PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EARLY CAREER TEACHERS REGARDING QUESTIONS USED TO PROMPT REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

By

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Abstract

Traditional professional development (PD) for teachers has often been offered in a *sit-and-get* format (Toll, 2018). Unfortunately, this model has removed educators from their classrooms while providing teachers with short, non-contextualized information delivered through a workshop or class (Russo, 2004). To respond to this issue, the coaching model for PD has become a frequently adopted method in today’s modern classrooms (York-Barr, 2006). In fact, this form of job-embedded PD has often been used to help activate reflective practice among teachers through guiding (reflective) open-ended questions posed by the coach to the coachee. It is still unclear how this coaching model and its reflective questions are perceived by key stakeholders in educational settings. School administrators often assume the role of coach in elementary and secondary school settings (Toll, 2018), especially when coaching early career teachers (ECTs). In this multiple case study, the researcher explored the integration of guiding questions used by school administrators in their coaching strategies while focusing on the perceptions of Ontario’s school administrators and ECTs regarding the use of reflective questions in principal-to-teacher coaching methods. The researcher explored what school administrators and ECTs identify as the benefits to the coaching model of PD, as well as the barriers associated with this coaching model. For this study, a school administrator and ECTs in two schools were interviewed to better understand their perceptions of the model in a comprehensive manner. Data from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using an inductive coding approach, which revealed common themes. These themes then converged, leading to a clear view of the perspectives of ECTs and school administrators with regards to the coaching model for PD, specifically while using reflective questioning. This research is
important to the world of education, as it provides insight into the reflective coaching model for PD that has been adopted by some school administrators in Canada.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Personal Statement

Over the course of my career, I have held many positions in both teaching and leadership, which all have contributed to my desire for pursuing graduate research in the field of education. I was born and raised in Southern Ontario and had the privilege to learn and grow alongside many phenomenal teachers and principals who were the bearers of the French language and culture in a linguistic minority context. I truly idolized these leaders, and they inspired me to pursue a fulfilling career that I certainly do not regret today.

After graduating with my Bachelor of Education from the University of Ottawa, I returned to the Windsor area and began my career teaching at the primary, junior, and intermediate levels in the Francophone public school system. Prior to obtaining my first teaching contract, I held positions as an Educational Assistant, Early Childhood Educator, and Adult Education Instructor. I was also a Teaching Assistant in the University of Windsor’s French Department of Literature and Linguistics. From all of these rich experiences, I was able to not only refine my teaching skills, but to also develop important leadership qualities while climbing the ladder within the public education system.

Having occupied many different roles within a school, I recognize the challenges that educators face, and I am able to empathize and understand the needs of both students and staff. This comprehension of systemic challenges and a yearning for change influenced my desire to pursue the principalship. I wanted to share my experiences with others and contribute to coaching my colleagues with evidence-based practices that would help staff and, ultimately, influence high quality education for students. After obtaining my PQP (Principal Qualification
Program) courses in the summer of 2018, I was appointed Vice-Principal of an elementary French public school in Kingston, Ontario. My dream of being a school leader who could have a significant impact on a larger scale had become a reality.

Within the first few months in my position as a Vice-Principal, I was introduced to educational coaching and reflective questioning, as described by Van Seggelen-Damen and Romme (2014) as well as Toll (2018). I preferred the term “coach,” as it was less intimidating and focused on helping teachers grow and flourish while striving for continuous improvement. Toll’s proposed coaching strategies focused on the use of guiding questions for facilitating strategic discussions that occurred between principals and teachers. I found this idea to be extremely innovative as a practical strategy to support the development of positive and trusting relationships between myself and staff members. In my professional experience, I had observed principals who chose to use guiding or "reflective" questions in their coaching strategies to help nurture professional growth and reflective practice while working with their staff. Reflective questioning, a process in which the questions posed by the coach (principal) aid in bringing to light unseen areas of improvement to the coachee (teacher; Van Seggelen-Damen & Romme, 2014), is a fundamental element in facilitating reflective practice (Gavelek & Raphael, 1985; Nesbit, 2012; Wetzstein & Hacker, 2004). As many educators know, reflective practice is important for improving one’s teaching skills and ensuring student success (Schön, 1987). We must constantly question ourselves in order to improve practice and help students attain their full potential. Reflective questioning through coaching practices truly planted the seed and created an “a-ha” moment, which has driven my interest in educational coaching ever since.

Shortly after the start of my appointment as a school administrator, I was given the responsibility of managing Ontario’s Renewed Math Strategy project within my school, and this
is where I practiced the vast majority of my guiding questioning. I immediately started implementing reflective coaching within my school, and it rapidly bore fruit. My goal in coaching teachers was to help improve our teaching strategies in mathematics. I formulated questions that focused on collaborative learning inspired by the work of Liljedahl (2015). I wanted my teachers to realize that it was important to facilitate highly engaging, non-curricular, collaborative tasks that drive students to want to talk with each other as they try to solve problems. I asked the teachers how they could attain this type of learning environment and what sort of tools they would need to facilitate this type of learning. I inquired about the possibility of giving tasks orally rather than by the traditional paper-pencil approach or problems written out on the board. I would say, “Do you believe this approach would help your students? Have you tried changing the classroom environment to allow your students to work in other ways?” Teachers reflected and responded creatively: “Should we remove the compartmentalization of the classroom to change the traditional environment that has not been conducive for teaching mathematics? Can our students stand instead of sit? What about using the hallways to work instead of desks? Maybe we can create a living classroom throughout the entire school!” These responses influenced my implementation of Liljedahl’s (2015) Thinking Classroom Model throughout our school, for grades K-6. We also complemented this large-scale project with a lead teacher in numeracy, as well as successful reflective and collaborative strategies such as “Number Talk” (to name a few).

The coaching experience has been transformative and has allowed for both teachers and administrators within my school community to learn and grow professionally, all while having positive outcomes that produce tangible results. Educational coaching has emerged as an alternative to more traditional PD, as it permits teachers to engage in reflective practice while
realizing their needs, learning gaps, and strategies to attain their goals. When educators believe in the reasons behind why they are engaging in PD or adopting new strategies, they are far more likely to succeed in applying new educational initiatives. Obtaining the buy-in of the educator is one of the reasons why educational coaching through guiding questions may be helpful in facilitating student success. When I meet with teachers during one-on-one coaching sessions, I have the opportunity to engage in rich dialogue regarding their practice, all while guiding them through the process of identifying where they may need additional support. Once the teachers’ needs are identified, I am able to provide staff with PD opportunities, whether this be through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), in-person or online workshops, conferences, or other forms of PD.

In June 2019, my school was awarded the Education Quality and Accountability Office’s Dr. Bette Stephenson Recognition of Achievement for innovation and performance in mathematics. As a principal and policy scholar, I attribute a large part of this success to coaching strategies that integrate the use of guiding questions and acknowledge its efficacy. I believe reflective coaching is the future of principalship and that more research must be contributed to the field to further explore this innovative approach in pedagogical leadership.

Since August 2020, I have had the great pleasure of being appointed as principal, a role that I currently fulfill with endless passion and great fervour.

**Research Focus**

The role of the school principal is multifaceted and complex. Today’s Ontario principals have an array of responsibilities, including but not limited to the following: managing budgets, supervising teaching and administrative staff, discipline, and school improvement. One responsibility that is often not mentioned is the facilitation and organization of PD for teachers,
an important duty that many school principals must assume to ensure student and teacher success.

Traditional PD has often been delivered in a “sit-and-get” format, where educators receive information and then apply the knowledge in their classrooms (Toll, 2018). In today’s modern schools, PD is often job embedded and can take many forms including PLCs, mentorship, and educational coaching (York-Barr, 2006). These aforementioned methods are often preferred by practitioners and tend to be effective, as they avoid removing teachers from the classroom while accounting for the quotidian realities of the teaching profession (Russo, 2004).

In the context of educational coaching, the use of guiding questions by school principals in fostering professional growth is a concept worth exploring for educational leaders. Certain principals choose to use these guiding or “reflective” questions in their coaching strategies to help nurture professional growth and reflective practice. Reflective questioning, a process in which the questions posed by the coach (principal) aid in bringing to light unseen areas of improvement to the coachee (teacher; Gavelek & Raphael, 1985; Nesbit, 2012; Wetzstein & Hacker, 2004), is a fundamental element in facilitating reflective practice. Similarly, the efficacy of teacher achievement may be influenced by increased contact with an effective coach who can help facilitate reflective practice (Ross, 1992; Schön, 1987). Giovannelli (2003) found that correlations exist between teachers’ self-reflection and student success. Thus, a part of the principal’s role is to help influence a culture of self-reflection as well as the relationships created between those that work within a school community. The focus of the current study was on exploring the reflective questioning strategies used by school administrators when providing
feedback to help develop and nurture professional growth amongst early career teachers (ECTs) while specifically exploring coaching relationships and reflective practice and guiding questions.

**Rationale: The Research Problem**

Barth (2006) stated that “The nature of the relationships among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else” (p. 8). In the context of educational coaching, principals must establish a relationship of trust between themselves and teachers to ensure that there is open communication based on confidence and trust. If this cannot be created beforehand, the coaching will be rendered ineffective. Schön (1987) further explored communication in the dialogue between coaches and students, stating that some students may never understand what the coach is trying to convey and that some coaches may never permeate the lines of communication with their students. Schön (1987), however, also indicated that “Many succeed, nevertheless, in crossing over an apparently unbridgeable communication gap to a seeming convergence of meaning” (pp. 100-101). A possible framework for the challenge of discovering how this bridge can be made possible between teachers and principals could be to integrate coaching strategies used by school administrators, which is referred to as “reflection-on-action” (Schön, 1987, p. 101). This refers to when learners reflect on how their professional practice can be altered after the learning experience has already happened. Principals may use this form of reflective coaching through guiding questioning to help provide high quality feedback to teachers and even support staff or paraprofessionals. Ralph (2000) further expounded upon Schön’s work by applying reflection-in-action while mentoring supervisees. Ralph used a contextual supervision model (CS) to teach, intervene, and elaborate on the use of the model in supervisory relationships. Neck et al. (2017) explored the importance of relationships in a different manner while primarily focusing on the
leader’s own motivation and influence, following the principle that one must learn to lead oneself in order to effectively lead others. Sergiovanni (2004) also helped define these relationships from the perspective of organizational competence: the idea that the sum of teachers’ knowledge within a school leads to better learning for students. Sergiovanni used the prescriptive term “reciprocal roles” to define the shared responsibilities of each individual within the school setting. Within the framework of educational coaching used by school administrators, reciprocal roles oblige teachers and administrators to constantly seek improvement in their professional practice, all while creating institutionalized collaborative cultures within the organization (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

As previously defined by Gavelek and Raphael (1985), reflective or guiding questions permit the learner to question his or her practice by identifying areas of improvement through a critical lens. In regards to guiding or reflective questions in principal-to-teacher coaching, it is still unclear when and in what context this method should be practiced (Carson & Fisher, 2006; Cunliffe, 2004). Reflective questioning may help foster higher order thinking skills, as the terms “critical thinking” and “reflective practice” have been used interchangeably by many researchers, some of whom have even called it “critical reflection” (Van Seggelen-Damen & Romme, 2014). It is also clear that critical reflection may be beneficial because it helps to create meaning and sense regarding teaching experiences, especially in a collective setting between teachers and principals (Elliott & Reynolds, 2012; Keevers & Treleaven, 2011; Vince, 2002). Van Seggelen-Damen and Romme (2014) researched reflective questioning within an educational management setting and concluded that “reflective questioning apparently differs from other types of questioning as it is triggered by events, experiences, or interactions with other people provoking non-rhetorical questions” (p. 9). This signifies that school principals should focus on formulating
guiding questions based on the experiences and interactions that have ensued with the newly inducted teachers who are being coached.

The effects of guiding questioning in coaching strategies used by Ontario public school principals are still unclear and relatively unexplored in current academic literature. Some proponents of educational coaching through reflective questioning and constructive feedback have suggested that “the only attribute that clearly demonstrates efficacy as a characteristic of effective feedback is immediacy” (Scheeler et al., 2004, p. 404). Thus, there was a need to further investigate the use of guiding questions in coaching models favoured by school administrators who provide feedback to their teaching staff.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to explore the integration of guiding (reflective) questions used by school administrators in their coaching strategies with early career teachers. The researcher sought to describe the perspectives and experiences of ECTs who have been coached using the reflective questioning model while concurrently exploring the perspectives and experiences of school administrators (i.e., principals and vice-principals) who have adopted this coaching model in their professional practice while supervising, evaluating, and monitoring teachers. In the context of Ontario’s education system, little research has been conducted to demonstrate how guiding questions used by principals affect professional growth amongst new teachers. I hoped that this research may shed a light on the multiple facets of reflective questioning in the roles of both school administrators and teachers.

**Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following central research question:
**RQ:** What are the perceptions of Ontario’s school administrators and ECTs regarding the use of reflective questions in principal-to-teacher coaching methods?

To address this research question, the following four sub-questions were developed:

**SQ1:** What do school administrators and ECTs identify as the benefits to the coaching model of PD?

**SQ2:** What do school administrators and ECTs identify as the barriers to the coaching model of PD?

**SQ3:** Based on their own experiences as coaches who use guiding questions to promote self-reflection, what recommendations and strategies do principals offer to peers new to the model of reflective questioning?

**SQ4:** How do ECTs believe that the coaching experience has contributed to their teaching practice and overall feelings of competence and confidence?

**Dictionary of Terms**

This following is a list of significant terminology that was used throughout the course of this thesis:

*Coaching.* Coaching is a process focused on improving one’s performance in an immediate time frame. This strategy focuses on present time and does not necessarily evaluate past or future contexts for improvement.

*Coach.* A coach is an individual charged with the responsibility of coaching. In a workplace environment, this person can be a superior, colleague, or even subordinate, depending on the context.
Coachee. A coachee is an individual who receives feedback and training from a coach in order to improve his/her/their professional practice. In a workplace environment, this person can be a subordinate, colleague, or even superior, depending on the context.

Community of Practice (CoP). Community of practice refers to individuals who have a profession as a point of commonality. Lave and Wenger (1991) first coined the term to describe learning through practice and participation, known as “situated learning.” A CoP is defined by “characteristic ways of belonging to a community whereas peripherality and participation are concerned with location and identity in the social world” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29).

Contextual Supervision Model (CS). According to Ralph (2000), the CS model is a “developmental leadership model that is used by supervisors (i.e., experienced practitioners in either permanent or temporary mentoring roles) to promote the PD (i.e., the acquisition or the improvement of job-related skills, tasks, and/or knowledge) of supervisees (e.g., protégés in this relationship whose goal is to learn and/or improve these professional skills or tasks)” (p. 30).

Early career teacher. An early career teacher is a teacher who is in his or her first 5 years of teaching, as described by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2019).

Guided/guiding questions. Guiding questions were inspired by Bloom’s taxonomy for higher order thinking. These open-ended questions posed by the coach permit professionals to move to higher levels of thinking and reflection, all while bringing their attention to important details within their practice. These questions are reflective in themselves and are less prescriptive in nature. This term is interchangeable with reflective questions.

Newly inducted teacher. According to the Ontario Ministry of Education (2019), newly inducted teachers are defined as follows:
Teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers hired into a permanent position – full-time or part-time – by a school board to begin teaching for the first time in Ontario’s publicly funded school system. Second year permanent hires who do not successfully complete NTIP in their first year. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 6)

**Principal.** According to the Ontario Education Act, the principal is a teacher who holds principal’s qualifications. The principal of a school is in charge of the instruction and the discipline of students, as well as the organization and management of the school (Flynn, 1998).

