

The empirical findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 directly address the research question concerning teachers' perceptions of peer coaching within CPD. While the literature review established a theoretical gap regarding the limited personalisation and reflective depth of conventional CPD, this study's data shows, empirically, that peer coaching was perceived by participants as a more authentic, trust-based, and sustainable approach to professional development. This alignment between literature and empirical evidence strengthens the argument that video-based peer coaching can meaningfully reframe professional learning practices within secondary education.

1. How is peer coaching perceived and positioned within the landscape of CPD in secondary education?

Coaching within secondary education is increasingly recognised as a crucial component of teachers' CPD. The study's findings revealed that teachers perceive coaching as a robust and reflective framework that significantly contributes to their professional growth. The coaching programme presented in this study highlighted four central themes that emerged during coaching conversations: self-realisation and deeper thinking, questioning and challenging practice,

identifying and sharing effective practices, and collaborative sense-making. Teachers considered these themes to be the backbone of their development, offering a more personalised and impactful form of CPD than traditional methods (Ilgan and Basaran, 2023).

The positioning of coaching in CPD is further emphasised through the review interviews, where participants reflected on their experiences with the coaching programme. Teachers highlighted the value of coaching in enhancing both personal and professional transparency. The process encouraged them to present their authentic selves, free from the constraints of pre-existing professional personas. This authenticity fostered mutual respect and open dialogue, creating an environment conducive to meaningful professional development. Teachers noted that this environment, where hierarchical barriers were minimised, allowed for more genuine and student-centred learning experiences. This shift from performance management to a co-learning approach aligns with contemporary educational research, which advocates for more collaborative and reflective forms of professional development.

The study also underscored the importance of trust and collaboration within coaching relationships. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to engage in coaching conversations that were not only reflective but also challenging. The coaching model encouraged them to question and critically reflect on their practices, leading to deeper insights and more thoughtful teaching approaches. This reflective questioning, supported by clear and probing inquiries such as ‘I noticed that you...’ and ‘Can you tell me more about your decision to...’ was particularly effective in moving teachers toward self-improvement. The implementation of Korthagen’s ‘Onion Model’ helped explore deeper layers of the teachers’ identity and beliefs to foster meaningful professional

growth. The coaching process aligns with the Onion Model's emphasis on holistic teacher development by encouraging teachers to reflect on their behaviours and their underlying beliefs and values. The emphasis on balancing constructive feedback with a positive atmosphere was seen as crucial for maintaining the effectiveness of the coaching process.

Moreover, the identification and sharing of good practices emerged as a key theme in the positioning of coaching within CPD. Teachers found that coaching provided a platform for expanding their knowledge, sharing different perspectives, and verifying their understanding of teaching practices. This process of cognitive conflict and the exploration of alternative perspectives are essential for professional growth, as they challenge teachers to rethink their approaches and consider new methodologies. The study linked these outcomes to previous research on peer coaching, further reinforcing the value of coaching as a central element of CPD in secondary education.

As identified in Chapter 2, the literature review highlighted persistent challenges in sustaining reflective professional development and fostering teacher agency. The empirical investigation directly addressed these gaps, demonstrating how video-based peer coaching responds to the theoretical limitations identified in the literature. This synthesis of conceptual and empirical insights thus completes the analytical loop between the literature review and the study's findings

2. What challenges and enablers do teachers experience during educational peer coaching

processes?

Teachers' experiences with the coaching process are shaped by a range of challenges and enablers, which can either hinder or enhance the effectiveness of coaching as a professional development tool. One of the primary challenges identified in the study is the time and effort required for effective coaching. Teachers often must balance their existing responsibilities with the demands of the coaching process, which involves significant reflection, critical thinking, and the implementation of new strategies. This can be particularly challenging in schools where time is already a scarce resource, and teachers are stretched thin with their teaching duties.

Despite these challenges, the study highlights several enablers that contribute to the success of the coaching process. A key enabler is the coaching relationship, built on trust, respect, and mutual understanding. The voluntary nature of participation and the diverse representation across different career stages and leadership roles add complexity to the coaching dynamic. However, the study identified that a role-reversal approach, where both partners take turns being the coach and the coachee, helps to minimise perceived differences in status and authority. This reciprocal nature of the coaching relationship fosters a sense of equality and partnership, which is crucial for effective collaboration and professional growth.

Another significant enabler is the focus on self-realisation and critical thinking within the coaching process. Teachers noted that the coaching conversations often led to deeper reflection on their teaching practices, encouraging them to question their assumptions and explore new approaches. This study provides evidence of core coaching components, such as self-questioning

and self-challenging, which are essential for meaningful professional development. These reflective practices are supported by probing questions that guide teachers toward a better understanding of their decisions and actions in the classroom.

Identifying and sharing good practices also serve as important enablers in the coaching process. The study found that coaching creates opportunities for teachers to expand their knowledge and share insights with their peers. This exchange of ideas and perspectives not only enhances individual growth but also contributes to the collective improvement of teaching practices within the school. The process of cognitive conflict, where teachers are exposed to alternative perspectives, is particularly valuable for challenging existing beliefs and fostering innovation in teaching.

However, the study also identifies potential barriers to the success of the coaching process. The pre-existing hierarchies within schools can hinder the effectiveness of coaching, especially when teachers perceive differences in status or authority. This challenge underscores the importance of creating a coaching environment that is based on mutual respect and confidentiality, where teachers feel comfortable being vulnerable and open about their challenges. The study emphasises that overcoming these barriers requires a concerted effort to build trust and establish a non-judgemental atmosphere where teachers can engage in honest and productive conversations.

3. How do coaching relationships contribute to the effects of coaching and its sustainability from the perspective of teachers?

The quality of coaching relationships plays a pivotal role in determining the long-term effects and sustainability of coaching in secondary education. The study highlights collaborative sense-making as a critical element in coaching conversations, where participants work together to make sense of observed situations and preconceived ideas. This collaborative approach is not only essential for enhancing teacher engagement but also contributes to the sustainability of coaching outcomes. Teachers who are actively involved in the sense-making process are more likely to internalise new insights and apply them consistently in their practice.

Trust and collaboration are foundational to effective coaching relationships. The study underscores the importance of trust as a non-cognitive, value-based attachment that allows teachers to be open and vulnerable during coaching interactions. This level of trust is crucial for fostering candid discussions and enabling teachers to engage deeply with the coaching process. Collaboration, on the other hand, enhances the effectiveness of coaching by promoting a shared understanding and a collective approach to problem-solving. The study builds on existing research by demonstrating how trust and collaboration contribute to the effectiveness of coaching and its sustainability over time.

Meaningful feedback and reflexivity are also central to the sustainability of coaching outcomes. The study found that techniques such as video recordings of teaching practices can provide teachers with a clearer view of their performance, enabling more objective and collaborative sense-making. This reflective process, supported by feedback from the coach, helps teachers to gain a deeper understanding of their practices and to make more informed decisions

about their teaching strategies. The reciprocal nature of coaching relationships, where both partners contribute to the feedback process, is particularly effective in fostering continuous improvement and sustaining the benefits of coaching.

The perception of sustainability within coaching is closely tied to the need for a cultural shift within schools. Teachers expressed a strong desire for ongoing collaborative dialogue around professional development and emphasised the importance of protected time for coaching in school timetables. The study highlights that sustainability is not just about maintaining the coaching process itself but also about embedding the principles of coaching into the school culture. Teachers noted that the accountability and consistency fostered by coaching help to prevent the return of old habits and encourage the adoption of new, more effective practices.

The study's findings illustrate the significant impact of coaching relationships on the sustainability of coaching outcomes in secondary education. By fostering trust, collaboration, and meaningful feedback, coaching relationships can contribute to the long-term effectiveness of professional development. The study also emphasises the importance of creating a supportive school culture that values and prioritises coaching, ensuring that the benefits of coaching are sustained and integrated into everyday teaching practices. The findings show that teachers can perceive peer coaching as a meaningful and sustainable form of CPD, addressing the conceptual gaps identified in the literature concerning relevance, trust and reflective depth.

6.2 Potential Contributions to Practice

Examining the potential implementations of this study, it seeks to expand on the practical application of peer coaching within educational settings. The coaching programme, central to this research, was designed to enhance teachers' professional practices through the use of peer coaching. This method allows educators to critically assess their teaching in real time, identifying which aspects of their practice should remain consistent and which require change. By focusing on growth rather than penalisation, this approach fosters a reflective and adaptive teaching environment. Teachers respond particularly well to video observations, as they provide specific, actionable feedback that surpasses other forms of assessment. This method not only improves the flow of teacher training but also guides educators in selecting high-quality teaching strategies.

The utilisation of video analysis offers practitioners a clearer understanding of their teaching methods and their impact on student learning. The ability to review and analyse these videos directly, combined with the integration of new technologies, supports ongoing professional development. This, in turn, equips teachers to adapt to changing educational paradigms, fostering a conducive learning environment from the start of their careers through to retirement. Moreover, the improved teaching techniques derived from video analysis can positively impact students, creating a more reflective and responsive educational setting.

Students benefit from this reflective teaching environment, as teachers who engage in video-based professional development are more attuned to learners' needs. This commitment to creating a supportive learning atmosphere has the potential to elevate students' educational outcomes and achievement in secondary schools. The growing recognition of peer coaching within

CPD programmes points to its potential to implement systemic improvements within education. By supporting and encouraging policymakers who facilitate these efforts, developing a more sensitive and effective education system is possible. The emphasis on evidence-based practices aligns with broader educational change goals, offering concrete recommendations for policymakers to enhance the quality of instruction in schools.

The implications of this research extend to policymaking, suggesting how teacher professional development programmes should be designed, funded, and implemented at a macro level. The deployment of peer coaching programmes, specifically when combined with video analysis, could potentially shift educational paradigms, establishing a solid foundation for disseminating effective teaching practices across schools in a timely and cost-effective manner. This knowledge exchange fosters a collaborative community of practice, continually enhancing the relationship between teachers, researchers, and policymakers.

The immediate impact of peer coaching is evident in the targeted feedback that teachers receive, enabling timely modifications to teaching practices. This positive change in student learning experiences is observable in the short term, providing institutions and coaches with immediate feedback on the programme's effectiveness. Additionally, the process strengthens the teaching staff by fostering professional self-regulation and a sense of efficacy in addressing the challenges of evolving educational contexts.

In the long term, the use of peer coaching has the potential to revolutionise teaching, contributing to sustained advancements in educational frameworks. The combined influence on practitioners, students, and the broader educational field supports the argument for sustainable systems reform. Other long-term benefits include fostering a culture of continuous improvement and embedding peer coaching as a central component of teachers' professional development. This, in turn, necessitates the creation of a more adaptable and responsive education system that benefits teachers, students, and the educational community.

It is essential to acknowledge that the significance of this study extends beyond its immediate findings, offering insights for teachers, administrators, and policymakers alike. Peer coaching programmes, when integrated into school CPD processes, emerge as a best-practice model for enhancing instructional quality across diverse learning environments. The results of this study are relevant universally to all educational establishments, providing educators with strategies to refine their professional development processes. School leaders may use these insights to develop more effective coaching strategies, while policymakers can leverage this knowledge to implement efficient public education policies that enhance professional learning for educators. A more informed and empowered teaching workforce ultimately benefits society. Improved teaching and learning strategies enhance the overall quality of education, thereby raising the educational standards of the broader population. This research helps to address a critical gap through bridging theory and practice in education, contributing to social utility. The broader implementation of peer coaching programmes with video analysis across secondary schools could significantly impact various aspects of teaching. This analysis not only addresses the effects on professionals, learners,

and policymakers but also considers how Peer coaching could transform the field of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The short-term benefits, such as increased student engagement in the classroom, represent the initial steps toward systemic educational transformation. The implications of this study extend beyond its immediate scope, offering theoretical insights into the challenges faced by current educational systems within professional development structures. The recommendations for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers focus on enhancing the professional development culture in education. While education and coaching are continually evolving, the practice of incorporating video analysis into coaching programmes stands out as a promising best practice, poised to significantly influence the future of education.

6.3 Contributions of the Study

This study aimed to make significant contributions to the field of educational coaching, particularly through its focus on the implementation of peer coaching that utilises video analysis. By exploring the effectiveness of this approach, the research advances understanding in several key areas of educational theory, policy, and practice, thereby offering insights that can be used to inform and improve professional development programmes for teachers.

6.3.1 Contributions to Educational Coaching Literature

One of the primary contributions of this study is its enhancement of the existing literature on educational coaching. The research presents a detailed examination of the usefulness of video-

stimulated peer coaching, a relatively underexplored area within the broader field of educational coaching. By providing empirical evidence on how video analysis can be integrated into peer coaching models, this study helps to fill a gap in the current academic discourse. Specifically, it offers a nuanced understanding of how video-stimulated peer coaching can be used to foster professional growth among teachers, thereby contributing to more effective coaching practices.

Moreover, this study extends the theoretical framework of educational coaching by incorporating video analysis into traditional coaching methodologies. The synthesis of these approaches allows for a more comprehensive portrayal of teaching practices, moving beyond the limitations of observation-based feedback alone. This integration is particularly important as it provides a more robust mechanism for capturing the complexities of classroom interactions and teacher development, offering a richer and more detailed analysis than previous studies have achieved.

In addressing the long-term impact of professional development interventions, this research tackles a recurring question in the literature: how sustainable are these interventions, and what are their enduring effects on teaching practices? By examining the effects of peer coaching over an extended period, the study offers new insights into the long-term benefits of such programmes. This contribution is particularly noteworthy as it provides evidence that supports the sustained use of educational peer coaching, reinforcing its potential as a tool for professional development.

6.3.2 Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

The findings of this study have significant implications for educational policy and practice, particularly in the context of English secondary schools. By demonstrating the effectiveness of peer coaching in enhancing teaching practice, the research provides policymakers with evidence-based recommendations for integrating such strategies into educational environments. This is particularly relevant at a time when educational systems are increasingly looking for innovative ways to improve teaching quality and student outcomes.

The study's emphasis on the professional learning of teachers through peer coaching underscores the importance of this approach in modern educational settings. By offering a detailed analysis of the factors that influence the successful implementation of peer coaching interventions, this research provides practical guidance for schools looking to adopt this methodology. The findings highlighted the critical role of school culture, leadership, and teamwork in moderating the effectiveness of these interventions, offering insights for educational leaders and policymakers seeking to foster a supportive environment for teacher development.

Furthermore, this study challenges traditional views of teacher professional development, which often treat teachers as passive recipients of pre-existing knowledge. Instead, it positions teachers as active agents in their own professional growth, co-constructing knowledge and understanding within their specific classroom contexts. This shift in perspective has important implications for how professional development programmes are designed and implemented, suggesting that more emphasis should be placed on collaborative, context-specific learning opportunities that empower teachers to take an active role in their own development.

The study's practical implications extend beyond the academic sphere, offering real-world applications that can be used to improve educational practices. For instance, the research suggests that peer coaching can be an effective way to promote continuous professional growth among teachers, leading to long-term improvements in teaching quality and student achievement. This is particularly important in the current educational landscape, where there is a growing demand for evidence-based strategies that can help educators meet the challenges of an increasingly complex and dynamic teaching environment.

6.3.3 Long-Term Impact and Future Directions

The long-term impact of this study is expected to be felt both in academic research and in the practical realm of educational practice. By providing a detailed exploration of the use of peer coaching, the research lays the groundwork for future studies to build upon. It offers guidance for future researchers and policymakers, encouraging them to continue exploring the potential of technology-facilitated professional development interventions.

This study calls for a paradigm shift in how teacher professional development is conceptualised and implemented. The research suggests that professional development should not be seen as a finite process with immediate results but as a continuous, evolving journey that has long-term impacts on both teachers and students. This perspective encourages a more holistic approach to professional development, one that considers the complex dynamics of school culture, leadership, and collaboration.

The implications of this research resonate beyond the academic community, influencing the everyday practices of educators and learners. The study advocates for a more integrated approach to professional development, where evidence-based strategies, such as video-stimulated peer coaching, are embedded into the fabric of educational systems. This approach has the potential to transform how teachers learn and grow, ultimately leading to a more empowered and student-centred educational landscape.

As the study suggests, the introduction of peer coaching represents a significant step forward in the evolution of teacher professional development. However, the journey does not end here. The research serves as a catalyst for further exploration and innovation, inspiring educators, administrators, and policymakers to continue pushing the boundaries of what is possible in professional development. By embracing technology, collaboration, and reflective practices, the educational community can work together to create a brighter future for both teachers and students.

In conclusion, this study makes a substantial contribution to the field of educational coaching by advancing the understanding of peer coaching and its impact on teacher development. It provides insights that can inform educational policy and practice, offering practical guidance for the implementation of innovative professional development strategies. As the research continues to influence both academic discourse and real-world practices, its long-term impact will be felt in classrooms and educational systems around the world, helping to shape a more effective and sustainable model of teacher professional development.

6.4 Relating to Existing Literature

Teacher peer coaching and video analysis are two promising forms of teacher professional development. Both, especially when used together, are in the broader area of the literature on education. This section will delve into relevant existing research, demonstrating how the integration of these two methodologies contributes to, extends, or challenges existing theories and knowledge in the field:

1. Peer Coaching in Education

Studies on peer coaching indicate that it fosters a positive, collaborative, and professional learning environment. Grounded in social constructivist theory, which asserts that learning occurs through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978), peer coaching promotes shared reflection and collective growth among educators. Research by Thacker et al. (2022), Knight (2007), and Joyce and Showers (2002) further demonstrated that peer coaching plays a vital role in enhancing instructional practice. The introduction of video analysis in peer coaching programmes extends these studies, as discussed below. As opposed to conventional peer coaching, which is rooted in the belief of observation-based feedback, video analysis provides additional layer of critical analysis to teaching practices, which can build on current research evidence (Banhart and Vega, 2024; Eghterafi, 2022; Van Es and Sherin, 2010). In this way, it assists this process by offering an additional layer of independent verification and the fine-grained documentation of the learning process that is facilitated by cooperation. Kretlow and Bartholomew (2010) raised questions about the sustainability of the peer coaching model and the need for continuous support. To overcome this challenge, the integration of video analysis is recommended because it is structured,

systematic, and ongoing; therefore, it may alleviate the sustainability issues that some scholars have pointed out.

2. Video Analysis in Teacher Professional Development

The use of video in teacher professional learning has emerged as a unique topic that has received much focus in the last several years. Many studies (Barclift, 2024; Baran et al., 2023; Bannister and Reinhart, 2016; McDuffie et al., 2013) highlighted the value of video in promoting self-reflection and identifying areas for improvement. The analysis of the video is similar to the constructivist theories because they involve the construction of knowledge through reflective practice, as proposed by Sherin and Van Es (2005). The integration of peer coaching adds a social dimension to video analysis, aligning with socio-cultural learning theories (Vygotsky, 1978). Collaborative sense-making (Fishman et al., 2013) is enhanced as teachers, through peer coaching, jointly analyse and interpret classroom dynamics, fostering a shared understanding beyond individual reflection. Challenges to video analysis primarily revolve around issues of time and accessibility. Svaricek (2024) and Tripp and Rich's (2012) research suggested that time constraints hinder teachers' engagement with video analysis. However, peer coaching mitigates this challenge by providing a structured framework for time-efficient collaboration, potentially addressing the practical concerns raised in the existing literature. Research from Kamali and Javahery (2024) served as critical support when linking these findings to broader, international applications of cognitive models in PD.

3. Theoretical Implications of Peer Coaching and Video Analysis Integration

The integration of peer coaching and video analysis reflected a strong alignment with socio-constructivist learning theories, which emphasise the social construction of knowledge through interaction and reflection. By embedding professional learning within collaborative, peer-led dialogue, this approach challenges traditional individualistic models of CPD and supports more communal, contextually grounded teacher development. Research by Kamali and Javahery (2024) reinforced this view, showing that structured peer coaching frameworks can promote sustained reflective engagement even amid cultural and logistical barriers. Similarly, Barnhart and Vega (2024) highlighted how video-based coaching strengthens professional relationships, fosters shared inquiry, and creates more egalitarian mentoring dynamics.

The use of video adds a further dimension to professional learning, enabling teachers to situate their reflective practice within a broader context that includes classroom interactions, peer relationships, and institutional norms. As Svaricek (2024) demonstrated, video analysis can serve as a catalyst for deeper shifts in teacher beliefs and behaviours when integrated into dialogic teaching cycles. These interventions are not just about individual development, they also shape professional cultures and influence systemic practices. This framing supported a more holistic view of teacher learning, one that considers the dynamic interplay between individual agency, peer influence, and organisational culture.

4. Practical Implications of Peer Coaching and Video Analysis Integration

Teaching and analysing lessons using video alongside coaching is increasingly recognised as a highly effective method of professional development, offering personalised and targeted

support for teachers. Video recordings allow educators to focus on specific areas of their practice that they themselves have identified, enabling feedback that is both meaningful and aligned with their developmental goals. This personalised approach reflects a shift away from traditional undifferentiated CPD models, supporting more collaborative, reflective forms of professional learning (Ilgan and Basaran, 2023). Studies have shown that video-based peer feedback enhances not only self-efficacy but also deepens instructional insight and fosters genuine professional dialogue (Eghterafi et al., 2022; Barclift and MacLeod, 2024).