**Professional development.** Professional development refers to the process of developing competencies of teachers and administrators through access to education, training, and learning experiences in a professional setting (e.g., the workplace).

**Professional growth.** According to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education (2018), professional growth refers to a shift in knowledge, skills, abilities, or perspectives resulting from continuous professional learning which help to enhance teachers’ professional competencies and praxis (p. 82).

**Reflective practice.** Reflective practice refers to the ability for one to reflect on their own actions in order to create a cycle of continuous improvement, learning, and reflection.

**Reflective questions.** Reflective questions are questions that allow one to think about their thinking and overall professional practice. These questions allow professionals to better understand how they are working or learning, which permits them to make intrinsic changes or improvements within their praxis (theory to practice).

**School administrators.** A school administrator is a person who holds a supervisory role within a public school setting (see “principal” or “vice-principal”).
Staff: Staff refers to individuals who hold a teaching or educational support role within a public school setting.

Supervisory Officer. Also known as “Superintendents”, Supervisory Officers are employed by Ontario publicly funded school boards. They are responsible for carrying out Ministry of Education policies in Ontario and are members of the Ontario College of Teachers. They also supervise school administrators such as principals and vice-principals.

Vice-Principal. According to the Ontario Education Act, the vice-principal is a teacher who holds principal’s qualifications. The vice-principal performs duties relating to the instruction and the discipline of students, as well as the organization and management of the school, as assigned by the principal (Flynn, 1998).

Assumptions

The philosophical assumptions of this study are firstly ontological. Multiple perspectives of both teachers and principals were explored and interpreted through the lens of Lave and Wenger’s (1991) theory of situated learning, specifically the concept of the CoP. Epistemologically, the participants answered questions honestly so that the researcher was able to rely on quotes as evidence from the participant. One can assume, however, that these answers were subjective according to the participants’ experiences and knowledge on the subject. The fact that the researcher is also a principal within the same school board denotes an axiological implication for practice, as it was important to consider and address personal biases related to educational coaching from an administrator’s perspective. From a methodological standpoint, it was beneficial to utilize inductive logic while assuming that all participants are familiar with and have experienced the model of educational coaching through guiding questioning. Regarding generalizations, Guba and Lincoln (1989) explored whether or not it is fair to generalize in the
social sciences, stating case studies are ever changing hypotheses that are constantly being reworked and refined. This said, it would not be possible to generalize within the context of this study, as experiences are unique. When analyzing the data, knowledge of the topic became more detailed and apparent.

**Overview of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One contains the personal statement, research focus, rationale, purpose, definitions of terms, and assumptions and limitations of the study. Chapter Two includes a review of the literature on the key concepts pertinent to this research. In Chapter Three, the researcher details the methodology and the data collection and analysis procedures. The researcher presents the findings of the study in Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five includes a conclusion and recommendations for future study.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the literature related to the integration of guiding questions used by school principals in their strategies for coaching ECTs. To accomplish this aim, the researcher provides an overview of pertinent literature relating to educational coaching amongst ECTs. Included are the definitions and contexts of educational coaching, the ways in which school administrators engage in coaching with ECTs, the descriptions and factors related to supports available from administrators to new teachers, and the approaches used by administrators to facilitate reflective practice amongst teaching personnel. The researcher also explores the reflective questioning strategies used by school administrators to help develop and nurture the professional growth of ECTs.

What is Coaching?

Coaching is most often associated with sports. Côté and Gilbert (2009) proposed the following definition of coaching: “The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes’ competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts” (p. 316).

Law (2013) defined coaching by first exploring the initial meaning of the word “coach”: a horse-drawn carriage used to transport a people from one point to another. According to Law, “The role of a ‘coach’ is to act as a vehicle that carries (transports) the coachees from where they are (here and now) to where they aspire to be (in the future)” (p. 56). Thus, a coach is someone who can help guide a person towards an objective. Law (2002) asserted that coaching activities have four fundamental characteristics: (a) to help unlock a person’s potential to improve performance, (b) to help to facilitate learning, (c) to help address immediate performance
improvement and the acquisition of certain skills through PD comprised of tutoring and instruction, and (d) to help enhance performance in work and personal life using coaching models that are constructed upon certain psychological approaches.

Parsloe (1995) described coaching as being performance-centered, relatively short term, and gaged towards the development of a skill, project, or performance issue. The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) expounded upon Parsloe’s definition by viewing coaching as an activity

Within the area of professional and personal development with focus on individuals and teams and relying on the clients’ own resource to help them to see and test alternative ways for improvement of competence, decision making and enhancement of quality of life. (EMCC, 2011, p. 3)

According to the EMMC, the coach is an expert in building relationships with others through series of conversations that purposefully contribute to a client’s personal and professional development while helping him or her achieve goals by providing strategies, PD, or advice.

**What Qualities Define Educational Coaching?**

There are many definitions of coaching in educational settings; however, scholars have agreed to the same broad conclusions pertaining to what elements should be found in various coaching models. Although there is no decisive definition of coaching (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002), many scholars have attempted to describe the characteristics and roles of the educational coach. Toll (2005) defined an educational coach as someone who helps teachers identify strengths while building upon these strengths to develop new areas of improvement. Three key qualities should be demonstrated in an efficient coaching relationship: connectivity, acceptance, and trustworthiness (Toll, 2018). The coach should demonstrate a certain level of connectivity
which aims to create a healthy working relationship with the teacher being coached. The coach should also maintain openness and acceptance while welcoming what the teacher has to say without subjective judgment. Last, the coach must prove to be trustworthy and confidential. In the context of principal-to-teacher coaching, these qualities hold utmost importance, as the coach also holds a supervisory role that may affect the coaching relationship. Thus, it is important for school administrators to make clear distinctions between their supervision and coaching roles without blurring lines of evaluation, supervision, and coaching.

It is important to note that coaches do not aim to fix problems within the teachers’ professional practice, but rather “enhance teachers’ capacity” (Toll, 2018, p. 7), as well as their overall success in the profession. Toll (2018) further elucidated on this definition by stating that coaching focuses on the multiple facets of teaching: students, curriculum, and pedagogy. Instead of focusing on one element of the profession, an effective coach considers all aspects relating to the work of a teacher in order to provide a holistic form of interdisciplinary coaching.

In a school setting, administrators who assume coaching roles must integrate professional knowledge or know where to seek this information, interpersonal knowledge (i.e., knowing how to positively interact with teachers and colleagues in order to motivate them to perform and present their best selves), as well as intrapersonal knowledge (i.e., the principal’s own set of competencies). Through effective coaching, the principal can encourage the organization and integration of experiences and content, so that the teacher may apply this new knowledge into the classroom setting.

**Traditional PD and Educational Coaching**

More traditional PD activities have removed teachers from the classroom setting, leading to frustration and decreasing overall learning for students (Russo, 2004). In modern school
settings, PD is often offered using educational coaching models that are tailored to the teachers’ classroom and professional contexts. These coaching models are comprised of “experts in a particular subject area or set of teaching strategies working closely with small groups of teachers to improve classroom practice and ultimately, student achievement” (Russo, 2004, p. 1). According to Russo (2004), sustained coaching models involve teacher coaches or administrators who help co-plan lessons, offer demonstrations within the classroom setting, and follow-up throughout the year using descriptive feedback. This differs tremendously from regular PD, as teachers are shown the skills rather than being told how to effectively apply said strategies. In this example, school administrators can use their expertise and experience in offering PD through coaching.

As aforementioned, a coach provides PD to teachers, whether individualized or among a group of teachers (Toll, 2018). Toll built upon this definition by specifying that educational coaching is a partnership: “It’s a collaboration between equals. The coach may steer the process, but the teacher has the final say in what is discussed and what actions are taken as a result” (p. 6). This partnership between a coach and a teacher exists in a job-embedded context with a focus on the needs of the teacher in the hopes that the teacher will learn from this form of PD (Toll, 2018). Hence, when coaching is effective, teachers will learn from the coaching experience.

When comparing educational coaching to alternative forms of PD, clear contrasts can be identified which render this type of training far more engaging than traditional PD. School boards are now moving away from the magisterial approaches to PD, such as sit-and-get, where teachers receive information during meetings or workshops without opportunities for follow-up from the person providing the training (Toll, 2018). In today’s schools, teachers and school administrators are focusing more on collaborative learning models, such as PLCs.
Toll, “Coaches, with their skill in facilitating teacher reflection and problem solving, are ideal facilitators of learning done by teams” (p. 8). Team learning, often referred to as a PLC, gives way to open discourse and reflection between the coach and teacher(s). These teams have learning objectives that are determined either by school leaders or by the PLC participants (Toll, 2018). When a PLC focuses on a specific learning component, it is possible for the role of a coach to become an integral part of team learning (Toll, 2018). Coaching sessions can occur in small study groups and may be content-specific, tailoring to the needs and interests of teachers.

**Coaching and Mentoring: What Is the Difference?**

Toll (2018) mentioned an important caveat when discussing coaching versus mentoring. Coaching focuses on building strengths, identifying weaknesses, and catering to the interests of the teacher being coached. A mentor may use coaching strategies in his or her professional toolbox; however, the mentor will also tend to other needs pertaining to the profession (Toll, 2018). According to Rhodes (2002), mentorship occurs within a professional relationship between an often younger person and an older, experienced individual. The mentor aims to encourage and guide the younger professional. In a school context, the mentee may not necessarily be a younger person, but simply someone who is new to the profession. Similarly, it is possible that the mentor may, in some circumstances, be younger than the mentee, but possess rich experience in the workplace. Flaxman and Ascher (1992) emphasized that a mentor may assist primarily in transitional periods, particularly in the context of ECT induction. For example, a mentor may help new teachers adjust to the profession, tackling important issues related to human resources, school board policies, pedagogy, and other administrative affairs (Toll, 2018). In short, the educational coach provides more specific, job-related PD and support, whereas the mentor aims to provide overall transitional assistance related to the profession.
Tschannen-Moran (2010) alluded to coaching as a tool that can be used by school administrators, department chairs, peer coaches, and, of course, mentors. Coaching is an evocative practice used to summon a person into action. More specifically, coaching has the purpose of motivating people by using conversations and ways of being with the purpose of achieving specific goals and outcomes (Tschannen-Moran, 2010). Thus, coaching can be viewed as tool within a mentorship that can further the mentor-mentee relationship. In contrast, mentorship is not a tool used to facilitate coaching.

**School Administrators’ Engagement in Coaching**

Educational coaches may rely on fundamentals of reflective practice to guide and provide PD to ECTs. According to Schön (1983), reflection is an import aspect for expressing and demonstrating learning. Schön categorized two types of reflective practice related to experience: reflection-on- and reflection-in-action. According to Schön, “When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependant on the categories of established theory and technique but constructs a new theory of the unique case” (p. 68). Reflection-in action occurs during the learning experience when it is still possible to alter the end result of the situation. When a teacher is reflecting-in-action, they must consider the situation, decide how they will address the situation, and then act immediately (Schön, 1983). In contrast, reflection-on-action ensues when learners reflect on how their professional practice can be altered after the learning experience has already happened (Schön, 1987). Reflection-on-action can help prepare teachers to face new challenges, as this reflective practice modifies the way in which they address future situations. Hence, it is possible for coaches to transform these experiences into the learning of new knowledge by guiding teachers while they engage in self-reflection.
Creating Dialogue: Reflection-On and Reflection-in-Action

Throughout the progression of the school year, school administrator coaches can promote reflection by conducting reflective conversations that focus on teachers’ original or revised goals as well as classroom observations. Schön (1987) explored this communication in the dialogue between coaches and students, stating that some students may never understand what the coach is trying to convey, and that some coaches may never permeate the lines of communication with their students. Schön, however, also indicated that “Many succeed, nevertheless, in crossing over an apparently unbridgeable communication gap to a seeming convergence of meaning” (pp. 100-101). Thus, coaches who are capable of aiding teachers in activating their “reflection-on-action” can bridge important learning gaps, making it possible for teachers to become receptive and grow professionally. School administrators engage in coaching through dialogue that initiates reflection-on-action. Barge (2002) stated that dialogue “focuses on seeing things holistically and creating the space for learning” (p. 168). It is important to maintain an open and clear dialogue between the coach and teacher to ensure a collaborative process that addresses predispositions, assumptions, and general learning (Barge, 2002). According to Terrion and Philion (2008), “Verbalization or dialogue may be conducted in a face-to-face manner, it also could be performed as a written conversation between coach and student” (p. 585). They further elucidated on communication by stating that “both verbalization and dialogue can be conducted internally with oneself” and that “this form of communication is an integral part of learning and personal growth” (Terrion & Philion, 2008, p. 585). Therefore, when considering Schön’s approach of reflection-on-action, a coach who communicates effectively can help a teacher engage in reflective practice through either face-to-face or written conversations.
While Lave and Wenger (1991) focused on the situated position of the learning experience, Schön approached the teacher’s acquirement of knowledge in a different manner without considering the environment in which the teacher learns (Usher et al., 1997). It is essential not to confuse the CoP with reflection-on- and reflection-in-action, as unique characteristics are attributed to each theory. Lave and Wenger (1991) focused somewhat on learning by doing while addressing the social context in which the participant has learned (Tennant, 1997). Usher et al. (1997) argued that their approach differs from Schön’s, as the importance of the context or “situatedness” becomes an essential element that Schön did not consider in his theory. Both frameworks can be used in conjunction with one another, with each addressing different issues related to the practitioner’s learning experience.

**Engaging through Contextual Supervision**

Ralph (2000) further built upon Schön’s work by applying reflection-in-action while mentoring teachers that he supervised. Ralph used a contextual supervision model (CS) to teach, intervene, and elaborate on the use of the model in supervisory relationships. According to Ralph, “CS is a developmental mentorship model […] in which the mentor or supervisor […] assists a protégé or supervisee” (p. 312). In contextual supervision, the supervisor can be an administrator, lead teacher, university advisor, or any other experienced educator (Ralph, 1994). The supervisee can be “any professional or preprofessional educator who, in a relationship with the supervisor, intends to learn or improve a specified skill or task” (Ralph, 1994, p. 354). The model occurs in a specific context, and the coach adjusts their approach in conjunction with the setting. Ralph asserted that “The process is contextual because the mentoring relationship is affected by a complex web of factors unique to each mentoring setting” (Ralph, 2000, p. 312).
Ralph (1994) identified two important variables that affect the process of contextual supervision: a balance between “competence and confidence” that determines the readiness of the supervisee to accomplish a particular skill or task (p. 354). In contextual supervision, competence signifies “the extent of supervisees’ knowledge, skill, ability and prior experience to perform a particular task” (Ralph, 1994, p. 354). Likewise, confidence is “the degree of their [teachers] self-assurance, willingness, motivation, or enthusiasm to become engaged in the task” (Ralph, 1994, p. 354). By taking into account these important variables, the coach can modify his or her supervisory style to optimize the supervisees’ “level of development” (Ralph, 1994, p. 355). An optimal development level may be attained when confidence and competence levels are at their highest (Ralph, 1994). Thus, coaches who assume a supervisory role while using the CS model must be aware of these variables prior to undertaking coaching sessions and dialogue-rich conversations to ensure the readiness of the teacher who is learning to perform a new skill or task. These, however, are not the only factors to take into account when using the contextual supervision model. As previously stated in Lave and Wenger’s CoP (1991), teachers learn through interaction in a particular professional context. There are multiple factors that affect this context, which include “international and national events, social/political/economic forces, cultural/ethnic/community factors, curricular/school policies and practices, and personal relationships/characteristics of participants” (Ralph, 1994, p. 354).