Such peer-supported reflection, as demonstrated by Barnhart and Vega (2024), promotes a culture of non-hierarchical mentoring and strengthens professional relationships, sustainable improvement in schools. Furthermore, structured video analysis frameworks, like the Galperin model applied in peer coaching by Kamali and Javahery (2024), can reframe teaching practices and build a foundation for sustained reflective engagement. These methods collectively support a professional culture where educators enhance each other's practice through shared inquiry and constructive dialogue. By using visual data to anchor feedback, teachers move beyond assumptions, grounding professional learning in observable evidence. This aligns with broader educational trends that prioritise evidence-informed practice and data-driven decision-making. In this context, video-enhanced peer coaching emerges not only as a practical tool but as a transformative model for professional growth grounded in research, trust, and reflective dialogue.

6.5 Research Limitations

While this study presents an examination of peer coaching using video analysis within English secondary education schools, several limitations must be acknowledged, both in the design and methodology and in the broader scope of the thesis.

6.5.1 Methodological Limitations

The decision to use a qualitative research approach, though beneficial in capturing rich, contextual insights, inherently limits generalisability. The findings offer depth rather than breadth, reflecting the lived experiences of a small group of participants within one institutional setting. While this aligns with the interpretivist paradigm guiding the research, it means that conclusions should be viewed as illustrative rather than definitive. Furthermore, the absence of longitudinal data restricts the ability to fully assess the sustainability of the coaching outcomes over time. Although teachers reported growth in reflective capacity and professional confidence, the study cannot claim to measure whether these changes persisted beyond the academic year.

The researcher's role as a practitioner-researcher introduces both strength and challenge. Insider status enabled trust, familiarity, and access, which facilitated open dialogue and naturalistic observation. However, this same proximity may have shaped participant responses or data interpretation, despite efforts to maintain critical distance, such as excluding participants under the researcher's direct supervision. Reflexivity was applied throughout, but the risk of bias remains, especially in interpreting coaching conversations that carried interpersonal nuance.

There were also limitations in data collection tools. Audio recordings captured coaching dialogue and interviews effectively, yet the absence of video data from the coaching sessions themselves limited opportunities to triangulate observational behaviours with verbal data. Moreover, while video was used by participants for classroom reflection, its role could have been expanded further for meta-analysis of coaching conversations. This presents a potential area for development in future iterations of the research design.

6.5.2 Wider Thesis Limitations

At the thesis level, the study's scope was intentionally narrow, focusing on peer coaching as a professional development mechanism in secondary education. While this allows for a deep dive into one context, it excludes comparative perspectives from primary or post-compulsory settings, or from school leaders and policymakers. Furthermore, the literature review could have more extensively incorporated international case studies that explored peer coaching across varied policy and cultural environments. This would have offered greater insight into the universality or specificity of the findings. Another limitation lies in the focus on perception rather than outcome. The study did not aim to measure student progress as a result of coaching, and as such, cannot assert a direct impact on learning outcomes. While changes in teacher mindset and dialogue can be powerful indicators of professional development, connecting these changes to classroom effectiveness remains an open question.

This study was conducted on a small scale within a specific educational context, and as such, its findings are not intended to be generalised in a statistical sense. However, in line with Stake's (1982) notion of naturalistic generalisation, the value of this research lies in the extent to

which readers can draw meaningful connections between the experiences documented here and their own professional settings. By providing a rich and detailed account of the processes, challenges, and outcomes of implementing video-based peer coaching, the study offers insights that may resonate with educators and leaders in other schools. Rather than serving as a universal prescription, the research can be viewed as a model that schools may adapt to their own contexts, supporting professional development in ways that align with their unique cultures, resources, and priorities.

Finally, the thesis was conducted during the COVID-19 disruptions to schools/education, which influenced the availability and flexibility of participants. In some cases, session frequency was affected, and opportunities for participant validation were limited by logistical constraints. These contextual factors should be considered when evaluating the robustness of the findings. By acknowledging these limitations transparently, the study strengthens its credibility and lays a realistic foundation for future research to build upon its insights and design.

6.6 Proposing Future Research Directions

Given the ongoing and forthcoming initiatives aimed at enhancing and supporting teachers' professional development, it is essential to examine the issues surrounding peer coaching programmes critically. This study elucidates its findings in the context of existing research questions and identifies significant gaps that necessitate further investigation. Consequently, this research outlines potential avenues for future inquiry that promise to refine and expand the implementation of video-based peer coaching models, thus contributing to their overall effectiveness and scalability.

Long-Term Impact and Sustainability. Another line of investigation that will be of interest is the review of large-scale studies that are aimed at evaluating the long-term results of the application of video analysis to peer coaching intervention programmes. Alternatively, further research is needed to gauge the long-term impact of coaching programs with video analysis elements, potentially over several academic years.

Teacher Collaboration, School Culture, and Leadership. Further research should be dedicated to learning how these factors impact the effectiveness of peer coaching interventions and the role of teachers, school climate, and leadership. Future studies were deemed advisable in the extended school context, emphasising the effects of and lessons learned from video-based peer coaching practices. It could be helpful to examine the implications of leadership in schools in relation to the relationships staff members have with each other, the school climate regarding such programmes, and the outcomes yielded by the latter. This may be of particular interest to schools in trusts, several schools under the same leadership body or management, making the schools share common objectives.

Technology Integration for Efficiency. One such direction that needs to be explored could be research on utilising new technologies in video analysis for teacher professional development. Using artificial intelligence or machine learning as a tool in this approach might be possible and effective and ease the process of video analysis for educators. This research direction is significant in today's technological trends in the educational sector.

Differentiated Support and Customisation. Future research should focus on strategies for differentiated support within video-based peer coaching, addressing individual teacher needs. Examining how feedback and coaching interventions can be customised to target specific teaching strengths and areas for improvement would contribute to a more personalised and effective professional development experience.

Generalisability Across Subjects and School Levels. Understanding the generalisability of findings across diverse educational contexts is paramount. Research should investigate whether integrating video analysis into peer coaching is equally effective across different subjects, grade levels, and school types (primary, further education, higher education, and specialist schools). Insights into the contextual factors influencing outcomes would contribute to the adaptable implementation of video-based coaching:

Teacher Resistance and Acceptance. An important area for exploration is the identification of factors influencing teacher resistance or acceptance of video analysis within peer coaching. Research should delve into teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about being observed through video and receiving feedback, paving the way for strategies to overcome potential resistance and enhance acceptability.

Impact on Student Learning Outcomes. It is essential to build a deeper understanding of the link between teacher professional development through video analysis and its impact on student learning outcomes. Future research should investigate specific instructional practices or

teacher behaviours correlated with improved student achievement, establishing a more nuanced connection between teacher development and student success.

Integration with Formal Evaluation Systems. The alignment of video analysis with formal teacher evaluation systems, such as performance management procedures, is an area ripe for exploration. Investigating how evidence-based insights from video analysis can complement or enhance traditional evaluation methods would provide guidance for integrating video-based peer coaching into broader teacher assessment frameworks.

The growing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI presents opportunities to extend research on video-based peer coaching and professional development. AI-assisted video analysis could identify key teaching behaviours and generate objective feedback, as well as the potential for the analysis of coaching dialogue to identify individualised reflective patterns. These tools may enable scalable, personalised CPD, offering insights beyond manual observation.

The recommendations for future research outlined above have direct implications for how video-based peer coaching can be implemented in English secondary schools. Given the structural and cultural dynamics of these settings, schools and trusts provide a fertile context for testing and refining the approaches identified. For example, the emphasis on long-term impact and sustainability is particularly relevant for MATs, which operate over multiple schools and can embed video-based peer coaching within trust-wide professional development frameworks. This creates opportunities to assess not only outcomes within individual schools but also the scalability

of such interventions across varied contexts. Similarly, recommendations concerning teacher collaboration, school culture, and leadership are critical in the secondary school and MAT environment. Trust leadership can play a pivotal role in shaping a culture of professional openness and reflective practice, while shared values and objectives across schools facilitate the transfer of effective practices. Research in this area could investigate how trust-level leadership structures either enable or constrain teacher collaboration and the diffusion of coaching practices.

The identified need for technology integration and differentiated support also resonates strongly in the English context, where schools face diverse challenges related to resources, staff capacity, and subject-specific demands. MATs are particularly well positioned to trial innovative technological solutions, such as AI-assisted video analysis, while ensuring that interventions remain adaptable to individual teacher needs and subject areas. Finally, the call for research on teacher resistance, student outcomes, and alignment with evaluation systems has clear practical implications. Schools and MATs operate under OFSTED accountability frameworks, and findings from future studies could help leaders understand how to integrate video-based peer coaching into existing performance management structures without undermining teacher trust or willingness to participate.

Together, these avenues for future research provide a clear direction for advancing video-based peer coaching, with the potential to refine professional development models, enhance scalability, and strengthen links to student outcomes. English secondary schools and multi-school trusts represent crucial contexts for this work, offering the structures needed to trial, adapt, and

embed innovative approaches. Embedding such practices within trust-wide CPD strategies will be central to ensuring their long-term impact on teacher growth and student achievement.

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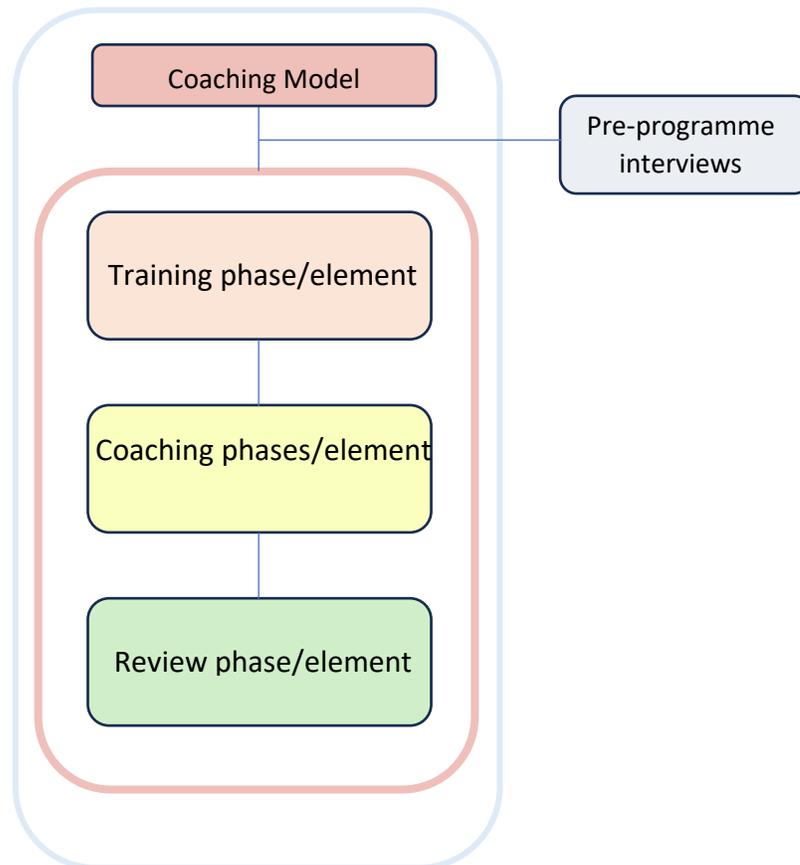
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Coaching Model Diagram/Structure



Appendix 2: Structure of Coaching Model Programmes/Elements

Training programme/element

Similar to Moen and Fedrinci's (2012) research design each coach selected for this research will go through a training programme prior to the commencement of the coaching element. This will reduce the variation between quality and consistency of coaching and illustrated techniques, procedures and structures that will be useful throughout the coaching model. Each coach will be selected due to their prior coaching experience and ability, with each receiving training prior to the start of the research on the following aspects:

- General overview of the programme
- Procedures for training and coaching model integration and management
- Purpose and structure of coaching sessions
- What is coaching and the reflective cycle
- Setting up video sessions - camera location, focus
- Use of video recording during the coaching sessions
- Ethical information

Coaching programme/element

The coaching programme will consist of regular coaching sessions between the coaches and coachees. These will focus on the use of video recordings of lessons as a form of stimulus recall to aid. This will provide an opportunity for teachers to view their own teaching style from a third person's perspective and give the opportunity for reflection on their own teaching practices and techniques.

The coaching cycles will consist of three steps:

1. The coach and coachee meet and look through student baseline data and agree upon the focus and aims of the observation
2. The coach will observe the coachee's classroom lesson. This will be video-recorded - (Set up, back of room, no student faces (ethical point), focus on teacher movement and classroom practice).
3. Coach/Coachee meet to discuss lesson as soon as practical. Both the coach and coachee will use the video recording, as a stimulus recall, to assess the lesson against the criteria agreed in stage 1. Both the coach and coachee will be able to discuss the recorded session and enter into a 'joint deliberation' phase of coaching, which will focus less on *what* is discussed between the two parties but *how* it is discussed. Coaching sessions will be audio-recorded and these will be transcribed verbatim, in order to qualitatively analyse themes that are evident during the coaching conversations. These themes will then be given as recommendations for further CPD for the coachee (Ben-Peretz, Gottlieb and Gideon, 2018).

This process will take place twice per half term, approximately twelve times over the duration of the research period (one year). Data collection points will be at each coaching session, looking into the transcripts and analysing the themes that are present within each coaching session. The use of video analysis will be utilised as a stimulus recall for both the coach and coachee.

Review element

The evaluation element will use a summative process to bring closure to the cycle of coaching and analysis. Here the coach and coachee will be able to assess the impact of the coaching programme, using the data gathered throughout the year. This phase will not only allow for the coach and coachee to give feedback in regards to the coaching programme/element, but also on the larger research project as a whole. This feedback will be crucial in the final adjustments of the coaching model and could shape how it is used in future research.

Appendix 2.1 – Coaching Documentation (Participant example of completed documentation)

Coaching Program – Planning, Coaching and Guidance document (PCG)
Example – Only use pages 1 and 2 for coaching cycle

Coach: Ann Example		Class observed: 11X1 Science		Date of observation: 01/01/ 2021	
Coachee: Alan Other					
<p>1. Plan</p> <p>Teacher's questions posed prior to observation. <i>What would you like your colleague to consider while observing you teach?</i></p> <p><i>Do the students engage productively with each other during group work? Do students use the subject terminology to discuss what they are finding through practical activity?</i></p> <p>Discuss key areas of observation focus – Coachee-led. Assess class data (progress and behaviour). <u>Set time and date for observation</u></p>		<p>2. Observe</p> <p>Observer collects evidence. What have you observed during the lesson that relates to the questions posed by your colleague?</p> <p><i>You introduce subject terminology when giving pupils the direction for the task. Pupils work well together in all groups. Mixed ability groups seem to work well here. They discussed their models but rarely used technical terms to share ideas.</i></p> <p>Observer present and session element recorded. Observer makes notes either in lesson noting time of point made (using video)</p>			
<p>4. Coach</p> <p><i>How can we promote effective interventions to prompt student to use subject terminology without affecting their active engagement and autonomous group work? How could we develop success criteria with the pupils which encourages them to make good use of new words and concepts?</i></p> <p>Pods meet to discuss areas of focus from observation. Non-judgmental approach is a necessity, only pose questions. <u>Refer overleaf for guidance on coaching/example questions</u></p>		<p>3. Reflect</p> <p><i>Were your verbal explanations of the key words accessible to all learners? Were students aware of the subject terminology and how it might help them?</i></p> <p>Coach and coachee have time to reflect on lesson, focussing on areas identified in section 1. <u>Set time for coaching session and make sure video is accessible</u> – Collect Dictaphone from NBA office</p>			

Coaching and Observation tool

NBA 2020

Coaching Program – Planning, Coaching and Guidance document (PCG)
Example – Only use pages 1 and 2 for coaching cycle

Setup & prep

Equipment:
Cameras can be booked through the "Helpdesk" system. Cameras are then collected and returned to IT.
Dictaphones (x2) available in NBA office – Please collect and return to NBA

Video recording:
 Camera needs to be set up to focus on teacher/board at front of classroom – **Do not include student faces**
 All students and parents have been made aware of research within school

Key Areas of focus from observation

Time	Point of interest
1m23s	Well-structured encouragement for students to effectively work together "James, are you asking effective questions to Jenny?"
6m15s	An interesting exchange between teacher and student – teacher challenge student for lack of work produced in time given – Discussion didn't amount to positive engagement. Students given C2 very quickly into discussion.
15m55s	Majority of students discussed areas of interest well, terminology not used as effectively as it could have been – Areas to develop this?

These timings don't need to be super precise, but more of a guidance – Can be added later with the use of the video prior to the coaching conversation.

Coaching – Core reflection

Use Korthagen's Reflective cycle (See additional info):

1. What is it you have to cope with?
2. How did you cope with that?
3. What are you competent with that could help?
4. What do you believe about the situation?
5. What do you think about yourself in this situation?
6. How do you think your 'ideals' impact this development?

Key points to remember:

- Coaching = Discovery/Development
- No Judgement, All curiosity
- Focus on teaching practice
- Don't scared to move out of your comfort zone

Next steps

- **What to do after your coaching session**
- Video to be shared with Duncan Kilford and then make Duncan the 'Owner' of the video (done through the advanced share function and selecting the drop-down box by DKJ's name) so these can be stored securely.
- Pass Dictaphone's back to NBA for uploading of audio file (A copy can be sent to you too)
- Retain documentations for future reference
- Swap roles and repeat the cycle

NBA 2020

Coaching Program – Planning, Coaching and Guidance document (PCG)
Example – Only use pages 1 and 2 for coaching cycle

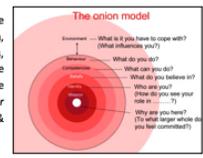
Additional information (This sheet is for reference only) – Worth a read prior to coaching

The coaching program is underpinned by the educational research of Korthagen, F. A. J. (2014). He investigates the use of core reflection and multi-level learning to develop teaching practices in a safe and developmental environment.

Korthagen's Onion model is discussed below. **Please utilise this to shape your own coaching pod conversations/sessions.**

The meaning of the various layers in this model, which is often called 'the onion model'.

1. The environment. This layer refers to everything that a person encounters outside of herself. In the case of a teacher, this involves the whole classroom setting, the subject matter, the school culture with all its implicit and explicit norms, and so forth. In the example of Linda, the most obvious elements in her environment are the students.
2. Behaviour. This refers to what the teacher does, how he or she copes with the challenges in the environment, in Linda's case how she acts in the classroom.
3. Competencies. This layer involves what the teacher is competent at doing.
4. Beliefs. This layer refers to what the teacher believes about the situation s/he is dealing with. With the term 'beliefs' we refer to assumptions about the outer world, which are often unconscious.
5. Identity. This layer refers to teachers' assumptions about themselves, their self-concepts and the professional roles they see for themselves.
6. Mission. This layer is concerned with what inspires us, and what gives meaning and significance to our work or our lives. Whereas the layer of identity has to do with how we see ourselves, the layer of mission is about our ideals.
7. In the center of the onion model we locate the teacher's core qualities, such as enthusiasm, curiosity, courage, steadfastness, decisiveness, openness, flexibility, and so forth. The term 'core qualities' was coined by **Ottman** (2000), and the concept concurs with the notion of **character strengths** in positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).



NBA 2020

Coaching Program – Planning, Coaching and Guidance document (PCG)
Example – Only use pages 1 and 2 for coaching cycle

Broken down further, these 7 levels can be seen in the following terms for use within coaching:

1. **Promoting awareness of ideals** and core qualities in the person that are related to the situation reflected on.
2. **Identifying internal obstacles** to acting out these ideals and core qualities.
3. **Promoting awareness of the cognitive, emotional and motivational** aspects embedded in ideals, core qualities, and obstacles.
4. **Promoting a state of awareness** in which the person is fully aware (cognitively and emotionally) of the discrepancy or friction between 1 and 2, and the self-created nature of the internal obstacles.
5. **Trust in the process** that takes place from within the person.
6. **Support of acting out one's inner potential** within the situation under reflection.
7. **Promoting autonomy** in using Core Reflection.