Hence, when coaching ECTs, school administrators should consider how these elements influence their supervisory practices when deciding how they will apply the CS model. Ralph (2000) adopted action research, a qualitative approach in which he as a researcher assumed a place in the field of study testing the CS model. As a participant-observer in the study, Ralph applied the model and coached others in its use while also studying and analyzing these
processes through reflection-on and reflection-in-action. Ralph’s intention was to determine the effectiveness of the CS model in helping new interns develop skills and competencies related to teaching. The key assumption of the study was to demonstrate that when a supervisor synchronizes mentorship styles with the protégé’s level of development, the coachee-protégé will optimize the support to grow professionally and confidently, with the end result of mastering the competency being practiced (Ralph, 2000).

Ralph (2000) administered a pre and post practice survey to the teacher-participants over the course of a 1-month internship program while targeting the development of oral questioning skills posed in the context of classroom teaching strategies. The oral questioning skills aimed to promote critical thinking, motivate learners’ attention, and enhance overall classroom management (Ralph, 2000). Over the course of the study, the findings demonstrated that protégés improved their oral questioning skills, while supervisors demonstrated a certain level of advancement in their leadership and supervisory style (Ralph, 2000).

An equally interesting finding to note pertains to the supervisor’s management approach. When supervisors adopted a more directive, task-oriented response to mentorship and coaching, the protégés were less responsive in terms of professional growth and development (Ralph, 2000). Niehouse (1988) referred to this phenomenon as “overleading,” where the supervisor applies a higher degree of directedness than necessary when helping new teachers assimilate a particular task. According to Ralph, “Supervisors overemphasizing such a task-orientation style may cause the protégé to view the mentor as being too restrictive or domineering by not recognizing the former's higher level of competence to do the task” (p. 320). This hypothesis provides reason for prioritizing a coaching approach that focuses on reflective practice, which helps to lead the practitioner to realizations on his or her own terms. An educational coach who
is capable of facilitating reflection-on-action (Schön, 1987) respects the learner’s level of competence and avoids a dominating disposition.

**The Importance of Positive Relationships**

School administrators engage in educational coaching when a relationship based on trust is established (Barth, 2006). Barth stated that “the nature of the relationships among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else” (p. 9). The principal must first establish a relationship of trust between him or herself and teachers to ensure that this is reflected onto the relationships between students as well as their parents (Barth, 2006).

Barth (2006) defined a multitude of relationships that can be categorized and considered when observing the ways in which school leaders coach and interact with ECTs. For example, some teachers who engage in relationships that resemble “parallel play” tend to isolate themselves from colleagues, spending many hours in their classroom without interacting or sharing within the context of a CoP (Barth, 2006, p. 10). These teachers may spend countless hours becoming engrossed in their craft without considering the opportunity to learn and grow professionally with their colleagues. According to Barth, “The cost of concealing what we do is isolation from colleagues who might cause us to examine and improve our practices” (p. 10).

The first type of relationship, parallel play, can exist between principals and teachers who work in the same building but live in their own self-contained reality of education. Next, of course, are “adversarial relationships” where teachers or administrators blatantly degrade colleagues regarding performance, professional practice, or a plethora of other observable behaviours (Barth, 2006, p. 10). It is not surprising that many teachers and even administrators
choose parallel play to avoid conflictual situations that may have detrimental effects on school climate.

The third type of relationship that can be observed in school settings is known as “congenial” (Barth, 2006, p. 11). These relationships can manifest themselves in a variety of ways, such as a teacher making a coffee for a colleague or a principal giving a sick employee a ride home. Congenial relationships are personal, friendly, and help motivate educators in their daily lives (Barth, 2006). Though these friendly relationships have little to do with teaching and learning, they often represent the first sparks of positive workplace relationships that contribute to significant professional growth (Barth, 2006).

Lastly are “collegial relationships,” which represent the ideal balance between congeniality and professional practice (Barth, 2006, p. 11). Collegial relationships are characterized by educators who are truly “playing together,” which is a stark contrast from the aforementioned parallel play relationship (Barth, 2006, p. 11). These relationships occur when educators communicate with one another, share their knowledge, observe each other in practice, and encourage their collective and individual success. These collegial relationships are important in creating a CoP, as they favour rich dialogue and can help draw the practitioner from the periphery to the center of the CoP.

Barth (2006) offered certain recommendations to help administrators create a culture of collegiality which, in turn, help foster positive relationships between school administrators and teachers. First, it is important to discuss practice, as a learning community is built upon “continual discourse about our important work—conversations about student evaluation, parent involvement, curriculum development, and team teaching” (Barth, 2006, p. 11). Whether this be
informally in the staff room or during a PLC that serves as a form of PD, continuous discourse is an important element in fostering collegial relationships within a CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

School administrators can engage teachers to talk about practice by implementing certain guidelines and initiatives to facilitate these conversations. For example, a principal may implement discussion regarding pedagogy in the staff room on a certain day of the week, rather than congenial, personal topics (Barth, 2006). Second, it is important for school principals to facilitate dialogue that prioritizes sharing craft knowledge relating to the profession. Barth stated that, “Once the exchange of craft knowledge becomes institutionally sanctioned, educators no longer feel pretentious or in violation of a taboo by sharing their insights” (p. 12). In the context of educational coaching, the importance of sharing the craft becomes essential in facilitating reflection-on-action (Schön, 1987) and guiding the ECT towards rich learning within the CoP. Third, it is important for school administrators to encourage the use of observations, which occurs when teachers and administrators observe one another in practice. According to Barth “there is no more powerful way of learning and improving on the job than by observing others and having others observe us” (p. 12). Administrators assuming roles of educational coaches may encourage observation for fostering collegial relationships by ensuring that these sessions will be confidential, deciding together beforehand what will be observed during the visit, and engaging in conversation afterward to discuss observations, share learning, and provide feedback (Barth, 2006).

Last, but certainly not least, educators should “root for one another” and become beacons of support within their CoP (Barth, 2006, p. 13). Positive support for a colleague can manifest itself in many forms: taking the time to sit with a teacher after class to provide insight on an educational subject of interest, caring for a disruptive student who may require additional
support, or simply congratulating a colleague for a job well done. All of these methods are a few strategies used by school administrators to help create a culture of collegiality within the school.

By modeling these aforementioned behaviours, school administrator coaches encourage teachers to do the same (Barth, 2006). Barth suggested that school administrators state their expectations explicitly regarding collegiality while rewarding and protecting teachers who engage in collegial behaviours. These key practices help school administrators who commit to the coaching of ECTs by setting the tone for a positive school culture that flourishes within a CoP.

**School Administrators’ Role in Establishing Relationships**

Neck et al. (2017) explored the importance of relationships in a different manner while primarily focusing on the leader’s own motivation and influence, following the principle that one must learn to “lead oneself in order to effectively lead others” (p. 62). In the context of educational coaching within a CoP, it is important for the principal to engage in coaching while making use of empathy to understand how he or she would wish to be treated, listened to, and understood. This helps to establish and to foster an important relationship between the coach and coachee. Once a positive working relationship has been nurtured, principals can encourage teachers’ reflective conversations about teaching and learning using think tanks, study groups, support groups, video and book clubs, and roundtables (York-Barr, 2006). PLCs, annual personal improvement plans, and reflective questioning are also proposed methods to help foster the implementation of new initiatives relating to teaching, learning, curriculum, and overall PD (York-Barr, 2006). It is important to acknowledge that each teacher has a different personal and professional background of various experiences, which should be considered when coaching to stay within the teacher’s zone of proximal development (Moore & Rhodes, 2004). This signifies
that when school administrators engage in coaching relationships, they must consider anterior knowledge and skill sets before moving onto notions that are more complex. This approach follows the curriculum principles of idea-based learning, where broader ideas are first presented to the teacher and specific content-rich concepts are introduced over time (Hansen, 2011).

Sergiovanni (2004) further explored these coaching relationships from the perspective of organizational competence, or the idea that the sum of teachers’ knowledge within a school leads to better learning for students. Sergiovanni used the prescriptive term “reciprocal roles” to define the shared responsibilities of each individual within the school setting. Within the framework of educational coaching used by school administrators, reciprocal roles oblige teachers and administrators to constantly seek improvement in their professional practice, all while creating institutionalized collaborative cultures within the organization. This also helps to create a balance between professional autonomy and collaborative work within the school setting. Sergiovanni’s research helps to elaborate on the benefits of coaching relationships, as these facilitate professional collaboration that rely on the reciprocal roles of the school administrator (coach) and the teacher (coachee).

**What Supports Do Schools Administrators Provide to ECTs?**

There are many forms of PD offered by school administrators to ECTs. Multiple definitions of PD and PD activities have been established in the literature. In this section, the researcher explores the supports offered by school administrators to ECTs in the context of Ontario’s public education system.

**Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program**

The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) is a job-embedded form of PD offered by Ontario’s Ministry of Education, which provides “professional support to help new teachers
develop the requisite skills and knowledge to be effective as teachers in Ontario” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 3). All new permanent contract teachers in their first year of professional practice must be registered in NTIP. Teachers in their first 5 years of full-time employment in a publicly funded school, however, may also qualify for support (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019).

The program includes both formal and informal PD opportunities coupled with mentorship and performance appraisals completed by the teacher’s school administrator. The mentors involved in the program are also provided PD and are usually “experienced teachers supporting NTIP required teachers” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 6). The ECT is exposed to both formal and informal mentors, such as other teachers, support staff, and school administrators. These professionals within the CoP become a part of the ECT’s “mentoring web” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 10).

The aim of the NTIP program is to facilitate “orientation for new teachers to the school and school board” and “professional learning relevant to the individual needs of new teachers” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 4), which aligns well with coaching supports that can be offered by school administrators to ECTs registered in NTIP. Within the program, teachers are encouraged to establish goals with their mentor and school administrator, which includes classroom observations and feedback. Hence, this program gives way for principals to utilize coaching methods that are tailored specifically to the needs and objectives of the ECT. Frank (2017) found that “ongoing feedback and encouragement from the principal was the strongest predictor of growth in NTIP” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 13). Thus, the possibility for school administrators to listen, encourage, and guide new teachers through coaching PD remain important elements of the mentoring web for an ECT.
Kane (2008) examined the impact of Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) and the experiences of new teachers, mentors, and school principals when the program was first implemented in 2006. Kane found that there was a need for school leaders to provide feedback and to encourage observation with ECTs (Kane, 2008). Kane also stated that it is essential for school communities to “recognize that the principal, as school leader, needs to embrace the NTIP and explicitly advocate for the NTIP as a priority and an essential element of building the school culture” (p. 8). The NTIP guide encourages principals to prioritize the program through certain recommendations such as facilitating co-teaching opportunities, co-planning in PLCs, collaboratively assessing student work, participating and contributing to a CoP, and choosing formal learning opportunities with the newly inducted teacher (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019).

**The Sustained Coaching Models**

In any sustained coaching model, school administrators are not necessarily required to perform all of the coaching on their own. In fact, a school administrator can help support an ECT by delegating coaches within his or her CoP. According to Rhodes and Beneicke (2002), school administrators can also deploy coaching strategies that make the use of peer-coaching, which focuses on mentoring while creating a peer-network that helps develop competencies, skills, and performance. Rhodes and Beneicke asserted that “Two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect upon current practices…build new skills; share ideas…teach one another, or problem solve within the workplace” (p. 298). A school administrator may choose to assign a teacher mentor or peer-coach to an ECT, such as is in the case of Ontario’s NTIP. It is important to note that, in a sustained coaching model, there is a need to provide feedback over a period of time. “Coaching and feedback on professional practice [occurs] over a period of weeks or
months” (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002, p. 299). Within a CoP, ECTs and their peer-coaches engage in discourse that helps offer “potential benefits of raising teacher confidence, facilitating teacher learning and embedding improvements in professional practice within the classroom” (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002, p. 305). Thus, school administrators who choose to implement this coaching as a form of PD are capable of doing so, all while creating an organic and authentic PLC that focuses on collaboration and mutual support.

**The Model for Assessment-Driven PD**

Kelleher (2003) explored a sustained coaching model for assessment-driven PD and proposed a six-stage form of coaching PD that is job-embedded with reflective practice at its core. School administrators can use this model to support ECTs as they navigate through their formative years in the profession. The stages of Kelleher’s model include the following:

1. Establishing goals for student achievement using a myriad of data and presenting these objectives in a SMART goal format that coincides with teachers’ professional learning outcomes targeted in the PD sessions. This stage also requires teachers to decide how student achievement will be assessed after the teacher has participated in the PD activity.

2. Preparing appropriate PD activities to achieve teachers’ goals, with principals and peer-coaches acting as facilitators who encourage new teachers in the planning and evaluation of their learning activities.

3. Deciding what strand of PD activity will be prioritized (i.e., peer collaboration or individualized PD).

4. Self-reflecting and facilitating reflective practice amongst teachers regarding the outcomes of the learning activity.
5. Deciding how the newly learned knowledge can be applied in the classroom setting.

6. Teachers use their student achievement data to determine the progress they (i.e., the teachers) have made following the specific PD chosen at the beginning of the process. Throughout the six stages, the principal, mentor, or peer assumes a role of educational coach by guiding teachers in their search for PD that is anchored in student achievement and overall learning. By using the assessment-driven data, the ECT and coach can overview PD activities that will respond to students’ needs as well as the teacher’s learning goals.

The Coaching/Mentoring Model

While Kelleher’s model can help school administrators support ECTs, Kennedy (2005) also proposed nine sustained coaching models of continuing PD that can be adopted by principals who wish to implement learning opportunities for teachers. Among these nine models is the “Coaching/Mentoring” model that “covers a variety of CPD practices that are based on a range of philosophical premises” (p. 343). According to Kennedy, the coaching and mentorship model requires a one-on-one relationship with a teacher, which can be formed with either a peer-coach or a school administrator. Kennedy explained that “The mentoring or coaching relationship can be collegiate, for example, ‘peer coaching’, but is probably more likely to be hierarchical” (p. 343). It is important to note that coaches provide skill-specific learning (Toll, 2018), whereas mentorship resembles more of a professional friendship (Kennedy, 2005). Nevertheless, the hierarchal relationship that exists between school administrator coaches and teachers should be considered, as there is a power dynamic that may influence the coaching model by adding an element of accountability, as such is the case in Ontario’s NTIP. Robbins (1995) explored the characteristics of these one-on-one relationships by stating that the focus should be on confidentiality rather than accountability. By removing an element of
accountability while focusing on confidentiality, school administrators are able to permeate the power-dynamic that influences the coaching relationship. Hence, it is important to make a distinction between coaching as a means for PD support, rather than an element of supervision and evaluation.

Wiliam et al. (2004) proposed the use of formative assessment as an entry for school administrators who provide PD to teachers using educational coaching supports. In their study, teachers were asked to implement formative assessment tasks that were created collaboratively with educational coaches who provided feedback. Throughout the study, coaches entered the classroom to observe how teachers implemented formative assessment and then provided ideas that could improve evaluative practices. Student achievement was then compared between the group of teachers who implemented formative assessment and a group who did not use this method of evaluation. The findings demonstrated that coaches can support teachers by helping them analyze the creation and implementation of formative practices, which then improves important evaluative skills that are essential to the teaching profession.