NBA 2020

Appendix 2.2 - Coaching Documentation (Participant template for active use)

Coaching Program – Planning, Coaching and Guidance document (PCG)			
<i>Template – Only use pages 1 and 2 for coaching cycle</i>			
Coach:	Class observed:	Date of observation: / / 2021	
Coachee:			
1. Plan			2. Observe
<p>Discuss key areas of observation focus – Coachee-led. Assess class data (progress and behaviour). Set time and date for observation</p>		<p>Observer present and session element recorded. Observer makes notes either in lesson noting time of point made (using video)</p>	
Coaching and Observation tool			
4. Coach			3. Reflect
<p>Pods meet to discuss areas of focus from observation. Non-judgmental approach is a necessity, only pose questions. Refer overleaf for guidance on coaching/example questions</p>		<p>Coach and coachee have time to reflect on lesson, focussing on areas identified in section 1. Set time for coaching session and make sure video is accessible – Collect Dictaphone from NBA office</p>	
NBA 2020			

Coaching Program – Planning, Coaching and Guidance document (PCG)
 Template – Only use pages 1 and 2 for coaching cycle

Setup & prep

Equipment: Cameras can be booked through the "Helpdesk" system. Cameras are then collected and returned to IT. Dictaphones (x2) available in NBA office – Please collect and return to NBA	Video recording: Camera needs to be set up to focus on teacher/board at front of classroom – Do not include student faces All students and parents have been made aware of research within school
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Key Areas of focus from observation

Time	Point of interest

Coaching – Core reflection

Use Korthagen's Reflective cycle (See additional info)

1. What is it you have to cope with?
2. How did you cope with that?
3. What are you competent with that could help?
4. What do you believe about the situation?
5. What do you think about yourself in this situation?
6. How do you think your 'ideals' impact this development?

Key points to remember:

- Coaching = Discovery/Development
- No Judgement, All curiosity
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- Don't scared to move out of your comfort zone

Next steps

What to do after your coaching session

- Video to be shared with Duncan Kijford and then make Duncan the 'Owner' of the video (done through the advanced share function and selecting the drop-down box by DKJ's name) so these can be stored securely.
- Pass Dictaphone's back to NBA for uploading of audio file (A copy can be sent to you too)
- Retain documentations for future reference
- Swap roles and repeat the cycle

NBA 2020

Coaching Program – Planning, Coaching and Guidance document (PCG)
 Template – Only use pages 1 and 2 for coaching cycle

Setup & prep

Equipment: Cameras can be booked through the "Helpdesk" system. Cameras are then collected and returned to IT. Dictaphones (x2) available in NBA office – Please collect and return to NBA	Video recording: Camera needs to be set up to focus on teacher/board at front of classroom – Do not include student faces All students and parents have been made aware of research within school
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Key Areas of focus from observation

Time	Point of interest

Coaching – Core reflection

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1. What is it you have to cope with?
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NBA 2020

Coaching Program – Planning, Coaching and Guidance document (PCG)
 Template – Only use pages 1 and 2 for coaching cycle

- Addition observation sheet

Key Areas of focus from observation

Time	Point of interest

NBA 2020

Coaching Program – Planning, Coaching and Guidance document (PCG)
 Template – Only use pages 1 and 2 for coaching cycle

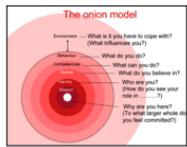
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NBA 2020

Broken down further, these 7 levels can be seen in the following terms for use within coaching:

1. **Promoting awareness of ideals** and core qualities in the person that are related to the situation reflected on.
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Appendix 2.3 – Participant Introduction and Training (Presenter notes)

Coaching as an approach to teaching development

Nicholas Barker

Contents

- Introductions
- Research title
- What and Why?
- Research Aims
- What do I have to do?
- How much time will it take?



Who am I and why am I here?

Local teacher

UEA EdD

Passion for educational research

Opportunity to help with student-centred research

Why coaching, why me?



Thesis title

"Coaching as an approach for sustainable improvement to teaching within secondary education"

Key focus:

- Peer-Coaching
- Teaching development
- Continuous Professional Development



What and Why

"Improving teaching is vital for improving the achievement of students and teachers' professional development is, in turn, crucial in enabling teachers to hone skills and characteristics to bolster their professional repertoire" Darling-Hammond, 2000)

Educational research has a gap - Secondary education/CPD/Coaching - Sustainable impact?

I want to have a look at this a little bit closer and I want to stay within my local community.

Long term aim - Set up a Norfolk/Suffolk Teacher-Coaching hub that is backed with scientific evidence.

Will it take up all of my time?

Time taken for each element:

Training - 2-3hours training session

Coaching - 9-12 hours spread over all 3 terms (break down below)

- Coach/coachee initial meeting - 0.5hr
- Coachee observation - 0.5-0.75hr
- Coaching session (with video stimulus) - 0.5-1hr. (including sending the audio-recording of the coaching session by the coach to the researcher at: Nicholas.O.Barker@uea.ac.uk)
- (Once per term each)

Evaluation - 0.5-1hours summative meeting/interview with lead researcher (Nick Barker)

Approximately: 12 - 16 hrs over an academic year



Research Aims

Develop a coaching model as an approach to sustainable improvement in teaching in a secondary school context.

Possible research outcomes may include:

- A better understanding of the impact that coaching relationships have on the sustainability of teaching changes brought on by coaching
- Research data that could contribute to alternative ways of looking at both coaching and the use of video analysis from an educational perspective.

Research Questions

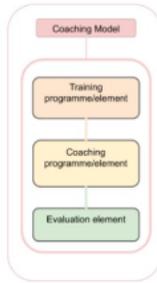
1. Where does the concept of coaching 'sit' in relation to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in general and improving teaching within the specific context of secondary education?
1. Which factors facilitate the process of coaching (as reported in published literature and by the research participants, coaches and the coachees)?
1. What challenges are experienced by the coach and coachee during the coaching process?
1. Does the perceived relationship between the coach and the coachee contribute to the effects of coaching and its sustainability?



What do I have to do?

Coaching model

1. Training Phase
2. Coaching Phase
3. Evaluation Phase



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1. Training Phase

Let's get to the nuts and bolts of this!



- General overview of the programme
- Procedures for training and coaching model integration and management
- Purpose and structure of coaching sessions
- What is coaching and the reflective cycle
- Setting up video sessions - camera location, focus
- Use of video recording during the coaching sessions (as per school policy)
- Ethical information

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Training Phase - FAQ

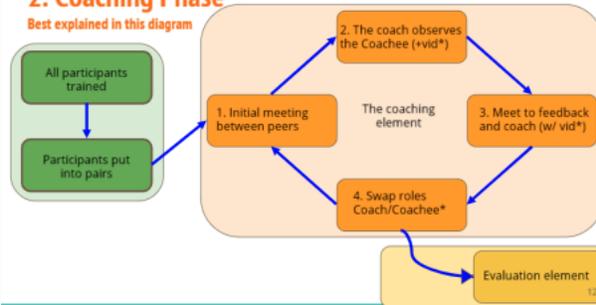


- What if I have never coached before?
- What if I am an NQT or training?
- What if I don't want everyone to see the video of me teaching?
- When and where will this training take place?
- What if I forget something important?
- What if I'm partnered with my own line manager?
- What if I want to stop and withdraw from this research?

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2. Coaching Phase

Best explained in this diagram



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Coaching Phase - FAQ



- What if I've never coached before?
- What if I have a TLR and have responsibility for observing others?
- What help is available if I forget something?
- Will I have to produce lots of documents?
- What happens to the video-recording once we are done?
- How will I get the audio recording to you?

13

Video-recorded observations



Each observation will last approximately 20-30 minutes

Many researchers have investigated the use of video recording for improving teacher practice, reflection and coaching can have some impact on teaching (Charteris and Smeaton (2013) Sherin (2004) Ben-Peretz, Gottlieb and Gideon (2018)).

In this research the use of video recording will only be used as a stimulus-recall for both the coach and the coachee.

These recordings will only be used during the coaching sessions, and will not form any data collected for this research.

Student faces will NOT be visible on the video recording and the recording will be stored securely in line with school policy.

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3. Evaluation Phase

We're almost there!



Almost there now...!

One final summative meeting with me.

We will discuss a number of sections of the coaching model:

- Personal perceptions
- Effectiveness
- Ease of use, etc.

These sessions will be audio-recorded for later evaluation of the project on a wider basis - This is NOT an evaluation of your teaching

15

Evaluation Phase - FAQs

How long is the 'summative interview'?

30 mins - 1 hour

Where and when will these take place?

Around late June/early July (depending on the progress of our coaching pairs), in one of the meeting rooms here at your school at a time that suits you.

What questions will you ask me?

The summative 'interview' will be a discussion about how you found the coaching model as a whole. There are no trick questions and no wrong or right answers, I just want to have your open and honest opinion of the previous year's coaching.



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Final pieces of information

Gatekeeper: Insert gatekeeper name

If you are willing to help and take part or have any further questions please contact me:

My contact: Nicholas.O.Barker@uea.ac.uk

Supervisory contact: Agnieszka.bates@uea.ac.uk

More information about my supervisor, Dr A Bates can be found below:

https://uea.ac.uk/my-eherspoint.com/page/personal/one110ms_uea_ac_uk/0077676/yuaLQW1T8AGqR0atLemf.8364PChQcM6g?name=Agnieszka.Bates@uea.ac.uk&=PKL4u6kDkue=9870=8972aE7-de33-a78e-a432-14f86684ed3a

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Appendix 2.4 – Participant Introduction and Training PowerPoint - Presenter’s Notes

Slide 2

Brief run through of the main areas of the PowerPoint.

Give detail of each section and ensure that you cover all aspects that will be of interest to the potential participants

Slide 3

Keeping this brief, introduce self and ensure to remind the potential participants that all correspondence goes through my UEA email.

Introduction of my own professional background and relationship to school - The only relationship/link between myself and the research school is the fact that both the school and my own are within the same Multi-Academy Trust (MAT. Apart from this there is no links between the researcher and this school or its staff.

Give some insight into why I am interested in this project and how it is linked to my own passion for developing educational research and to investigate my passion first-hand and make an original contribution to knowledge.

Share with the staff the fact that this is also a key opportunity for the staff to get involved with developing education in a manner that they will unlikely have seen before.

Identify my background in both teaching and coaching being open and honest about my current role within my own school and the passions that I have for both teaching and coaching. Potentially discuss coaching background, through Undergrad and MSc work undertaken as well as coaching within American football and teaching Leaders modules undertaken.

Slide 4

Start with the grand picture. Ensure that you convey the rationale behind this research without going into too much detail by staying concise throughout this section.

Draw attention to the fact that this research is specifically focused on developing teaching and not simple Performance management as well as being focused specifically on secondary education.

Go through each key focus of the research as well as why these have been brought to the forefront of the study - Link to research aims and questions.

Slide 5

This section is a key area where you can discuss, in very basic terms, what I will be researching and why I have chosen this school for the research.

Show the need for this research and the aim of the coaching hub within Norfolk and Suffolk/Local community

Slide 6

As a teacher I am fully aware of our very limited time and I have developed/designed this programme to protect this valuable time.

Slide 7

This is where you can start to ‘drip-feed’ some more detailed information about the inner workings of the research to the potential participants.

The aim of the next two slides to show the audience the interesting areas that they will be involved in as well as the opportunity to take a deeper reflective look within themselves and thus potentially improve their own teaching practice.

The sustainability section will also show this research has long-term goals that could see development have impact further down the road (Short term work for long term pay-outs).

Slide 8

Give the participants the complete picture of what the research and coaching model will investigate. Most teachers will be intrigued by this as most teachers have a student-centred ethos that specifically motivates them to want to improve the student’s education and thus their life chances.

This should be given a good amount of detail, so include:

Predicted challenges that they may face (be honest with this section, to give all potential participants a real-world picture of what they can expect).

As mentioned previously, draw attention to the sustainability question as this will show the importance that this research places on the importance high quality coaching and its longevity.

Slide 9

The main vehicle of this research is a bespoke Coaching model, that consists of 3 programmes:

The Training, Coaching and evaluation programmes.

The training programme as its name suggests is where all participants will become familiar with the upcoming coaching programme. Here the participants will be trained on all aspects of the coaching and evaluation programme and this is the time to ask all of the questions that you may have.

The coaching programme is the main section of the entire programme and will focus on the coaching of your peers. Here you will be working with a colleague and work together to coach each other through one academic year of teaching.

The Evaluation programme will allow us to break down the coaching that has taken place over the academic year and give us an opportunity to discuss and feedback on the entire model.

Each section will require participant input however, these can be carried out online where necessary (covid-19).

Slide 10

Each participant will be trained on all aspects of the coaching model - Can be carried out live or online via MS team/Google hangout etc.

The training programme as its name suggests is where all participants will become familiar with the upcoming coaching programme. Here the participants will be trained on all aspects of the coaching and evaluation programme and this is the time to ask all the questions that you may have.

Slide 11

What if I have never coached before?

What if I am an NQT or training?

What if I don't want everyone to see the video of me coaching?

When and where will this training take place?

What if I forget something important?

What if I'm partnered with my own Line manager?

What if I want to stop and withdraw from this research?

You can up to this date: July 2021

Slide 12

The coaching cycles will consist of four steps:

The coach and coachee have an initial meeting and look through student baseline data and agree upon the focus and aims of the observation (Standard observation practice)

*The coach will observe the coachee's classroom lesson and video-record this lesson- (Set up, back of room, no student faces (ethics justified), focus on teacher movement and classroom practice, etc).

*Coach/Coachee meet to discuss lesson as soon as practical. Both the coach and coachee will use the video-recording, as a stimulus-recall, to evaluate the lesson against the criteria agreed in stage 1. Both the coach and coachee will be able to discuss the recorded session and enter a 'joint deliberation' phase of coaching, which will focus less on what is discussed between the two parties but how it is discussed.

Coaching sessions will be audio-recorded, and these will be transcribed verbatim, in order to qualitatively analyse themes that are evident during the coaching conversations. These themes will then be given as recommendations for further CPD for the coachee.

*The coach and coachee swap roles and repeat the process - Each staff member will go through this process each half term, whilst alternating roles, thus having 3 journeys through the cycle as a coach and as a coachee.

This process will take place approximately 6 times over the duration of the research period (one year), with each participant going through the phase as the coach and coachee 3 times each.

The use of video analysis will be utilised as a stimulus-recall for both the coach and coachee and will not form part of the data that is collected, instead the audio-recorded of each coaching session will be analysed, looking into the transcripts and analysing the themes present within each coaching session.

Slide 13

The video-recording will be kept secure as per the school policy.

Where will the coaching meetings take place?

Slide 14

Ensure potential participants are clear with points 2 and 4.

The recordings will be used to stimulate recall of the lesson and specific aspects of the lesson that the coach chooses to focus on. The recordings will be securely stored on the school's secure drive and only accessible to the coachee and the IT manager, which is in line with the data protection and GDPR policies. Audio-recordings from the coaching sessions will be transcribed and analysed further for themes and trends.

Within each coaching session the video-recording of the lesson will be used as a stimulus-recall to aid/facilitate the coaching conversation. These video-recordings will focus on the teacher's behaviour and action, not the students' behaviour or progress etc.

Recordings will take place from the back of the classroom where no student faces will be visible.

Slide 15

The Evaluation programme will allow us to break down the coaching that has taken place over the academic year and give us an opportunity to discuss and feedback on the entire model.

Once we all reached this stage a large majority of the project has been completed.

Final section of the coaching model is simply to evaluate how you have found this. I will be running summative meetings with each of you to discuss how the coaching model has gone for you - Being honest and open at this point is helpful and helps the model to develop further.

Where will the evaluation take place?

Slide 17

General contact info. Mention who my main point of contact is ie Gatekeeper.

Appendix 3.1 – Parental Information Form

Mr Nicholas Barker
Doctoral Research Student (EdD)
1st September 2020

Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Education

University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7TJ
United Kingdom

Email: Nicholas.O.Barker@uea.ac.uk
Web: www.uea.ac.uk

Coaching as an approach for sustainable improvement to teaching within secondary education

PARENTAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

This research study is about educational coaching and how coaching can improve teaching. In order to gain the best insight into teaching, the teachers participating in this research will video a lesson taught to your child in the designated recording room in the school. In line with the school policy, the recording will focus on the teacher and not on the children. The video will be stored securely on the school hard drive and only used by the teacher and the coach to discuss how teaching could be improved. Your child will therefore not be part of the study per se.

This Parental Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to let your child take part in the lesson which will be video recorded and used as explained above. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Consent is assumed **UNLESS** you tell us otherwise by opting out of the process. If we do not receive an indication from you that you **do not want** your child to be part of this research, we take that you are giving your consent and you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree for your child to take part in the lesson that will be video recorded as explained above.
- ✓ You have received a copy of this Parental Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researcher: Mr Nicholas Barker. Mr Nicholas Barker is conducting this study as part of his Doctor of Education research undertaken at The University of East Anglia. This will take place under the supervision of Dr Agnieszka Bates.

(3) What will the study involve?

The study involves a video-recording of the lesson taught to the class of children including your child. The video-recording will be discussed by the teacher and the coach with a focus on the teaching practice and how teaching could be improved. To help with these professional conversations, lessons will be recorded to help the observation feedback and coaching sessions that will take place following the lesson. The aim of this study is to identify factors that impact teacher development and thus, there is *no* reflection on student performance or behaviour. In line with the school's policy, the video equipment will be set up at the back of the classroom and will avoid recording student's faces as this process focuses solely on the teacher and not the students. Your child will therefore complete their normal day to day lessons and no information about your child will be discussed in the coaching session.

(4) How much of my child's time will the study take?

No additional time will be needed from the students. All students will continue with their regular day to day lessons and timings.

(5) Does my child have to be in the video-recorded lesson?

Consent to being in the video-recorded lessons is assumed unless you tell us otherwise, but your child does not have to take part. Your decision whether to let them participate in the lesson will not affect your current or future relationship with the school.

(6) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the video-recorded lesson?

We do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this lesson for your child.

(7) Are there any benefits associated with being in the lesson?

Longer term benefits of this research include, helping to develop and further teaching quality and practice within your school /community that will likely benefit each child in the future.

(8) What will happen to information that is collected during the study?

As explained above, no data will be collected directly from any students, however, the video-recorded lesson will be watched by the classroom teacher and the observer during a coaching session where the teaching is reflected upon and analysed. This video will not be accessible to any other staff member, nor will the researcher have access to this video. The video will be stored securely as per the

school's policies. These policies are also in line with the data management policies set out in the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation Act

(9) What if we would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Mr Nicholas Barker will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact: Dr Agnieszka Bates, +44 (0)1603 592627

Nicholas Barker: Nicholas.O.Barker@uea.ac.uk

Dr Agnieszka Bates: Agnieszka.Bates@uea.ac.uk

(10) Will I be told the results of the study?

You and your child have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by contacting Mr Nicholas Barker via email: Nicholas.O.Barker@uea.ac.uk

(11) What if we have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved under the regulations of the University of East Anglia's School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Committee.

If there is a problem, please let me know. You can contact me via the University at the following address:

Nicholas Barker

School of Education and Lifelong Learning

University of East Anglia

NORWICH NR4 7TJ

Nicholas.O.Barker@uea.ac.uk

If you would like to speak to someone else, you can contact my supervisor:

Dr Agnieszka Bates, Agnieszka.Bates@uea.ac.uk, +44 (0)1603 59 2627

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the interim Head of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Professor Nalini Boodhoo at N.Boodhoo@uea.ac.uk.

(12) OK, I'm happy for my child to take part in the video-recorded lesson – what do I do next?

You don't need to do anything if you are happy for your child to participate. Please keep the information sheet for your details regarding the project and how to get in touch with the researcher if you need to.

(13) OK, I don't want my child to take part – what do I do next?

You need to fill in one copy of the consent form and return to Mr Nicholas Barker at (school address) by the XXth Sept 2020. Please keep the letter, information sheet and the 2nd copy of the consent form for your information.

This information sheet is for you to keep

PARENT/CARER OPT-OUT FORM (1st Copy to Researcher)

I, [PRINT PARENT'S/CARER'S NAME], **am not**
willing for my child[PRINT CHILD'S NAME]
to take part in this research study.

.....

Signature

.....

PRINT name

.....

Date

PARENT/CARER OPT-OUT FORM(2nd Copy to Parent/Carer)

I, [PRINT PARENT'S/CARER'S NAME], **am not**
willing for my child[PRINT CHILD'S NAME]
to take part in this research study.

.....
Signature

.....
PRINT name

.....
Date

Appendix 3.2 – Student Information and Opt-out Form

Mr Nicholas Barker
Doctoral Research Student (EdD)
1st September 2020

Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Education

University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7TJ
United Kingdom

Email: Nicholas.O.Barker@uea.ac.uk
Web: www.uea.ac.uk

Coaching as an approach for sustainable improvement to teaching within secondary education



Hello. My name is Mr Barker

I am doing a research study to find out more about teaching and teacher development. The research will focus on your teacher and not directly on you as a student.

We are asking you whether you agree to your teacher's lesson being video-recorded by another teachers in your class are not going to be looking at what you and your classmates say or do, we are only interested in seeing how your teacher teaches. The video will be taken from the back of the classroom, so your faces won't be in the video.

Will anyone else know what happens within the lesson?

The video-recording of the lesson will only be viewed by your teachers that are present during the lesson. The teachers will be using the video later as a form of video playback, similar to what commentators do when watching football replays and analysing what happened. NO one else will be allowed to watch the recording.

All videos from the study will be stored in a safe place and we will look after it very carefully. We will write a report about the study and show it to other people, but we won't say your name in the report, and no one will know that you were in the lesson that was video-recorded.