Wheeler’s Cyclical Model for Coaching

School administrators may choose to follow a certain curricular cycle in their own coaching to better organize the use and development of guiding questions. According to Wheeler’s (1967) cyclical model of curriculum development, ultimate learning goals achieved by the learner, or in this case the teacher, are demonstrated through the exhibited behaviours that the principal can monitor and observe so as to provide adequate coaching that will aid the teacher in achieving his or her goals. Within these ultimate goals, there are mediate goals that can be observed as “the patterns of expected behaviour at given stages [of one’s professional growth]” as well as “statements of intended behaviours in classes of situations at given stages” (Wheeler,
These mediate goals can thus be taken into account and used as signs of success or obstacles for the school administrator to observe when he or she is coaching the teacher. Obstacles are demonstrated through a divergence to be bridged between actual patterns of behaviour and expected patterns of behaviour (i.e., actual learning outcomes versus expected learning outcomes). The role of the principal is ultimately to guide the teacher in attaining the expected pattern of behaviour through the use of reflective questions in his or her coaching practices. By observing the patterns of behaviour of the teacher, the principal can help them establish mediate goals, or statements of intended behaviour, and propose strategies to attain these outcomes. Wheeler lastly elucidated on proximate goals, which are “the most specific statements of behavioural outcomes” (Wheeler, 1967, p. 33). These proximate goals are the SMART goals, or topical goals, that build toward the overarching ultimate goals established by the teacher. When the principal formulates reflective questions, the ultimate goals of the teacher should be considered in order to help the teacher continue to grow professionally all while facilitating reflective practice and attainment of objectives. By following a model such as the cyclical curriculum, school administrators are able to organize their interventions while considering the professional learning goals of the ECTs.

**Important Factors When Considering PD Supports**

School administrators who offer support to ECTs should focus their interventions by considering Loucks-Horsley and Matsumoto’s (1999) four important factors relating to effective PD. Administrators should first ensure that PD is learner and knowledge centered while also ensuring that there is a bridge between what teachers already know and what they need to learn. This permits the coach to reach the teacher within his or her zone of proximal development (Moore & Rhodes, 2004) while building upon previous knowledge to acquire new competencies.
In this sense, the PD is centered on the practitioner while also catering to knowledge-based learning. Effective coaches should also ensure that their interventions are assessment centered. Assessments include opportunities for feedback and reflective practice; hence, it is important for coaches to support teachers with these fundamental elements within their coaching sessions. It is also important for coaches to create learning environments that are community centered. This requires administrators to create opportunities for collaboration while allotting time for rich dialogue, observations of other colleagues in class, and feedback sessions outside of regular teaching time.

**Lead Teachers: A Tool for Educational Coaching**

Lead teachers in literacy and numeracy have become important stakeholders in Ontario’s public education since the early 2000s (EFTO Voice, 2004). They assume important coaching roles and are a prime example of job-embedded PD offered by colleagues rather than school administrators. Thus, it necessary to understand the role that these professionals provide in Ontario’s publicly funded schools.

In 2002, the Ontario Ministry of Education introduced the Reading and Math Expert Panels which examined the key knowledge and skills required for teachers to effectively teach and succeed within the context of the Ministry’s literacy and numeracy initiatives. A key recommendation of the panels was to introduce educational coaches, known as “lead teachers” who could help teachers enhance instructional practice and teaching skills. The role was first introduced by the McGuinty government in 2003 with the intent of “improving student success, providing on-going pedagogical support for teachers, assisting in developing teacher expertise, providing teacher renewal, and providing for non-administrative leadership opportunities” (EFTO Voice, 2004, p. 16). The Ministry’s vision was to demonstrate that literacy and numeracy
initiatives would become a shared responsibility of the whole school community. From an administrator’s perspective, lead teachers are able to coach, instruct, and guide their colleagues in attaining important goals related to student success and overall achievement. Lead teachers are also less intimidating than their school administrator counterparts, as they are colleagues who do not hold supervisory power.

Administrative duties such as “formal or informal evaluation of the teaching practices of colleagues; [establishing] improvement targets and benchmarks; or timetabling of instructional time” are not roles that are held by the lead teacher (EFTO Voice, 2004, p. 17). Hence, school administrators can use the lead teacher as a gateway, or bridge, to fulfilling the requirements of important Ministry of Education initiatives. For example, the principal may meet with his or her lead teaching team to convey important information and establish goals within the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The lead teachers can then utilize this information when deciding how they will help staff members achieve their personal learning goals while simultaneously carrying out school improvement mandates (EFTO Voice, 2004). Lead teachers can choose to co-teach, co-plan, organize PLCs, and observe teachers in the classroom and provide feedback. They may also organize more formal PD, such as workshops and in-class training sessions (EFTO Voice, 2004).

Every lead teacher is provided job-embedded training that focuses on the principles of effective PD. Following initial training, PD is offered over a sustained period throughout the year to ensure that lead teachers have the time to engage in reflective practice and hone the skills that are being taught. Training for lead teachers often includes pedagogy, facilitation skills, and content (EFTO Voice, 2004). The lead teachers’ professional knowledge and expertise are always at the core of PD which is a fundamental element that should be recognized by both
school administrators and the Ministry of Education. Lead teachers have a plethora of professional competencies that should be built upon; thus, is it necessary to design PD that is idea based and contextually relevant (Hansen, 2011).

**How Do School Administrators Facilitate Reflective Practice?**

As previously defined by Gavelek and Raphael (1985), reflective or guiding questions permit the learner to question his or her practice by identifying areas of improvement through a critical lens. According to Van Seggelen-Damen and Romme (2014), “reflective questions include options, inferences, hypotheses, premises, or experiments” and focus on the individual’s capability “to draw on underlying logic” (p.6). Thus, when principals use reflective inquiry in their coaching strategies for newly inducted teachers, they must be wary of appropriateness such as, for example, the teacher’s current pedagogical knowledge, or professional experience outside of teaching. This permits questioning to remain pertinent and productive for the new teacher.

When discussing guiding (reflective) questions in principal-to-teacher coaching, it is still unclear when and in what context this method should be practiced (Carson & Fisher, 2006; Cunliffe, 2004). It is known that reflective questioning should help foster higher order thinking skills, as the terms “critical thinking” and “reflective practice” have been used interchangeably by many researchers, with some even calling it “critical reflection” (Van Seggelen-Damen & Romme, 2014). It is also clear that critical reflection is beneficial because it helps to create meaning and sense regarding teaching experiences, especially in a collective setting between teachers and principals (Elliott & Reynolds, 2012; Keevers & Treleaven, 2011; Vince, 2002). Van Seggelen-Damen and Romme (2014) explored reflective questioning within an educational management setting and concluded that “reflective questioning apparently differs from other types of questioning as it is triggered by events, experiences, or interactions with other people provoking
non-rhetorical questions” (p. 9). This signifies that school principals should focus on formulating guiding questions based on the experiences and interactions that have ensued with the newly inducted teachers who are being coached.

**Feedback: A Basic Definition**

Feedback is an essential contributing factor for the development of performance and professional expertise, as it helps to build skills, competency, and overall knowledge in a particular subject area (Ericsson, 2009; Salas & Rosen, 2010). According to Van de Ridder et al. (2008), feedback can be defined as “Specific information about the comparison between a trainee’s observed performance and a standard, given with the intent to improve the trainee’s performance” (p. 193). Shute (2008) further expounded upon this definition, stating that feedback is “information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behaviour for the purpose of learning” (p. 154). This said, feedback is comprised of observational and informational components which allow the learner to modify or improve certain behaviours and skills. For the purpose of this study, Ramaprasad’s (1983) definition of feedback was used. Ramaprasad defined feedback as “information about the gap between the actual level [of performance] and the reference [or standard] level which is subsequently used to alter the gap in some way” (p. 4).

**How Do ECTs Benefit from Feedback?**

School administrators who engage in continuous daily observations of one’s performance can aid practitioners in attaining specific goals that, in turn, benefit the organization (i.e., school) as a whole (Aguinis, 2009; Aguinis & Pierce, 2008). First, school administrators observe the ECTs in action (i.e., teaching in a classroom setting), interpret these data, and integrate the observations to make a judgement on the quality and efficiency of the skill or task being
observed. This is known as the assessment stage (Ericsson, 2009). The school administrator then offers information to the ECT that was collected during the observation process, as well as their (i.e., the school administrators’) own interpretation of the task and skill that was determined during the assessment phase. This sharing of information is known as feedback (Ericsson, 2009). The final stage is the teacher’s interpretation of the information to enable improvement and growth within their professional practice. If the information is not correctly interpreted or well conveyed by the administrator, the feedback will be ineffective (Ericsson, 2009). Hence, this process requires an engagement in reflective practice from the ECT. According to Nesbit (2012), the analysis of formal and informal feedback from one’s immediate supervisor helps to instill a certain quality of self-reflection amongst practitioners. Professionals will often value positive feedback and reject negative comments or observations regarding their practice (Ashford et al., 2003). Feedback can, however, “improve teachers’ classroom practice and principals’ leadership, and ultimately student achievement” (Garet et al., 2017, p. 11). The type of feedback provided to help nurture effective teaching can be canalized by three factors: (a) the nature of feedback provided, (b) the temporal dimensions of the feedback, and (c) the individual who is giving the feedback (Scheeler et al., 2004). For many teachers, feedback can be promising or transformative, bringing about important changes regarding some of their teaching behaviours (Scheeler et al., 2004). Scheeler et al. found that the most productive feedback provided to teachers included specific, positive, and/or corrective elements to instill professional growth and change. Feedback should also be immediate to ensure that it remains an effective attribute in evaluating teacher efficacy. Thus, school administrators who provide feedback to ECTs should always do so promptly following in-class observations to ensure that the feedback is given in a timely and appropriate manner (Scheeler et al., 2004).
Conceptual Framework: The Community of Practice

The conceptual framework of Lave and Wenger’s CoP (1991) may be used to contextualize educational coaching in school communities. The CoP is comprised of people whose profession is a point of commonality. More specifically, a CoP is “a group of people who share a common concern, set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 4). Lave and Wenger first coined the term to describe learning through practice and participation, known as the theoretical framework of “Situated Learning.” Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed that learning is contextually situated, meaning the contexts when evaluating how PD is organized and delivered must be considered (Tennant, 1997). Lave and Wenger also characterized the CoP by the “ways of belonging to a community, whereas peripherality and participation are concerned with location and identity in the social world” (p. 29). Learning first occurs outside of the community, at the outer limits of the CoP known as the “periphery” (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Floding (2011) explained that “The newcomer’s participation at first is legitimately peripheral, but over time is centripetally drawn inwards and becomes more engaged and more complex” (p. 193). This signifies that as learners become more experienced in a CoP, they will further participate and engage in a professional context. Learning is a social process rather than a simple acquirement of knowledge through PD (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

In the context of educational coaching, the CoP is, according to Wenger et al. (2011), a “learning partnership among people who find it useful to learn from and with each other about a particular domain. They use each other’s experience of practice as a learning resource” (p. 9). Wenger (2004) further explored the characteristics of this partnership by defining the concepts of domain, community, and practice. According to Wenger (2004), the domain is the ensemble of
qualities that provide an identity to the group of learners. The domain is “the area of knowledge that brings the community together, gives it its identity, and defines the key issues that members need to address” (p. 2). Wenger described the community as a “group of people for whom the domain is relevant, the quality of the relationships among members, and the definition of the boundary between the inside and the outside” (p. 3). The community is composed of individuals who develop relationships through interaction while solving problems and sharing knowledge. Lastly, the practice is “the body of knowledge, methods, tools, stories, cases, documents, which members share and develop together” (p. 3). A CoP brings together teachers and administrators who are collectively accumulating competencies and knowledge in their area of practice. This accumulation of professional expertise allows participants to refine their practice, which renders them better practitioners both as a group and individually.

In the current study, the researcher utilized the CoP as the conceptual framework to describe coaching strategies and relationships between teachers and school administrators who assume educational coaching roles. When coaching ECTs, it is clear that they are in the periphery of the community as they are in the early beginnings in the profession. Through the “increasing participation in communities of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 49), a school administrator coach aims to help the teacher to learn and grow professionally through the process of social participation. Thus, coaches have the ability to provide PD to teachers within a CoP, in a professional school setting as the context for learning, all while aiding the teacher in becoming an active participant in the CoP.
Chapter Summary

The literature review was written following a deductive methodology, rather than an ad hoc approach. Major themes such as PD, CoP, and reflective practice were first identified by the researcher and further explored through initial sources. Then, categories relating to the themes, such as coaching and mentorship, were introduced in sections (chunks) of new literature added to the chapter, and additional sub-categories were identified within them.

The role of the principal as an educational coach is certainly one that holds much importance regarding student and teacher achievement. School administrators have the ability to empower teachers and help them develop their reflective practice, all while improving the quality of education within the school community. Current research on coaching demonstrates the importance of trusting relationships that help facilitate reflective practice, while fostering empathy as characterized by Neck et al. (2017).

Having gone through the current literature, it is evident that work of Schön (1987) and the reflective practitioner is of utmost importance when adopting a coaching model for PD that makes use of guiding questions. By using strategies such as “reflection-on-action” proposed by Schön (1987) and the CS model further explored by Ralph (2000), principals are capable of creating foundational coaching relationships that are conducive to professional growth.

Similarly, guiding questions as defined by Gavelek and Raphael (1985) aid in bringing to light important shortfalls within one’s professional practice. This, according to Van Seggelen-Damen and Romme (2014), helps to facilitate critical reflection and reflective practice. When teachers are able to acknowledge and truly understand where and what they must improve, the coaching relationship can become an useful tool for PD.
Are ECTs benefitting from the critical reflection that is facilitated by their school administrator? How do they perceive the effectiveness of this coaching strategy? What are the administrators’ perspectives on the effectiveness of reflective questioning integrated into their coaching strategies? These are some of the essential questions that are further explored regarding the impacts of reflective practice amongst ECTs.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research methodology and methods that were used throughout the study are described and explained. The researcher begins by defining the qualitative methods research design and providing an explanation of how this research was conducted through the theoretical lens of Situated Learning and the conceptual framework of the Community of Practice. The researcher then provides a rationale for the use of this approach in the context of a multiple case study. Thirdly, the researcher describes the research methods, which consists of the location, recruitment and selection of participants, and the research approaches implemented within the study. Lastly, the researcher explains the data collection process for each method, the data analysis techniques, the steps that were taken to establish the trustworthiness of this study, and the ethical considerations that were made.

Research Approach

A qualitative methodology, specifically a multiple case study comparing two elementary Francophone public schools in Ontario within the same school board, was utilized in the current study. According to Yin (2014), case study research studies a case or multiple cases within a real-life, contemporary context or setting. A case can be bounded by a concrete setting, such as an entity, a group, or an organization (Yin, 2014). The case can also be less concrete, however, such as in the study of a relationship, a process, or even a community (Yin, 2014). Stake (2005) argued that the cases studied within a system are specifically bounded by time and place, which further expounds upon Yin’s broader definition.

In the current study, the researcher sought to explore, through a series of semi-structured interviews, the integration of guiding questions used by school administrators in their coaching strategies with ECTs. The research approach was thus coherent with Yin’s (1989) technical
description of the case study strategy, as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 23). Yin concluded that the boundaries established between a phenomenon and a context are not always clear; hence, many sources of evidence must be used. Therefore, the interviews were supplemented with rich, clearly defined, contextual case data that served to draw an accurate portrait of both schools.

**Defining the Case Context**

Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that multiple case studies, also referred to as collective case studies, require the inquirer to select different cases with the intent of demonstrating many perspectives while shedding light on the same issue. If Creswell and Poth’s (2018) definition is accurate, the comparison of two schools within a system (the school board) helped to demonstrate many perspectives on coaching using reflective questions. Yin (2014) affirmed that cases may include “small groups, communities, decisions, programs, organizational change, and specific events” (p. 31).

The two schools participating in this study were viewed as individually bounded cases within the French Public School Board of Eastern Ontario (FPSBEO). Thomas (2016) further expounded upon Yin’s work by stating that a case is “defined not so much by the methods that you are using to do the study, but the edges you put around the case” (p. 21). The “edges” can be viewed as the boundaries that bind the case in time, place, and context: the schools, the school board, and the present academic year contribute to the formation of these important edges that Thomas had defined.