You can decide if you want to take part in the video-recorded lesson. You don't have to - it's up to you.

This sheet tells you a little more information about my research. Please read it carefully so that you can make up your mind about whether you want to take part in the video-recorded lesson.

If you have any questions, you can ask us or your family or someone else who looks after you. If you want to, you can contact me any time by email on Nicholas.O.Barker@uea.ac.uk

What will happen if I say that I don't want to be in the lesson?

Nothing will change except that we will not record this lesson and you will be able to take part in your regular day to day lessons.

We will assume that you are happy to participate in this lesson **UNLESS** you tell me otherwise by opting out. If I do not receive an indication from you that you **do not want** to be part of this research, we take it that you are giving your consent and you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the video-recorded lesson-as outlined above

If its ok with you, an additional teacher will sit in your classroom and take some notes of the things your teacher does. This will be how the discuss classroom topics, how they monitor work, etc.

Are there any good things about being in the video-recorded lesson? 😊

You will be helping me do my research and helping the development of teaching within your school.

Are there any bad things about being in this lesson? 😞

Nope. We hope that this lesson will be similar to other lessons you take part in.

Will you tell me what you learnt in the study at the end?

Yes, we will share a brief summary of this research on the school website and a newsletter, once the study is completed.

What if I am not happy with the study or the people doing the study?

If you are not happy with how I am doing the study then you can talk to the person who looks after you can call my supervisor at the University of East Anglia on (use my work telephone) or write an email to her at: (Agnieszka.Bates@UEA.ac.uk):

- Call the university on +44 (0)1603 592627
- Write an email to Agnieszka.Bates@uea.ac.uk

This sheet is for you to keep.

STUDENT OPT-OUT FORM(1st Copy to Researcher)

I, [PRINT STUDENT'S NAME], **am not willing** to take part in this research study.

.....

Signature

.....

PRINT name

.....

Date

STUDENT OPT-OUT FORM (2nd Copy to Student)

I, [PRINT STUDENT'S NAME], **am not willing** to
take part in this research study.

.....

Signature

.....

PRINT name

.....

Date

Appendix 4 – Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Mr Nicholas Barker
Doctoral Research Student (EdD)
1st September 2020

Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Education

University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7TJ
United Kingdom

Email: Nicholas.O.Barker@uea.ac.uk
Web: www.uea.ac.uk

Coaching as an approach for sustainable improvement to teaching within secondary education

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT – Coach/Coachee

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study looking into how coaching can impact teaching and what factors help the sustainability of these impacts. You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a member of staff at (*insert school name here*) and would participate in professional development within the upcoming academic year. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the study. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. By giving consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.
- ✓ You have received a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

Mr Nicholas Barker, Doctoral Research Students, University of East Anglia under the supervision of: Dr Agnieszka Bates, Associate Professor of Education, University of East Anglia

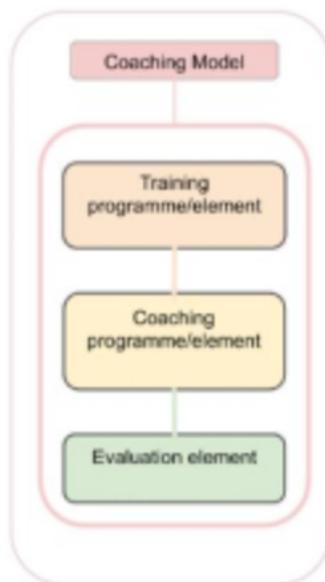
(3) What will the study involve for me?

All participants will be paired up with each of you taking on the role of either, the 'coach' or 'coachee' (These roles do not need to be assumed in relation to your current role within the school), these pairs will be known as 'Coaching Pods'. Each coaching pod will be taking part in a coaching programme that will look into improving the professional development of both participants. I will not be present for

these coaching sessions, however, there will be training given for each element prior to the commencement of the coaching programme and I will be available if you have any questions. Within the video-recordings of lessons, student identities will not be included, instead the focus will be on the teacher's actions and behaviours during the lesson. This will later serve as the stimulus-recall during the coaching sessions. These coaching sessions will be audio recorded for later transcription and analysis. [The audio-data from the coaching sessions will be emailed to me as an email attachment via the school's secure, firewalled email system. I will store the audio files on my UEA OneDrive and on my PC as encrypted files, same as the transcripts of these conversations and audio files and transcripts of interviews.](#)

Finally, each pod will have an evaluation session where coaches and coachees are able to feedback and reflect on the process as a whole and what impact they felt that it had. Once your pod has completed the entire coaching model, you will take part in a final evaluation **interview** with myself, which will help to investigate the sustainability of the effects of coaching.

All activities are planned to take place during the school day and should not impact upon your own time and over the space of one academic year, with 1 meeting each per term. Each element of information will be available for both participants to review if they wish.



(4) How much of my time will the study take?

This study will take place over one academic year. The coaching pods will meet twice per term for approximately 30-60minutes. The initial training element will take approximately 2 hours and will require both coaches and coachees to attend ([more detail can be found in appendix 6, PowerPoint slides/notes from your PowerPoint presentation](#)). This will likely be done during your Continued Professional Development (CPD) allocated time, but this cannot be guaranteed. Following this training, the coach and coachee will meet and decide upon which element of the coachee's classroom practice/professional development to focus on (approx 30mins). This could be from previous information, or simply a selection from the coachee. The coach will then observe their coachee and

video-record this. The coach and coachee will meet once again (as soon as possible) where the coach will feedback and facilitate a coaching conversation, utilising the video-recording as a stimulus-recall to facilitate conversation. [Audio-data from coaching sessions will be emailed to the researcher as an email attachment via the school's secure, firewalled email system. I will store the audio files on my UEA OneDrive and on my PC as encrypted files, same as the transcripts of these conversations and audio files and transcripts of interviews.](#)

Predicted timings for each of these sessions are shown below:



(5) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia or your school. If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time up until I have analysed and written up the data (i.e. 1 July 2021). You can do this by simply telling me at any time until the above date.

When participating in the **interview** with me, you will be free to stop the **interview** at any time. Unless you say that you want us to keep them, any recordings will be erased and the information that you have provided will not be included in the study results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview. If you decide at a later time to withdraw from the study your information will be removed from our records and will not be included in any results, up to the point we have analysed and published the results (as above).

(6) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study. All coaching sessions will take place in accordance with your school's regular policies and will not take more time than is necessary, in comparison to your regular CPD time.

[Educational Support \(EducationSupport.org\)](#), which is a free to use service available to all teachers for counselling within educational environments. This service offers support for stress and promote wellbeing within teaching establishments. This is especially vital in our current climate facing our educational system due to covid-19. This is a service that is currently promoted within your school and a service that you will continue to have access to if needed.

(7) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

We hope that talking with your colleagues about your teaching practices will have a positive impact on teaching.

(8) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise. Data management will follow the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation Act and the University of East Anglia Research Data Management Policy (2019).

Your information will be stored securely, and your identity/information will only be disclosed with your permission, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be identified in these publications.

(9) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Nicholas will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Nicholas on Nicholas.O.Barker@uea.ac.uk.

(10) Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by ticking the relevant box on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a one-page summary. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

(11) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved under the regulations of the University of East Anglia's School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Committee.

If there is a problem, please let me know. You can contact me via the University at the following address:

Nicholas Barker

School of Education and Lifelong Learning

University of East Anglia

NORWICH NR4 7TJ

Nicholas.O.Barker@uea.ac.uk

If you would like to speak to someone else, you can contact my supervisor:

Dr Agnieszka Bates, Agnieszka.Bates@uea.ac.uk, +44 (0)1603 59 2627

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the interim Head of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Professor Nalini Boodhoo at N.Boodhoo@uea.ac.uk.

(12) OK, I want to take part – what do I do next?

You need to fill in one copy of the consent form by signing it electronically and return to me on the email above by the 28th September 2020. Please keep the letter, information sheet and the 2nd copy of the consent form for your information.

This information sheet is for you to keep

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (1st Copy to Researcher)

I, [PRINT NAME], agree to take part in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:

- ✓ I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be asked to do, and any risks/benefits involved.
- ✓ I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been able to discuss my involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so.
- ✓ The researchers have answered any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.
- ✓ I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and I do not have to take part. My decision whether to be in the study will not affect my relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia now or in the future.
- ✓ I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time up until the data has been analysed and written up.
- ✓ I understand that I may stop the **interview** at any time if I do not wish to continue, and that unless I indicate otherwise any recordings will then be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study. I also understand that I may refuse to answer any questions I don't wish to answer.
- ✓ I understand that personal information about me that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about me will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.
- ✓ I understand that the results of this study may be published, but these publications will not contain my name or any identifiable information about me.

I consent to:

- **Audio-recording** YES NO
- **Video-recording** YES NO
- **Reviewing transcripts** YES NO
- **Would you like to receive feedback about the overall results of this study?**
YES NO

If you answered **YES**, please indicate your preferred form of feedback and address:

Postal: _____

Email: _____

Signature

PRINT name

Date

Appendix 5 – Semi-structured Interview Questions (Pre and post programme interview questions)

Semi-structured interview

PRE-Programme

- 1) **Please tell me a little about your career to date.**
- 2) **What changes have you experienced since becoming a teacher?**

Prompts:

- *general direction for education in recent years*
- *specific changes in this school*
- *any changes related to Covid-19*

- 3) **How do you feel you have developed as a teacher?**

Prompts:

- *What has helped? Developed your learning? CPD?*
- *Impact on pupils / teachers / leaders*
- *Impact on your day-to-day activities*
- *How 'realistic' / sustainable are these changes*

- 4) **Would you please tell me about CPD training that was successful / helpful? What, in your view, were the factors that made it successful?**

- 5) **Would you please tell me about some CPD training that was unsuccessful / that hindered...? What, in your view, were the factors that made it unsuccessful?**

- 6) **In your experience, how is coaching used in schools to develop teaching?**

- *Central or peripheral to CPD in your school?*
- *How would you evaluate coaching used within our school to develop teaching?*
(Coaching/Peer coaching/Line management support and conversations)

- *Where coaching may not be seen as coaching (i.e., corridor conversations)*

- 7) **What factors make a coaching/CPD programme sustainable to you?**

- 8) **In a perfect world, what would CPD look like?**

- 9) **Is there anything else you would like to say?**

Semi-structured interview

Post-Programme

1) What changes have you experienced since becoming a teacher?

Prompts:

- *general direction for education in recent years*
- *specific changes in this school this year (lead to next covid Q)*
- *any changes related to Covid-19*

2) How do you feel you have developed as a teacher?