**School Board**

Within the context of this multiple case study, the pseudonym “French Public School Board of Eastern Ontario” (FPSBEO) was used when referring to the board. The organization is
a fully Francophone school board comprised of 44 elementary and secondary schools in Eastern Ontario, comprising 16,714 students and over 5000 employees. The FPSBEO is diverse: 130 different countries of origin are represented throughout the school community, and 96 languages are spoken by the student and staff populations. The school board covers 40,314 km² of Ontario including Ottawa, Prescott-Russell, Renfrew-Pembroke, Quinte, Kingston, Trenton, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

The FPSBEO was chosen for this study as it contains multiple schools with principals who practice reflective questioning integrated into their coaching practices. Furthermore, the FPSBEO regularly hires ECTs who are practitioners within these school communities receiving coaching sessions from their school administrators. The school board has invested in the coaching model for PD by providing school administrators with training sessions gauged at honing the craft of educational coaching. For example, in November 2018, all FPSBEO school administrators attended specialized training regarding reflective coaching. There were multiple follow-ups from Supervisory Officers throughout the 2018-2019 academic year with the intent of ensuring that the coaching interventions were being implemented throughout the schools in the board. Thus, there is a clear commitment toward the coaching model for professional development by the FPSBEO.

Schools

For the purpose of this study, the two participating schools were referred to as “School A” and “School B.” The participating schools were identified by the Supervisory Officers as places of learning where guiding questioning in educational coaching was currently practiced by the school administrator(s). This multiple case research design first required developing in-depth
contextual descriptions of each school. These descriptions included pertinent data necessary for understanding the demographics and situational implications of the two respective cases.

The profiles of these schools focused primarily on the demographics of the students and staff. This information included publicly accessible, secondary-sourced quantitative data, such as demographic and academic information related to staff, students, and their families such as EQAO reports and Statistics Canada demographic data. These data included student population, school location, teacher and administrator experience, one versus multiple administrators, socio-economic status of students (e.g., level of education of parents, yearly household income), specialized programs, students with an IEP, and systemic classrooms (e.g., classes with specialized services for students with behavioural or learning exceptionalities, serving students from different schools within the board).

**Participants**

For each school, three participants attended in-depth interviews that were then recorded and transcribed. In each school, the participants were comprised of one school administrator and two ECTs. Prior to proceeding with participant recruitment, ethical clearance from the General Ethics Research Board (GREB) and the Educational Research Ethics Board (EREB) at Queen’s University was required. The FPSBEO ethical clearance was also necessary before the recruitment process.

In the context of this study, an ECT is a teacher who is in his or her first 5 years of teaching, as described by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2019). The school administrator was defined as an individual holding either a principal or vice-principal role. The school must have demonstrated the use of educational coaching with an integration of reflective questions.

The following consists of the inclusion criteria for participants:
1) ECTs must be registered in Ontario’s Newly Inducted Teacher program or have 5 or fewer years of experience. They have received some form of coaching within the current school year.

2) Principals must have practiced the use of guiding questioning within their coaching strategies for at least 1 school year and had used this approach while working with NTIP teachers within their respective schools.

3) A school was only considered for participation once the researcher had secured one administrator and two ECTs.

4) The school was then identified by the Supervisory Officer as having the best reflective coaching methods currently in practice.

As a contingency plan, if more than two schools volunteered to participate, the researcher proceeded on a first come, first serve basis. In the case where not all participants consent, the researcher approached other schools that had expressed interest in participating.

**Supervisory Officer**

Each of the five Supervisory Officers (Superintendents) in the board was responsible for nominating one school in his or her catchment area, as he or she supervises the board’s school administrators and has access to information regarding the use of coaching strategies in each school (see recruitment email in Appendix F). The Supervisory Officer utilized the following criteria when nominating participating schools:

1) The school administrator (principal or vice-principal) has used reflective questions in his or her coaching strategies during the current school year.

2) The school has at least five ECTs who have been coached using reflective questions during the current school year.
3) The school administrator has engaged in coaching with the ECTs during the current school year.

4) Among all schools supervised by the Superintendent, the nominated school has the best reflective coaching methods currently in practice.

All other exceptional scenarios that derogate from the inclusionary criteria were considered ineligible to participate. The Supervisory Officer did not have the authority to oblige a principal to participate in the study. The school administrators had the right to decide whether or not to include their school.

**School Administrators**

The Superintendents provided his or her permission to contact the five Principals (one nominated per Superintendent) with the letter of information and consent and the recruitment email (see Appendices C and D). After nomination and approval by the Supervisory Officer, the Principal was invited by the researcher to approve the recruitment process. In the recruitment email for administrators (see Appendix D), the researcher sought consent from the principal or vice-principal. In the email, the researcher also asks the principals to provide a list of at least five ECTs who have participated in coaching using guiding questioning. The first two of five principals who responded were chosen to participate. All five schools had already been identified as the best institutions for educational coaching practices by their Superintendents, and thus it was logical to proceed on a first come, first serve basis as previously mentioned.

Once the Principal returned the form, the researcher requested that the Principal send the invitation to participate to the ECTs so that, if they wished, they may contact the researcher directly. Once the LOI was signed by the Principal or Vice-Principal, the researcher proceeded to negotiate a date and time for potential interviews.
The first role to be analyzed was that of the principal or the vice-principal responsible for offering and organizing job-embedded PD and coaching to ECTs. These school administrators had engaged in classroom observations and coaching relationships with ECTs through guiding (reflective) questioning integrated into their coaching practices. Thus, the school administrator’s input was essential in understanding their perceptions regarding reflective coaching practices. In smaller schools that do not contain two administrators, the coaching role is assumed by one individual: the principal. Larger-scale schools with two or more administrators, however, may have multiple administrator-coaches. In both cases, only one school administrator was chosen to participate.

**Teachers**

After receiving approval from the school administrators, the Principal forwarded the recruitment email to potential teacher-participants at their school (see Appendix E). School administrator and ECT recruitment emails were adjusted to fit the respective roles of each participant. The emails contained salient information regarding the study, including the questions that would be asked and the time commitment required to participate in the study. Once the ECTs contacted the researcher, they were sent the LOI and consent form (see Appendix C). This allowed time for each potential participant to understand and to evaluate the implications surrounding participation in the study. Once the LOI was signed, the researcher, the interviewer, and the ECT negotiated a date and time for potential interviews.

The second role was embodied through interviewing two ECTs who were participating and receiving coaching through reflective questioning. ECTs had already been coached using this reflective questioning model. The ECTs were important participants in the study, as their
perceptions of the coaching model for PD, specifically through the use of guiding questions, were essential in captivating the purpose of this study.

**Graduate Student Interviewer**

The graduate student from the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University was exclusively important for mitigating power dynamics that may occur between the researcher (a school principal) and the ECTs. One graduate student was asked to conduct interviews with the ECTs in their respective schools. By asking the graduate student, who as paid a small stipend, to conduct interviews with the ECTs, it was less likely that a power dynamic would infringe upon the data collection processes. The graduate student was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix G).

**New Teacher Induction Program**

Each of the participants in this study had participated in Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program either as ECTs or school administrators (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019). The aim of the program is to facilitate integration into the profession through job-embedded PD. This mandatory Ontario Ministry of Education program offered to ECTs in their first permanent contract provides “professional support to help new teachers develop the requisite skills and knowledge to be effective as teachers in Ontario” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 3). Both ECTs and school administrators participate in the program, as the principal or vice-principal often assumes a coaching role in the context of this important PD program.

**Sampling**

Participants in this study were chosen using purposeful sampling strategies as described by Patton (2002). These strategies aim to create a sample of participants who are “information rich and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest;
sampling, then, is aimed at insight about the phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 2002, p. 40). More specifically, Patton’s (1990) typical case sampling strategy was used as a method to illustrate or “highlight what is typical, normal, average” (p. 182). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), typical case sampling serves the purpose of sampling specific cases that are not atypical, abnormal, unusual, or extreme. In order to meet the purpose of describing the perspectives and experiences of school administrators and teachers who have lived through the reflective questioning model, it was essential to identify typical cases to understand what aspects may emerge under ordinary circumstances. Thus, in the context of this study, the school administrators and ECTs interviewed were participants belonging to a typical sample: their characteristics fell within a so-called “normal” categorization of being not unusual or deviant (Patton, 1990).

**Data Collection**

As previously mentioned, for the purpose of this study, both ECTs and principals were interviewed separately using semi-structured interviews (see Appendices A and B), as the information collected could not be directly observed. The interviews occurred over a period of 4 weeks, through prescheduled and confidential videoconferences conducted over Zoom. According to Gall et al. (1996), interviews are often used when conducting research in educational settings, as the data may not always be observable. Each participant was interviewed once with the intent of collecting data that would serve to answer the study’s research questions. Furthermore, Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) stated that “knowledge is constructed in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee” (p. 4). Thus, the researcher relied upon reported information from participants being interviewed in order to construct knowledge through collected interview data.
The questions chosen for the interview protocol (see Appendices A and B) aligned with Creswell and Poth’s (2018) recommended procedures: the questions were “open-ended, general, and focused on understanding [the] central phenomenon in the study” (p. 165). This allowed for rich dialogue and insightful answers that would help to answer the overarching research question of the study, What are the perceptions of Ontario’s school administrators and ECTs, regarding the use of reflective questions in principal-to-teacher coaching methods? The interview protocol (see Appendices A and B) utilized both Patton (2002) and Kvale’s (1996) frameworks for identifying the nature of interview questions. By drawing inspiration from both Patton and Kvale, the interview questions aligned with the study’s research questions while facilitating an inquiry-based conversation (Jones et al., 2014).

It is important to mention that the interviews were conducted either in English or in French, depending on the preference of each of the participants. This helped the researcher to gather data that were accurate and expressive, eliminating linguistic barriers for the school administrators and the teachers interviewed. A graduate student was recruited to conduct the interviews with ECTs to help nullify the power dynamic that exists between the participants (teachers) and the researcher who is a school administrator. The researcher was responsible for conducting interviews with each school administrator. One may assume that school administrators may feel more comfortable speaking with a colleague (i.e., the researcher). In both cases, the two interview protocols included salient questions that respond to the overarching research questions of this study with the intent of converging together to collect rich data.

1) Setting issues: The interviews were conducted via Zoom. A calm and quiet setting chosen for the interviews was at the discretion of participants and the interviewer. Each
participant required a computer with webcam and audio capabilities to allow for human contact.

2) Recording device: The interviewer utilized Zoom’s recording capabilities to save audio content and transcription from the interview. The audio was also recorded with an iPhone 11, a secondary recording device used to back up data in the event that the primary device fails. The audio recordings were transformed to MP3 format and uploaded to a PC running Windows 10 software. The recordings were then transcribed by the interviewer and reviewed by an external party.

3) Vetted interview schedule: The interviewer is one of the “gatekeepers” of the school board by which the participants were employed. Although the interviewer is employed as a principal in a different school than those included in this study, he is familiar with the schools in which the interviewees teach and received the authority of his colleagues (i.e., the schools’ principals) to perform the interviews, following his call for participants sent in an e-mail format.

4) Participant consent form: The participant consent form for this study can be found in Appendix C. Each participant received the interview questions (see Appendix I and Appendix J) accompanied by their consent form. A 15-minute preparation period occurred prior to the start of each interview. During this time, questions were read aloud beforehand with the intent of ensuring that participants understood the intended outcome of each question. The semi-structured interview lasted no longer than 60 minutes.

**Data Analysis**

The analysis of the data consisted of a “bottom up” inductive approach, as possible findings were unknown and the research purpose was, in itself, descriptive. All interviews were
audio-recorded and transcribed in English or in French. If the interview took place in French, the transcription was translated into English prior to coding. The coding process prioritized the use of NVivo, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software used to analyze transcripts and create categories as well as themes. The coding procedure followed the established norms of qualitative text analysis for a case study as described by Creswell and Poth (2018) and O’Leary (2014):

1. Creating and organizing data into files;
2. Reading through text, making margin notes, and forming initial codes;
3. Describing the case and its context using categorical aggregation to establish themes and patterns (i.e., seeking a collection of themes from the data, hoping that relevant meaning about lessons to be learned about the case will emerge).

It was important to develop descriptions for the emerging themes, all while identifying the more “abstract themes” that appeared in the analysis of the data. After these steps were completed, the major themes found in the data comprised the main findings of the study. The data analysis concluded with validation, as defined by Creswell and Poth (2018). First, the corroboration of evidence through triangulation of multiple data sources was used to shed light on the multitude of themes and perspectives in the study. Throughout the coding procedure, the necessity to locate the required evidence for documenting a code facilitated the triangulation process. It was imperative to use these different data sources in tandem to validate the findings. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), it is beneficial for the researcher to involve an additional “reviewer,” one outside of the candidate’s supervisory committee, at the beginning and late stages of the data analysis to properly evaluate the identified themes. The purpose of inter-rater reliability is to implicate an external party who may review the themes identified in
the analysis procedures with the intent of verifying that they are compatible with the transcribed text. Miles and Huberman also suggested another independent reviewer, if possible, in order to compare the feedback given by both of the reviewers who are outside of the supervisory committee. The outside reviewer would examine the study as a whole to determine whether it meets Guba and Lincoln’s (1981) four criteria for trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The data were presented in the style of “Most simple to most complex” (Asmussen & Creswell, 1995) with the intent of allowing the reader to understand increasingly complex concepts in a progressive framework. Hence, the embedded writing structure resembled a funnel approach starting with large, simple concepts that become more specific and complex (Asmussen & Creswell, 1995; Frelin, 2015; Staples et al., 2005). Yin’s (2014) direct interpretation was utilized equally to ensure a cross-case analysis of data presented in a table format to compare similarities and differences between the two cases. The entire interview manuscript was translated, and key quotations for the purpose of presenting findings were included in English. A professional translator assisted in validating the initial transcription and interview protocols that were translated by the researcher. This process ensured overall accuracy and quality regarding the translations. The person chosen to conduct this task was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix H). Finally, naturalistic generalizations developed from analyzing the data permitted readers to “learn from the cases, apply learning to a population of cases, or transfer them to another similar context” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 206).

**Validity and Trustworthiness**

The researcher ensured validity and trustworthiness by making use of a variety of data sources to facilitate triangulation of the data. According to Yin (2014), the “convergence of data
collected from different sources” (p. 214) helps to ensure that the information is consistent and reliable. This may be done by collecting data from multiple participants who hold different roles (i.e., ECTs and administrators) in two separate schools that build upon two different cases. This ensured that multiple perspectives were reported within the study. Although the participants may have diverse perspectives, they are all still bounded within their respective schools.

The transcribed audio recordings were used in the data validation process and were member checked to ensure overall accuracy regarding what was said by the participants in the interviews and heard by the researcher in the transcription process. In addition, typed field notes were used to capture descriptive and experiential data while creating a data audit trail (Patton, 2002).

**Ethical Considerations**

The confidentiality of all participants in this study was upheld through the use of pseudonyms assigned to each individual. The school board and all of its participating schools remained anonymous in all aspects of the study. All school names were identified with pseudonyms which were determined at the moment each principal confirmed their participation in the study. First names were also replaced by pseudonyms in the semi-structured interview process as well as during the process of reporting and publishing data in the thesis. The study was subject to the ethics review process by the Education Research Ethics Board (EREB) and the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) of Queen’s University. Throughout the entirety of the study, the wellbeing of all participants was considered, respected, and unharmed. Once the Tri-Council Ethics review committee accorded ethical clearance, the study was submitted to the school board for an internal ethics clearance.
It is important to mention that the researcher is a principal in the FPSBEO. Thus, if the Vice-Principal of the researcher’s school chose to participate following the Superintendent’s call for participants, the researcher would not interfere or attempt to influence the participants of his school in any possible way. This measure would help to mitigate any possible ethical issues that may arise over the course of the study.

**Significance**

When referring to guiding questions used in the context of educational coaching in a Community of Practice (CoP; Lave & Wenger, 1991), it is evident that there is a gap to be bridged between the perceptions of school administrators and teachers. The researcher focused on these perceptions by analyzing the experiences of those teachers who have been coached using this model as well as school administrators who have used reflective questioning in their educational coaching practices. Thus, the research permitted academics and educators alike to discern these perceptions and distinguish the similarities and differences that each group of professionals faces when using this model in action. The researcher hoped that the findings would generate a set of practice-based strategies and recommendations to be used by school administrators in the context of educational coaching practices in elementary and secondary schools.

**Limitations**

The limitations of the study affected the methodology chosen as well as the interpretation of data, finding, and conclusions. As described by Murnan and Price (2004), it is necessary to report limitations to better understand the constraints of scalability. Five significant limitations were considered in the context of this study:
1) Access: As a principal and researcher working within the same school board as the participants chosen for the study, it may seem as though access would not be a problematic factor. Many teachers and principals, however, wish to maintain a certain level of anonymity out of fear of offending colleagues, the school board, or other important stakeholders. Some participants may wish to refrain from sharing, as the interviewer had access to a larger professional circle that could influence the perception of the participant in a negative or positive manner. It was possible that participants may lack candour in their responses, which could affect the interpretation and richness of the acquired data.

2) Biases: The researcher conducting this study is a practitioner and school administrator who is familiar with the approach of reflective questioning within educational coaching contexts. This may have had an effect on the interpretation or even collection of data, as the researcher holds a position of power that creates a power dynamic between himself and the teacher participants. To mitigate possible influences by the researcher on the teacher participants, an external party (i.e., the graduate student) conducted the interviews with the ECTs. This decision was made to help avoid possible biases and equally nullify power dynamics felt between the participants and the interviewer.

3) Lack of available or reliable data: Only two schools in a small, Francophone school board participated in this study. This created a possible issue concerning lack of available or reliable data.

4) Language barriers: The participants in this study spoke French as a first language. The researcher needed to translate the interview protocol, and the interviews were held in
French. However, the methodological procedures relating to coding and interpretation of data were conducted in English after being translated from French. These translations were validated by a professional translator who signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix H). Some words or expressions could not be directly translated from one language to the other which led to a limitation, as the translation was sometimes required in order to interpret the overall meaning of what was said in the participants’ language of choice.

5) Contextual limitations: The study was time-sensitive and was conducted at the end of the school year. Thus, there was little time to acquire all of the rich data that could be gathered in a longer, more comprehensive and elaborate study. As with many trends in education, certain approaches and strategies are constantly changing, and this is not limited to educational coaching through reflective questioning. Thus, it was important to complete the study in a timely manner.

6) Self-reported data: Using observation as an instrument for data collection was not practiced nor adopted in the context of this study. Semi-structured individualized interviews were the main instrument used for gathering salient participant data. Hence, it was impossible for the researcher to evaluate the veracity of the data as the participants were self-reporting in their answers to the interview questions. This, however, permitted the researcher to truly understand the perceptions of the participants, rather than the facts related to the experiences lived through educational coaching. According to Brutus et al. (2013), self-reported data can also be limited by selective memory (i.e., omitting certain elements of an experience from one’s memory), telescoping (i.e., stating that an event happened at a certain time when, in
reality, it happened at a different moment in time), and exaggeration (i.e., embellishing certain experiences or outcomes).
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the researcher outlines the research findings from the study. Upon the description of participants and schools, the researcher reviews the central themes that emerged during analysis of the interview data from a total of six participants at two case schools (School A: École Universelle and School B: École Mondiale). Although the study was qualitative and adopted an inductive approach, tables were used to present the data in a visually appealing manner, thus facilitating the understand and overall succinctness of data representation.

Schools and Participants

In this section, the researcher presents an overview of each case with the intent of creating rich descriptions of Case 1: École Universelle and Case 2: École Mondiale. The two participating schools were identified by the Supervisory Officers of the FPSBEO as places of learning where guiding questioning in educational coaching is currently practiced by the school administrator(s). The following in-depth, contextual descriptions of each school include data focusing on the demographics of students and staff from secondary-sourced quantitative data sets.

Case 1: École Universelle

École Universelle is located in Eastern Ontario. Its current student population is 474 students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 which is comprised of children born in Canada (92% of the student population) and in 20 other countries from across the globe (8% of the student population). This does not include first generation Canadian students, who represent 74 different nationalities and backgrounds. The staff is comprised of two school administrators (a principal and a vice-principal), 33 teachers, and 17 non-teaching staff members.
As of January 2021, 58% of the student population come from non-Francophone homes, which testifies to the rich diversity present in the school community. The average household income in the area is $59,567 per year after taxes (Statistics Canada, 2016). Within this area, nearly 29.1% of the adult population has a university degree, 23.5% of adults hold a college diploma, 5.6% of adults have a skilled trade, 27.9% have a high school education, and 13.8% of the population has not graduated high school (Statistics Canada, 2016). Approximately 13% of the student population has been identified by an IPRC (Identification, Placement, and Revision Committee), and have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Among these exceptional students, 11% are integrated into regular classrooms. The school has also implemented a Special Education classroom for 1.2% of those students with very particular needs (e.g., non-verbal students with autism spectrum disorder [ASD] and students with complex forms of intellectual disabilities; Provincial Assessment Results, 2020).

**Case 2: École Mondiale**

This public secondary school (7 to 12) is located in Eastern Ontario. École Universelle is the feeder school for École Mondiale, meaning the majority of the students who attend Mondiale secondary are former École Universelle students. The current student population of École Mondiale is 150 students from Grade 7 to Grade 12 which is composed of pupils born in Canada and in 9 other countries from across the globe. This does not include first generation Canadian students, who represent 21 different nationalities and backgrounds. The staff is comprised of one school administrator (a principal), 13 teachers, and 10 non-teaching staff members.

As of January 2021, 61% of the student population come from non-Francophone homes, where mainly English is spoken (97% of those non-Francophone families spoke English at home). The average household income in the area is $59,567 per year after taxes (Statistics
Canada, 2016). As is the case with École Universelle, the parents of École Mondiale have the same level of education, as they are from the same community. Nearly 29.1% of the adult population has a university degree, 23.5% of adults hold a college diploma, 5.6% of adults have a skilled trade, 27.9% have a high school education, and 13.8% of the population has not graduated high school (Statistics Canada, 2016). Approximately 3% of the student population has been identified by an IPRC and 6% of the overall student population has an IEP. All of these exceptional students are integrated into regular classrooms, including those students with very particular needs (e.g., students with complex forms of intellectual disabilities, or ASD; Provincial Assessment Results, 2020).

The participants in this study included one administrator and two early career teachers (ECTs) from each of the two case schools (see Table 1). Because a multi-case study design was used in this study, the findings are presented as a within-case analysis for each of the two schools, followed by a cross-case analysis.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Teaching duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case 1: École Universelle</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sébastien</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>ECT</td>
<td>Kindergarten to Grade 2 Music, Visual Arts, Dance, and Dramatic Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mélanie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>ECT</td>
<td>Grade 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case 2: École Mondiale</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>ECT</td>
<td>Grade 7 and 8 Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stéphanie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>ECT</td>
<td>Grade 7 and 8 French Language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The coding procedure followed the established norms of qualitative text analysis for a case study, as described by Creswell and Poth (2018) and O’Leary (2014):

1. Creating and organizing data into files;
2. Reading through text, making margin notes, and forming initial codes;
3. Describing the case and its context;
4. And using categorical aggregation to establish themes and patterns (i.e., seeking a collection of themes from the data with the hopes that relevant meaning about lessons to be learned about the case will emerge).

Analysis of the data resulted in the identification of three major themes related to the coaching experience:

1. Fostered teacher growth through guided questioning,
2. contributed to teaching practice through support and facilitation, and
3. contributed to teacher confidence through encouragement and a focus on strengths.

These themes were present in the data provided by all six participants, but the categories from which the themes were formed were not present in all participants’ responses. Each within-case analysis includes a visual representation in tabular form of which categories were present in each participant’s data. The presentation of the cross-case analysis aggregates the within-case findings and includes a visual representation of the two cases in tabular form.

School A: École Universelle

Three of the six study participants were drawn from École Universelle. They included an administrator (Marie) and two ECTs (Mélanie and Sébastien). Table 2 reveals the major themes, the categories from which the themes were formed, and which of the École Universelle participants contributed to each theme and category.
Table 2

École Universelle: Major Themes and Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Categories from which theme was formed</th>
<th>Marie (Administrator)</th>
<th>Mélanie (ECT)</th>
<th>Sébastien (ECT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1. The coaching experience fostered teacher growth through guided questioning</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting improvement through monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning teachers</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting and supporting instead of micromanaging</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2. The coaching experience contributed to teaching practice through support and facilitation</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating professional development</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to work with a mentor</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety in asking questions</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 3. The coaching experience contributed to teacher confidence through encouragement and a focus on strengths</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing room for risk and error</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on encouragement</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes of trust</td>
<td>☑</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

École Universelle Theme 1: Fostering Teacher Growth Through Guided Questioning

Theme 1 was formed from three related categories. Two of the categories (promoting improvement through monitoring, and questioning teachers) were observed by all three École Universelle participants. The third category, trusting and supporting instead of micromanaging, was confirmed by Marie and Mélanie, but not by Sébastien. Sébastien, however, did not provide discrepant data indicating disagreement with the category.
All three École Universelle participants indicated that one of the ways in which the coaching experience fostered teacher growth through guided questioning was by promoting improvement through monitoring and evaluation. The participants reported that administrators would visit classrooms, observe ECTs delivering lessons, and then provide feedback often in the form of questions designed to guide the ECT in problem solving to address areas for improvement. Marie reported that she first learned to coach ECTs through monitoring and evaluation through her previous role as a resource teacher responsible for observing less-experienced teachers and engaging them in questioning for reflexivity and problem-solving. Marie stated:

Through my role as a resource teacher in the school for a period of two years, there was already a little bit of coaching already present in that role, because I was with teachers who needed to find out how to teach differently and differentiate their practice. I really liked it because it's really like a partnership, it's really a collaborative work with teachers, so when I started as a vice-principal, I already had a lead in this domain.

Notable in Marie’s response was her characterization of her monitoring and evaluation of ECTs as “a partnership” and as “collaborative work with teachers” rather than as a top-down managerial or directive approach. Mélanie agreed with Marie’s response and provided more detail about how Marie conducted monitoring and evaluation:

There was monitoring that was done in the classroom by my vice-principal. She came a few times, I would say at least three or four times, to observe and all that . . . There was feedback, of course . . . I was given feedback to do a bit more peer review [with my
students]. That was one of my feedback points, to ask [students] to say by themselves that they do well, not well or to improve.

Sébastien also confirmed Marie’s response, stating that as a result of Marie’s evaluations of his delivery of lessons, “We had talked about goals and something we wanted to improve. For me, it was classroom management, so . . . for me, what I did . . . I tried to be funny and include the students' interests.” Sébastien added that, as a result of the feedback he received, he engaged with his principal and his mentor to develop strategies for classroom management. As an ECT working with children in the early years, the strategies that Sébastien developed and found effective included using rhymes and repetition to incorporate humor into his lessons.

**Category: Questioning Teachers**

All three École Universelle participants contributed to this category. Responses indicated that one of the ways the coaching experience fostered teacher growth through guided questioning was via the strategy of administrators’ eliciting solutions from teachers by asking them open-ended questions as opposed to imposing solutions in a top-down fashion. Marie described the relationship between teacher growth and questioning teachers to guide them in problem-solving:

If you want people to learn and develop a growth mindset, it [the strategy for improvement] has to come from them . . . If you want adults to learn, you have to go through questioning, and sometimes questioning is the only way to put your finger on a problem. The answers don't necessarily have to come from the administrator, but on the contrary, they have to come from the staff member, the teacher.

Marie stated that, in practice, she initiated the strategy of questioning teachers by conducting observations or responding to teacher questions: “Whether it's after a monitoring [session] or when a teacher comes to me with a question, I always try to get the answer from the person. But
I also try to suggest elements of an answer or offer resources.” Also notable in Marie’s strategies was her focus on positive feedback when engaging in the questioning of teachers: “I think I use questioning quite a lot with everyone . . . what I always try to do is to start from my observations in the classroom, to say what I observed, and I put positive things [first].” Marie elaborated on the meaning of “put positive things,” stating, “With beginner teachers, it's to say to them, ‘I really liked that,’ to put my finger on something that really worked well, that went well.” Marie provided a specific example of the questioning process in describing her monitoring of one teacher’s delivery of a lesson. After the lesson was concluded, she approached the teacher and opened the discussion by praising the appropriateness of the content. Marie then made an observation and questioned the teacher about an area for improvement:

   The [teacher] was always oriented to ask questions or to go and look for answers from his students on one side of the classroom rather than the other. So, I highlighted by questioning: “Did you observe that such and such a student did not answer much, participated or was playing with an object on his desk?” As we went along, the teacher realised that one side of the class was really less engaged than the other. And then I said to him, “But how can you keep everyone involved?” There was a whole conversation that started on that.

Mélanie agreed with Marie’s reports of questioning teachers in saying that after a monitoring session, Marie would approach her and ask questions to guide Mélanie in problem-solving. Mélanie said that the process began with Marie’s monitoring of a lesson: “The vice-principal came, observed, took her notes, and afterwards we went back together to see how it went, what went well, what could be improved or done differently. There was feedback after the evaluation.” Notable in Mélanie’s response was her confirmation of Marie’s statement that
evaluations began with focusing on the positive (“what went well”). Mélanie also confirmed that the evaluation and strategizing process was collaborative: “Questioning, yes, there are suggestions, we ask each other questions, how I can improve such and such an aspect of my teaching, and then we find solutions together, and that I liked.”

Sébastien validated the other two École Universelle participants, stating that after Marie conducted observations, “We established something I wanted to work on and steps to get there,” with the choice of pronoun (“we”) indicating a collaborative effort. Sébastien stated that the evaluation was successful in making him more mindful of the need to differentiate instruction according to students’ individual needs: “I realized that there are several students who have specific or very specific and individual needs. So, just to have a chance to discuss that . . ., that really helped me.” Sébastien added that after receiving Marie’s feedback and engaging with her in guided questioning, he grew as a teacher by starting to engage in more flexible lesson-planning to accommodate students’ needs:

I tried most often to think ahead of time about what the possible outcome of a lesson might be and . . . how I might change the instruction to meet the specific needs of each student but still provide classroom management.

Thus, all three École Universelle participants confirmed that guided strategizing through administrator questioning of and collaboration with teachers promoted teacher growth.

**Category: Trusting and Supporting Teachers Instead of Micromanaging**

Two of the École Universelle participants, Marie and Mélanie, contributed to this category. The third École Universelle participant, Sébastien, did not provide discrepant data contradicting this theme. The responses from this category indicated that the coaching experience promoted teacher growth in part through administrators’ use of a strategy of trusting
ECTs to find solutions and then supporting those solutions, rather than dictating solutions from the top down. Marie suggested that administrators’ imposing a single way of solving a problem was potentially counterproductive because “There is not one way of doing things, there are several ways.” Regarding the strategy of trusting and supporting ECTs’ problem-solving, Marie stated, “I believe very much in the fact that the leader is a bit of a precursor, where you give the means, the resources, but you trust your team to carry out projects or to develop certain things.” Marie said that trusting teachers to find and implement their own solutions to challenges was difficult to her personally because it went against the grain of her perfectionism: “Especially when you’re a perfectionist, and I am one, you want things to be done your way, and sometimes you have difficulty trusting the person to whom you give a task to accomplish.”