Prompts:

- *How has Covid-19 affected your teaching and your values?*

3) Please tell me about your experience of the coaching programme that you have participated in this year (i.e., the one with the use of video as a stimulus-recall).

- *What made it effective/what did not work as expected?*
- *What was the most important learning from the programme? Is the learning sustainable?*
- *How would you define the relationship between you and your coaching partner?*
- *How did you find the use of technology impacted your coaching experience.*

4) Is there anything else you would like to say?

Appendix 6 – Table of Participant Information

Identifying pseudonym	Gender and approximate age (years)	Role	Teaching experience (years)
William	M, 30s	Middle leader, Teacher	14
Jane	F, 30s	Teacher	6
›Tony	M, 30s	Middle leader, Teacher	5
Sasha	F, 40s	Teacher	4
Rachel	F, 40s	Teacher	3
Adam	F, 40s	Senior leader, teacher	13
John	M, 30s	Teacher	8
Alice	F, 20s	Teacher	1
Ben	M, 30s	Teacher	2
Emily	F, 40s	Middle leader, Teacher	10

Appendix 7 – Participant Pen Portraits

William – Middle Leader and Teacher (M, 30s, 14 years' experience)

William is a highly experienced teacher and middle leader with a strong presence in his school. With 14 years in the profession, he has witnessed numerous educational changes and has adapted his teaching methods accordingly. His leadership role includes responsibilities for mentoring newly qualified teachers and contributing to curriculum development. William values structure and evidence-based teaching practices and was keen to explore how coaching could refine his leadership and pedagogical approaches.

Jane – Teacher (F, 30s, 6 years' experience)

Jane is a passionate and dedicated teacher with six years of experience. She is at a stage in her career where she has gained confidence in her subject expertise but is still eager to develop her classroom management and instructional strategies. She values collaboration and professional learning opportunities and saw the coaching programme to reflect on her teaching practice. Jane is enthusiastic about student-centred learning and is always looking for innovative ways to engage her students.

Tony – Middle Leader and Teacher (M, 30s, 5 years' experience)

Tony is an emerging leader in the school, balancing his teaching responsibilities with his role as a middle leader. With five years of experience, he is still developing his leadership identity and refining his teaching style. Tony has a strong interest in fostering positive relationships with both

students and colleagues. His leadership responsibilities include supporting staff development, which made him particularly interested in how coaching could enhance peer-to-peer learning and improve overall teaching quality in his department.

Sasha – Teacher (F, 40s, 4 years' experience)

Sasha transitioned into teaching later in her career, bringing valuable life experience and a fresh perspective to the profession. Despite having only four years of teaching experience, she has a strong understanding of her subject and is committed to continuous professional development. She initially approached coaching with curiosity, eager to understand how structured reflection could enhance her teaching methods.

Rebecca – Teacher (F, 40s, 3 years' experience)

Rebecca is a teacher who entered the profession later in life, having spent time in a different field before moving into education. With three years of experience, she is still developing her confidence in classroom management and pedagogical approaches. Rebecca is particularly interested in student engagement and finding ways to make learning more accessible for all students. She approached the coaching programme as an opportunity to receive constructive feedback and develop a more reflective teaching practice.

Adam – Senior Leader and Teacher (M, 40s, 13 years' experience)

Adam is an established senior leader with extensive teaching experience. Over 13 years, he has taken on significant leadership responsibilities, including mentoring early-career teachers and influencing school-wide policies. Adam has a strong interest in educational leadership and is constantly seeking ways to support staff development. His participation in the coaching programme was motivated by a desire to explore how reflective practice could be embedded into professional learning cultures within the school.

John – Teacher (M, 30s, 8 years' experience)

John is a dedicated and knowledgeable teacher with eight years of classroom experience. He has developed a strong teaching identity and is confident in his subject knowledge but is always looking for ways to refine his instructional techniques. John values evidence-based teaching practices and is particularly interested in data-driven approaches to student progress. He saw coaching to gain fresh insights into his practice and engage in meaningful discussions with colleagues.

Alice – Teacher (F, 20s, 1 year experience)

Alice is an early-career teacher in her first year of teaching. Enthusiastic and eager to learn, she is still adjusting to the demands of the profession. She is open to guidance and values feedback that helps her develop her confidence and classroom presence. Alice was particularly interested in the coaching programme to accelerate her professional growth, refine her lesson planning, and improve her ability to manage diverse student needs.

Ben – Teacher (M, 30s, 2 years' experience)

Ben is a relatively new teacher with two years of experience. Having recently completed his teacher training, he is still navigating the challenges of classroom management and curriculum delivery. He is keen to develop his teaching strategies and sees coaching to gain structured support from more experienced colleagues. Ben is particularly interested in the role of student feedback in shaping effective teaching and is open to experimenting with different approaches to improve student engagement.

Emily – Middle Leader and Teacher (F, 40s, 10 years' experience)

Emily is a seasoned teacher and middle leader with a decade of experience. She plays a key role in supporting both students and fellow staff members, balancing her leadership responsibilities with her teaching duties. Emily has a reflective approach to teaching and values professional dialogue as a means of improvement. She was particularly interested in how coaching could enhance leadership development and foster a stronger culture of collaboration among staff.

Appendix 8 – Coaching Dyad Dynamics

Dyad 1: Jane and Tony

Jane and Tony are both at formative stages in their leadership journeys but have distinct teaching experiences and priorities. Jane, with six years in the profession, has grown confident in her subject knowledge but is still refining her classroom management and instructional strategies. She values collaboration and professional learning, making her an eager participant in the coaching program.

Tony, a middle leader with five years of experience, is still developing his leadership identity while balancing teaching responsibilities. His focus is on fostering positive relationships and supporting staff development. This pairing offers an interesting dynamic where Jane's enthusiasm for student-centred learning meets Tony's interest in peer-to-peer support and leadership growth.

Dyad 2: Rebecca and Alice

Alice, as a first-year teacher, is at the very beginning of her professional journey. She is still adjusting to the demands of classroom teaching, seeking to build her confidence, and eager to receive guidance on lesson planning, student engagement, and classroom management. This places her in a strong learning position within the coaching relationship. Rebecca is a more experienced teacher. This dynamic sets up a mentor-mentee relationship, where Rebecca can offer structured support and practical advice, helping Alice navigate the steep learning curve of early teaching. At the same time, Alice's fresh perspective on education may encourage Rebecca to reflect on her own practices, fostering a reciprocal exchange of ideas.

Dyad 3: John and Adam

This dyad pairs two experienced educators who bring different strengths to the coaching relationship. John, with eight years of teaching experience, has a strong teaching identity and is confident in his subject knowledge. However, he remains focused on refining his instructional techniques, particularly through evidence-based and data-driven teaching practices.

Adam, a senior leader with 13 years of experience, has extensive leadership responsibilities, including mentoring early-career teachers and shaping school policies. Their coaching relationship is built on shared experience but with differing professional priorities, which may lead to insightful discussions about the intersection of teaching and leadership.

Dyad 4: Sasha and Emily

Sasha and Emily are both in mid-to-late career stages but bring different professional experiences to the dyad. Sasha transitioned into teaching later in life and, despite having only four years in the profession, possesses valuable life experience that shapes her teaching approach. She is deeply committed to professional development and eager to explore how structured reflection can enhance her teaching methods.

Emily, a middle leader with a decade of experience, has an established presence in both teaching and leadership. She plays a key role in supporting fellow staff members and values professional dialogue as a means of growth.

Dyad 5: William and Ben

William and Ben represent a classic pairing of an experienced mentor and an early-career teacher. William, with 14 years of experience and a middle leadership role, has seen numerous changes in education and has adapted his teaching accordingly. He values structure and evidence-based teaching practices, which makes him a strong guiding presence for a newer teacher. His leadership responsibilities include mentoring newly qualified teachers.

Ben, with just two years of experience, is still finding his footing in the classroom. He is keen to develop his teaching strategies and is particularly interested in using student feedback to improve instruction.

Appendix 9 – NVivo Codes and Themes

Category	Codes used	Themes identified
Preliminary Interviews	Experience of CPD	Participants' previous experiences with CPD programs
	Coaching	Previous perception of coaching in CPD
	Gold Standard	Ideal characteristics of effective CPD from the participant perception
	Impact of CPD	Participant prior perception of effects of CPD on professional practice
	Negative CPD	Participant prior perception of aspects of CPD that were ineffective or problematic
	Positive CPD	Participant prior perception of elements of CPD that were beneficial
	Perception of education	Participants' perceptions of CPD in education
	Perception of sustainability	Perceptions of CPD's long-term sustainability
	Sustainability of CPD	Participant prior perception of key elements that contributed to CPD's lasting impact
Coaching Conversations	Negative coaching element	Participant perception of issues with coaching conversations
	Positive coaching element	Participant perception of benefits of coaching conversations
	Coaching	A neutral element where coaching was still evident
	Language	Specific language choices used by the participants during their coaching conversation
	Interesting language	Notable or impactful language used within coaching conversations
	Relationship	Elements of coaching conversations that highlighted specific dynamics of coaching relationships
	Interesting relationship	A point of interest/unique aspects of the coaching relationship
	Negative relationship element	A unique aspect of the coaching relationship that participant perceived as negative
	Positive relationship element	A unique aspect of the coaching relationship that participant perceived as negative
	Turn taking	When turn-taking affected coaching conversations or when a participant verbalised how the turn-taking element of the conversation was evident
	Interesting negative	A noteworthy negative coaching interaction
	Sustainability	A point where sustainability was discussed or mentioned

	Authentic self	An expression of authenticity in professional practice
Review Interviews	Challenge	Participant perception of a challenge faced within their coaching
	Covid	Elements where Covid-19 pandemic had impacted coaching or teaching.
	Facilitating	Strategies used to support learning in CPD were mentioned
	Meaningful feedback	Discussions around how feedback was given and received
	Reflective	Discussion highlighted reflective practice within coaching
	Informal or less pressure	Participants discussed the role of informal learning or reduced pressure during teaching/coaching
	Korthagen's Onion Model	Discussion of Korthagen's reflective model or evidence of its use
	Openness and honesty	Participant comments on the presence of trust and transparency within their coaching
	Relationship	Participant discusses their relationships within coaching. Both positive and negative perceived aspects.
	Mutual understanding and learning	Participant mentions reciprocal learning within their coaching
	Non-judgmental relationship	Participant mentions how non-judgmental interactions shaped coaching
	Reciprocal nature of relationship	Participant mentions the mutual benefit and exchange within their coaching relationships
	Sustainability	Participant discussed the long-term impact and continuation of CPD or coaching practices