The strategy of teacher cultivation and support, however, was important for promoting teacher growth. Marie stated, “You want to encourage the person to develop their strengths and use them in their work.” Mélanie reported that Marie’s strategy of not interfering with teachers who were succeeding with their own strategies was applied consistently enough that when Mélanie was teaching effectively during an observation, she sometimes forgot Marie was monitoring her:

At one point, she stayed longer than I thought she would, and so I thought there was something wrong, but no, on the contrary, she was enjoying it! I liked it, and I lost track of time because she liked what was going on!

Mélanie suggested that her becoming unaware of Marie’s continued presence was a sign of her own professional growth: “How do you demonstrate your professional growth? When she came to observe me, you put yourself in your element, you go with the lesson you have planned.” Mélanie said that monitoring made her nervous at first, but that once she had begun to grow as a
professional, “After a while, you pretend that the person [monitoring administrator] is not there because you have other people to deal with.” Thus, Marie and Mélanie agreed that it, in order to promote teacher growth, was effective for administrators to trust teachers to develop and implement their own strategies instead of micromanaging them. Sébastien did not reference this category, either to agree or disagree.

École Universelle Theme 2: Contribution to Teaching Practice Through Support and Facilitation

This theme incorporated four related categories. Reference by Marie, the administrator, was minimal; she only referenced the category “support.” Marie did not reference the other three categories included in this theme either to agree or disagree with them. The other three categories, however, had strong attestation from the ECTs, indicating that even though Marie did not reference the corresponding strategies in her interview, she and the principal were engaging in the strategies for the benefit of ECTs.

Category: Facilitating Professional Development

Sébastien and Mélanie both referred to this category. The category indicated that administrators contributed to ECTs’ teaching practice through the coaching experience by facilitating formal professional development, including training and pairings with more experienced teachers for observation and mentoring. Sébastien stated that the principal facilitated his professional development: “The principal, he shares his perspective, his experience, he encourages me to get better in the profession. Sometimes he has offered me training that I didn't even know existed, like counseling training or maybe other staff members.” Sébastien’s reference to the principal as the facilitator of PD may explain the absence of references to this category by Marie, as Marie was a Vice-Principal. Mélanie reported that her administration
facilitated her PD by pairing her with a more experienced teacher who mentored her. This finding was addressed more fully under the category “opportunity to work with a mentor.”

Regarding the administration’s facilitation of Mélanie’s PD by providing her the opportunity to work with a mentor, Mélanie stated, “The management absolutely supported this. If I’m not mistaken, it was their idea.”

**Category: Opportunity to Work with a Mentor**

Mélanie and Sébastien both referenced this category. The category indicated that one of the ways the coaching experience contributed to teaching practice was by giving ECTs the opportunity to work with a mentor who would guide their professional practice. Mélanie stated that she had the opportunity to work with a mentor during her professional integration program and that the experience was helpful:

>This mentor helped me a lot. We had many meetings together, discussions. I was a specialist, but he was a LEAD teacher, so we were able to have certain exchanges, not just in the specialist field, but in everything to do with teaching. He helped me a lot with that.

Mélanie’s statement that “he helped [her] a lot” with “everything to do with teaching” indicated the wide-ranging contribution the mentoring experience made to developing her professional practice. Mélanie added that her opportunity to work with a mentor occurred, “When I started my professional integration programme, the NTIP.” Sébastien stated, “We had, I think, in total, five days with our mentor in the NTIP.” Sébastien stated that his mentoring experience contributed to his teaching practice because he felt safe asking questions that might have been embarrassing to raise in a different context: “I’m a very self-conscious person, so . . . [mentoring] helped me a lot, honestly. It was just, I had the opportunity to ask some, can I say, stupid
questions? Because sometimes you don't know. I'm new.’’ Thus, both ECTs from École
Univ erselle reported that the opportunity to work with a mentor contributed to developing their
teaching practices.

**Category: Safety in Asking Questions**

Mélanie and Sébastien both contributed to this category. Marie did not reference it, although the ECTs’ responses associated with this category were, in part, references to Marie allowing them to feel safe in coming forward with questions. Mélanie described herself as hesitant to ask for help, but she added that she often wanted reassurance from administrators that her ideas were viable: “I'm someone who rarely asks for help, because it's not in my personality, but I like to ask for clarification: Is what I have in mind a good idea or not?” Mélanie added that she was able to seek the clarification she wanted because “I think I have a very good relationship, especially this year, with both principals [the Principal and Marie, the Vice-
Principal].” Mélanie stated that her relationship with her administrators was good in relation to her seeking clarification because “I'm not embarrassed to knock on their door and ask these questions, and I'm always welcomed, I'm not made to feel like my questions don't make sense. Quite the opposite. It clarifies me, it helps me, it suggests solutions.” Sébastien corroborated Mélanie’s response by stating, “I think [the administrators and I] have a good relationship,” because, “I feel like I can go talk to [Marie] about anything. [The Principal’s] really there to support us and offer help without judgment, and for me that's something very special, to not be judged.” Thus, a key way in which safety in asking questions contributed to ECTs’ teaching practice was by enabling them to come forward with questions and requests for clarification without feeling they were being judged negatively.
Category: Support

Marie and Sébastien contributed to this category. Mélanie did not reference it. This category indicated that administrators contributed to ECTs’ teaching practice by offering support to meet ECTs’ needs. Marie stated that one of the purposes of questioning ECTs was to assess their needs by “Taking the time to ask questions, to see how the person is doing, how we can support them, if there are things we can do on our side to help, I think it's really important.”

Regarding herself and the Principal, Marie stated:

Our role, in listening to what is perhaps not going well [for ECTs], is to, through questioning, see how we can help, what we can do to ensure that the situation improves.

This can be resources, but it can also be collaborations to encourage, try to see how to guide the person to solve the problem and make the situation improve.

Notable in Marie’s response were the statements that administrators’ support for ECTs’ teaching practices could include resources, encouragement, and guidance in problem-solving, depending on what the teacher needed to “ensure that the situation improves.” Sébastien reported receiving guidance and encouragement (motivation) from the principal when he was struggling as a first-year teacher with classroom management. He stated, “It's hard to manage some students, to just find strategies to keep them interested and keep the class managed.” Sébastien stated the following regarding principal’s supporting role as guide and motivator: “The principal is there to motivate us . . . to give his perspective and to help the teachers become better in their profession, in their teaching. Also, to listen to us and help us to achieve our goals.” In turn, Marie indicated that the coaching experience contributes to ECTs’ teaching practice through support for meeting challenges in the form of resources, encouragement, and guidance. Sébastien agreed with
Marie’s response, stating that encouragement and guidance were forms of support she had received.

École Universelle Theme 3: Contribution to Teacher Confidence Through Encouragement and a Focus on Strengths

Although all three École Universelle participants contributed to this theme, one of the three categories included references only from Marie, the administrator, and only one of the three categories had confirmation from all three participants. No participants, however, expressed disagreement with any of the three categories.

Category: Allowing Room for Risk and Error

Marie and Mélanie contributed to this category. In her responses, Marie emphasized the importance of building ECTs’ confidence in experimenting with new strategies, even though experimentation involved an element of risk. Speaking of the mentor who instilled in her the importance of allowing for imperfection in the pursuit of better strategies, Marie stated:

Someone said to me, “You won't be perfect, and that's okay.” I think that was something that reassured me enormously . . . She knew, she was someone who trusted and had confidence in the potential of people, and who trusted that the work would be done. It didn't worry her, but it reassured me a lot . . . She was someone who encouraged mistakes, who always said, “Look, it didn't work today, it's not serious, but tomorrow try to find another way to approach it,” who saw mistakes as a sign of the fact that one is growing in one's profession.

Marie said of the importance of giving teachers confidence by encouraging appropriate risk-taking that it enabled teachers to grow: “When you allow someone to take risks, that's when you see that they learn. That's what teaching is, it's taking risks all the time, it's trying new things,
sometimes being completely wrong, but sometimes it goes really well.” Mélanie confirmed Marie’s responses by stating that her administrators encouraged her in her experiments with new teaching strategies:

When you confirm or affirm a good idea, supported by an observation, it gives you confidence, it makes you feel like, “I'm not doing anything wrong, I'm still in control of the situation,” and it pushes you to continue with these good ideas or even to innovate afterwards. Because, for example, when I've been told several times that I have good ideas and it seems to work, it just leads to other good ideas.

Notable in Mélanie’s response were the statements that the encouragement she received from administrators built her confidence (“it gives you confidence”), and that her increased confidence had two effects. First, the positive reinforcement from administrators encouraged Mélanie to continue using her effective innovations (“it pushes you to continue with these good ideas”). Second, reinforcement from administrators encouraged Mélanie to continue to innovate (“it just leads to other good ideas”).

**Category: Focusing on Encouragement**

All three École Universelle participants contributed to this category. This category indicated that, in giving feedback, administrators focused on encouraging strengths more than on finding fault or pointing out areas where improvement was needed. According to participants, this positive focus increased ECTs’ confidence. Marie stated that her goal in maintaining a positive focus during evaluations was to “Allow everyone to develop their skills in small steps. Not to want people to transform themselves all at once, but to encourage people to proceed in stages and to encourage them as much as possible.” Marie added that building ECTs’ confidence by focusing on the positive during evaluations encouraged them to be more open to constructive
criticism, and regarding one instance in which she needed to identify areas of improvement during her evaluation of a teacher, she stated the following:

As I went along, I think the person relaxed, saw that my aim was not to criticise but more to encourage her, maybe to go and [engage] everyone in her class. I think that the success of a conversation like that, of feedback like that, really comes with respect, and as soon as the teacher sees that your aim is not to diminish what she has done, but on the contrary to build, I think that's where it's winning.

Mélanie agreed with Marie’s responses in stating of the administrator feedback she received during evaluations, “It was much more encouragement, much more of, ‘This is good, so keep it up,’ unlike, ‘No, it wasn't good.’ It was much more of the positive side.” Mélanie said that the effect of focusing on positive feedback was to build her confidence: “There's a sense of security, obviously, when someone says to you, ‘You're doing well.’ You feel good, too, and it pushes you to continue. Emotionally, I feel good.” Sébastien provided further confirmation in stating that after receiving encouragement from administrators, his confidence was increased: “It gave me a lot of confidence, it honestly helps and it shows in my teaching as well.” Sébastien added that a positive focus in administrator feedback reassured him that, “There are people who understand that we're in our first year of teaching, that there's a lot that we don't know. And when we get non-judgmental feedback, we have a chance to improve in our teaching.”

**Category: Outcomes of trust**

Marie was the only École Universelle participant to contribute to this category. The category indicated that administrators built ECTs’ confidence by engaging in trust building, in part by showing respect, and in part by maintaining a positive focus. Marie said that building a trusting relationship with ECTs was her primary concern in the coaching experience: “The first
thing is to work on the relationship. That would be my number one, it would be the relationship of trust with the members of staff.” Further, Marie stated that the first step of building trusting relationships was “to observe, not to want to change things too quickly,” in order to maintain a positive, respectful focus and “to discover the strengths and challenges of each person, and to play on the strengths. So, respect and observation would be my first two pieces of advice.” Thus, Marie indicated that building trust with ECTs was an essential and intentional part of the coaching experience, and that she engaged in it through strategies that built ECTs’ confidence, such as observing them to identify their strengths and treating them with respect.

École Universelle Summary

All three categories associated with Theme 1 (“The coaching experience fostered teacher growth through guided questioning”) included strong confirmation from the École Universelle participants. All three participants agreed that questioning teachers and promoting improvement through monitoring and observation were parts of the coaching experience that contributed to fostering teacher growth through guided questioning. The participants agreed that administrators would observe ECTs giving lessons and, afterwards, question the ECTs to promote mindfulness of areas for improvement and collaborative strategizing. Two École Universelle participants, Marie and Mélanie, further agreed that the coaching experience fostered teacher growth through administrators’ trust and support of ECTs as opposed to micromanaging them, and Sébastien did not disagree.

Under Themes 2 (“The coaching experience contributed to teaching practice through support and facilitation”) and 3 (“The coaching experience contributed to teacher confidence through encouragement and a focus on strengths”), Administrator and ECT perceptions diverged somewhat. Under Theme 2, ECTs emphasized that administrators used the coaching experience
to contribute to ECTs’ teaching practice by facilitating professional development, providing opportunities for ECTs to work with mentors, and enabling ECTs to feel safe asking questions. Marie, the administrator, did not contribute to those categories. Marie agreed with Sébastien, however, that administrators provided support to ECTs in the form of resources, encouragement, and guidance. Under Theme 3, Marie stated that administrators used the coaching experience to build ECTs’ confidence by allowing room for risk and error, focusing on encouragement rather than criticism in giving feedback, and building trust with ECTs. Both ECTs agreed with Marie’s perception related to focusing on encouragement, and Mélanie corroborated Marie’s responses related to allowing room for risk and error.

**School B: École Mondiale**

Three of the six study participants were drawn from École Mondiale. They included an administrator (Jean) and two ECTs (Alice and Stéphanie). Table 3 includes the major themes, the categories from which the themes were formed, and which of the École Mondiale participants contributed to each theme and category.
Table 3

École Mondiale: Major Themes and Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Categories from which theme was formed</th>
<th>Jean (Administrator)</th>
<th>Alice (ECT)</th>
<th>Stéphanie (ECT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1. The coaching experience fostered teacher growth through guided questioning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting improvement through monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning teachers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting and supporting instead of micromanaging</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2. The coaching experience contributed to teaching practice through support and facilitation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating professional development</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to work with a mentor</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety in asking questions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3. The coaching experience contributed to teacher confidence through encouragement and a focus on strengths</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing room for risk and error</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on encouragement</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes of trust</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

École Mondiale Theme 1: Fostering Teacher Growth Through Guided Questioning

Theme 1 was formed from three related categories. The category ‘promoting improvement through monitoring and evaluation’ received no confirmation for the reasons reported under the following subheading. The categories ‘questioning teachers’ and ‘trusting and supporting instead of micromanaging’ received references from Jean and Stéphanie but not from Alice.
**Category: Promoting Improvement Through Monitoring and Evaluation**

It should be noted that none of the École Mondiale participants referenced promoting improvement through monitoring and evaluation because of circumstances outside of administrative control. Alice and Stéphanie reported that the school was shut down through 2 school years, first as the result of a teacher strike, and then as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, neither ECT had had an opportunity to have a lesson monitored by an administrator. Jean agreed with their responses.

**Category: Questioning Teachers**

Two École Mondiale participants stated that administrators questioned ECTs to engage them in collaborative strategizing to address areas for improvement. By engaging ECTs in guided questioning, their growth was fostered. Jean stated that he used the practice of engaging teachers in guided problem-solving by questioning them: “When I evaluate a teacher, I ask him open questions. So that, in order to find the answer, I try to get him to find his own answers.” Jean further described how he engaged ECTs in the process of guided problem-solving through questioning:

I go into the classroom, I look at the strategies, then I can sit down, I look at her planning, I look at how she's modulating her lesson, what the objectives are and the approach. I can provide more open questions to my teachers at these moments.

Jean also stated that he questioned teachers to promote their growth, or, as he put it, to prompt them to “push themselves” and “take [their teaching] to another level”:

What you do is bring [ECTs] to question and make them push themselves. My strengths are going to be more to make him work so that he finds his strategy . . . it's going to be
more about getting people to question in light of what's wrong and to take it to another level.

Stéphanie reported that her growth was promoted through questioning when an administrator assisted her because, “I was having problems in the classroom, discipline-wise.” Of the questioning the administrator engaged in, Stéphanie said, “She would ask me questions like, what can I do to improve, what am I already doing, etc. So, she really tried to solve the problem with me.” Notable in Stéphanie’s response were the references to the problem-solving process as guided both by questioning and collaboration (“she really tried to solve the problem with me”). Alice provided discrepant data indicating that no administrator had engaged her in guided problem solving through questioning, stating, “That hasn’t happened with the principal for me at this point,” because of the teaching strike and COVID-19. Alice did, however, note that observation and monitoring coupled with the use of guiding questioning would have helped her attain her goals had the circumstances been different.

**Category: Trusting and Supporting Instead of Micromanaging**

Confirmation for this category came primarily from Jean, who reported that he used the coaching experience to contribute to ECTs’ growth by trusting and supporting them in implementing their own ideas rather than micromanaging them. Jean said that when ECTs brought an idea for a classroom strategy or initiative to him, his role was to trust and support them:

> It's an important culture that I have with these teachers. The solutions can come from them. Yes, I play a role in contributing and guiding them, we give them things when it doesn't work. That will be more with my beginners, but there are some who, at a given moment, need to be taken to the next level, and that's where I'll try to help them.
Notable in Jean’s response was his reference to teacher growth (“taken to the next level”) as a consequence of trusting and supporting teachers. Stéphanie spoke of an instance in which an administrator supported her rather than micromanaging her after observing her delivering a lesson in the capacity of a parent:

One time one of the principals was a parent of a student in my room, and he just said,

“I'm not worried about your assessment, from a parent's point of view what I saw looked good, so I'm not too worried.”

Stéphanie said that her school administrators trusted her instead of micromanaging her because her performance as a teacher appeared satisfactory: “Everything seemed to be going well, so the principals never came to me with pedagogical questions.” Stéphanie’s responses confirmed Jean’s to the extent that she indicated that the administrators in École Mondiale appeared to use a practice of trusting and supporting ECTs instead of micromanaging them.

**École Mondiale Theme 2: Contribution to Teaching Practice Through Support and Facilitation**

Theme 2 was formed from four related categories. In a pattern similar to the one that appeared in the École Universelle data, only the ECTs referred to the categories ‘facilitating professional development,’ ‘opportunity to work with a mentor,’ and, ‘safety in asking questions.’ Jean and one ECT contributed to the category, ‘support.’

**Category: Facilitating Professional Development**

Alice and Stéphanie referenced this category, and Jean did not reference it. The ECTs indicated that administrators in École Mondiale used the coaching experience to contribute to their teaching practice in part by facilitating their participation in PD. Alice described this
facilitation as one of Jean’s duties: “One part of his role is approving different training.” Alice described Jean as supportive of her professional development:

For example, last summer, I wanted to take the DP coordinator course [International Baccalaureate Diploma Program], and which, although that’s not my role, [Jean] was fine with that. So, he gave the permission for me to be able to take that. Also, I will be doing some MYP [Middle Years International Baccalaureate Program] training next year. So, I see that his role is being in charge of deciding who can do the training.

Stéphanie also reported that administrators supported her teaching practice through the facilitation of professional development: “Of all the principals that I've had, there was never one that I asked for training that said no. It was always yes. So, in relation to that, it certainly facilitates professional growth.” Jean did not reference the facilitation of PD for ECTs, but Alice and Stéphanie both indicated in the quoted responses that he did so.

**Category: Opportunity to Work with a Mentor**

Both École Mondiale ECTs reported that, as part of their coaching experience, they had the opportunity to work with a mentor to improve their teaching practice. Alice reported that Jean provided her with the opportunity to work with a more experienced colleague:

My current principal, I would say he gives us the opportunity to work with a mentor. For myself, it was another math teacher who understood more how things work with this board because I hadn’t worked for this board before. And so, there was an opportunity to have a period off to work with that teacher.

Stéphanie did not receive the opportunity to work with a mentor from Jean, but she had successfully sought mentors in École Mondiale on her own: “I targeted the teachers who I thought were the most helpful and pedagogically strong ones who I knew were good role models.
I would go to them and at that time they would help me.” Stéphanie stated that she was given the opportunity to work with a mentor in a structured setting once: “It happened once, with the management at the [French Catholic School Board], they gave me a whole day to sit with a teacher to learn how to write the report cards.”

**Category: Safety in Asking Questions**

Alice was the only École Mondiale participant who affirmed this category, although Jean and Stéphanie did not express disagreement with it. Alice spoke of the safety she felt in asking questions in the context of describing her positive relationship with Jean, which she attributed mainly to their shared goal of student success but also in part to his accessibility via his open-door policy:

“In terms of [the] leader at the school, I feel that we have a good relationship, I feel like we’re peers, as in the fact that we’re all interested in promoting students’ well-being, as well as helping them to become the best people they can be. I find that he has a positive way of dealing with the students and teachers as well, he’s always got his door open when he can, except for meetings, so we can walk in. So, I think we have a good relationship because I feel that we’re both working towards the same thing.

Most relevant to the present category were Alice’s descriptions of Jean as approachable (“he’s always got his door open . . . so we can walk in”). The perceived alignment, however, between Alice’s and Jean’s care for student success also appeared to contribute to his approachability via a sense of collegiality (“I feel like we’re peers”).

**Category: Support**

Jean and Stéphanie contributed to this category, and Alice did not disagree with it. Jean indicated that he used the coaching experience to contribute to ECTs’ teaching practice by
supporting them through guidance, encouragement, and resources. Jean’s guidance came in the
form of questioning ECTs to engage them in guided problem solving, as when he helped them to
develop teaching strategies by questioning them about their goals and their proposed conditions
for success: “I question them a lot to make the link with the goal [that they, the ECTs, have
established]. What is the goal in [the] lesson and how do you know you’ve reached it?” Jean
provided a specific example in which he supported a teacher who proposed a project by
providing her with encouragement and resources, saying that his role was, “Supporting her in
this project, providing her with the necessary resources, showing my appreciation, I'm sure that it
[…] had an impact.” Of the reason why he considered it vital to support teachers who came to
him with ideas and innovations, Jean stated:

   It's important for me to keep the flame burning in these people. When things aren't going
   well, to go and see . . . You don't give them everything, but enough to support them, to
   keep them going and to make a project grow which will be felt throughout the school and
   the community.

Stéphanie did not reference support received from Jean, but, regarding her principal during her
first year as an ECT, stated:

   She had given us training on alpha children . . . She gave me a book to read. She was
   really there to guide us and support us, especially as she knew that it was a very difficult
   first year of teaching.

Thus, Stéphanie reported that her first principal used the coaching experience to contribute to her
teaching practice through guidance, which took the form of training and distribution of relevant
literature. Stéphanie’s statement that the principal supported them, “especially as she knew that it
was a very difficult first year,” suggested that the principal also provided encouragement and emotional support.

École Mondiale Theme 3: Contribution to Teacher Confidence Through Encouragement and a Focus on Strengths

This theme was formed from three related categories, and all three École Mondiale participants contributed to it. Only Jean contributed to the category, ‘allowing room for risk and error,’ although he referenced this category repeatedly, indicating that he placed importance on it. All three École Mondiale participants contributed to the category ‘focusing on encouragement,’ and two of the participants contributed to the category ‘trust.’

Category: Allowing Room for Risk and Error

Of the three École Mondiale participants, only Jean contributed to this category, although Alice and Stéphanie did not express disagreement with it. Jean emphasized in several responses that allowing room for risk and error was critical not only to building ECTs’ confidence as part of the coaching experience, but to promoting ECTs’ growth. Jean referred to allowing room for risk and error in the context of supporting and encouraging ECTs who proposed new strategies or initiatives:

A teacher who comes to see me, who has an initiative, a project, who is motivated, who has a passion behind him, I don't even know if his project will work, but that doesn't matter. The fact that he's going to experiment, if he screws up, that's okay.

Of the reason for giving ECTs the latitude to experiment, Jean said that it was partly to promote their growth and performance: “I want to offer these opportunities to my teachers as much as to my students . . . The ultimate goal is to get the best from my teachers.” Jean also spoke of allowing ECTs room for experimentation as part of “Valuing them, trusting them, that they have
Jean further described allowing ECTs the latitude to take risks and make mistakes as part of building their confidence:

For me, it's to trust them and to know that we have got your back. It doesn't matter if it fails, you get back up, and I think for anyone who is human, it's a feeling of, you know what, I can experiment. Not only that, there's a feeling of confidence.

Jean’s references to allowing room for risk and error indicated that he perceived ECTs’ growth through the coaching experience as dependent in part on having this freedom. ECTs who felt that they would not be condemned for making mistakes had greater confidence (“there’s a feeling of confidence”) and felt supported (“know that we have got your back”). Building confidence in teachers by making them feel supported was intended to improve teaching practice as well (“the ultimate goal is to get the best from my teachers”).

**Category: Focusing on Encouragement**

All three École Mondiale participants contributed to this theme by indicating that administrators used the coaching experience to build ECTs’ confidence in part by focusing on encouragement rather than criticism. Jean expressed his commitment to focusing on the positive when giving ECTs feedback in stating, “I'm going to be a positive person, I'm going to be in a good mood, I'm going to look at the positive side of every situation.” Alice agreed that Jean focused on encouragement and positive feedback: “I think our discussions have been positive . . . I haven’t had negative feelings or negative comments.” Alice added that the effect of Jean’s positive focus was to build her confidence in her performance, saying that because of her discussions with Jean, “I feel that I’m doing a good job.” Stéphanie said that one principal’s praise and request to use some of her work as an exemplar for other teachers to follow contributed to her confidence: “One of my principals’ asked me to use my report card comments
as an example for the rest of the school. Of course, I felt much better, much more reassured.” She said that the feedback she received from administrators was positive overall, generally taking the form of, “Oh yes, everything seems to be fine.”

**Category: Outcomes of trust**

Alice and Stéphanie contributed to this category by indicating that administrators had succeeded in gaining their trust. Jean did not reference this topic. Alice reported that Jean gained her trust when he reacted to a parent complaint by first obtaining her side of the story. Alice described Jean as consistently advocating for her when parents expressed concerns:

If [Jean] mentions that a parent has spoken to him, then I always feel like he’s on my side to find out what happened, why the student said what they said to their parents. There’s one incident with a student this year, and it turned out that the student had made up a story to get out of trouble, but [Jean] was definitely being sure that I gave my side of the events before he addressed them with the parents.

Thus, Alice reported that Jean gained her trust by consistently advocating for her and seeking her input rather than assuming that parent complaints against her were valid. Stéphanie stated that administrators who were weak in pedagogy were not trustworthy sources of guidance: “If the management is not strong from a pedagogical point of view . . . if they can't follow the conversations, if they can't understand what’s going on in the classroom, what good are their comments?” Stéphanie added that Jean gained her trust by being a reliable and approachable pedagogical guide: “I'll always remember my management, who were there for me, to help me from a pedagogical point of view, even if it was disciplinary, because I felt listened to, I felt supported by the management.”
École Mondiale Summary

An important consideration in evaluating École Mondiale’s data was that the ECTs had not been observed in the classroom by administrators because of school closures. Thus, Alice and Stéphanie were not able to describe this key element of the coaching experience. Alice and Stéphanie, however, were able to confirm Jean’s statements that he engaged teachers in guided problem solving via questioning; that ECTs were supported through guidance, encouragement, and resources; that ECTs were trusted and supported instead of micromanaged; and that feedback was focused on encouragement rather than criticism. Alice and Stéphanie added to Jean’s responses that he was effective in gaining their trust, that he facilitated their professional development by giving them access to training, and that he was approachable with questions. The ECTs reported that they also had the opportunity to work with a mentor. Jean emphasized that he worked to build ECTs’ confidence and promote their professional growth and teaching practice by allowing them room for risk and error.

Cross-Case Analysis

In both within-case analyses, ECTs did not always confirm administrator responses and vice versa. The references across the categories, however, were consistent between the two schools. There are two ways to illustrate this. The first is to look at the number of participants from each school who confirmed each theme and category. Table 4 provides this perspective.
Table 4

Number of Participants from Each Case School Who Contributed to Each Theme and Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Categories from which theme was formed</th>
<th>n of participants contributing to theme or category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>École Universelle (N=3)</td>
<td>École Mondiale (N=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1. The coaching experience fostered teacher growth through guided questioning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting improvement through monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting and supporting instead of micromanaging</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2. The coaching experience contributed to teaching practice through support and facilitation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating professional development</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to work with a mentor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety in asking questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3. The coaching experience contributed to teacher confidence through encouragement and a focus on strengths</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing room for risk and error</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on encouragement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes of trust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notably, discrepancies between cases only appeared in two out of nine categories, excluding the category “Promoting improvement through monitoring and evaluation,” which was not applicable to École Mondiale due to school closures. One discrepancy appeared in the category “Safety in asking questions,” which was referenced by both École Mondiale ECTs but only one École Universelle ECT. The disparity between École Universelle and École Mondiale under this category may be described as minor because Stéphanie, the École Mondiale ECT who did not
contribute to it, also did not provide discrepant data. A second disparity appeared in the category
“trust,” which received mention only from the administrator in École Universelle and only from
the two ECTs in École Mondiale. Again, the disparity may be described as minor because the
participants who did not contribute to this category also did not provide discrepant data
indicating that administrators did not gain ECTs’ trust. The two ECTs at École Universelle,
Mélanie and Sébastien, did not use the word “trust” in their interviews. Jean, the administrator at
École Mondiale, only used the word ‘trust’ with reference to the trust he placed in teachers.
The second perspective from which the cross-case analysis can be viewed is that of which types
of participants (i.e., Administrator or ECT) contributed to each theme and category. Viewing the
data from this perspective may be useful because of the disparities that emerged in both within-
case analyses between Administrator and ECT responses. Table 5 includes a comparison
between ECT and administrator responses.
Table 5  

Comparison Between Administrator and ECT Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Categories from which theme was formed</th>
<th>n of participants contributing to theme or category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrators (N=2)</td>
<td>ECTs (N=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1. The coaching experience fostered teacher growth through guided questioning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting improvement through monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>2 (A x 1; B=N/A)</td>
<td>4 (A x 2; B=N/A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting and supporting instead of micromanaging</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (A x 1; B x 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2. The coaching experience contributed to teaching practice through support and facilitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating professional development</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to work with a mentor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety in asking questions</td>
<td>3 (A x 2; B x 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (A x 1; B x 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3. The coaching experience contributed to teacher confidence through encouragement and a focus on strengths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing room for risk and error</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on encouragement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes of trust</td>
<td>1 (A x 1)</td>
<td>2 (B x 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Parenthetical annotations beginning with “A” indicate the number of participants from École Universelle who contributed to the category. Annotations beginning with “B” indicate the same for École Mondiale.

Of the nine categories that applied to both École Universelle and École Mondiale (excluding “promoting improvement through monitoring and evaluation”), administrator references were the same across eight of them, meaning that either both administrators contributed to the category or both administrators did not reference the category. ECT responses were symmetrical across seven out of nine of the categories, indicating that the same number of École Universelle ECTs and École Mondiale ECTs mentioned the categories. The discrepant category for administrators
was “trust,” because Jean (École Mondiale) did not reference gaining ECTs’ trust as part of the teaching experience. “Trust” was also one of the categories under which different numbers of ECTs from the different schools provided confirmation. Both ECTs in Jean’s school reported that he had gained their trust, and neither ECT in École Universelle referenced trust, although both reported that they had a positive relationship with Marie. A very slight discrepancy emerged in that both École Universelle ECTs referenced feeling safe in asking questions, but only one École Mondiale ECT referred to this category. From the cross-case findings shown Tables 3 and 4, it may be seen that the similarities in the findings from the two schools indicated robust support for all themes and categories. Not only did identical numbers of participants indicate seven of the nine categories (with the two discrepancies being minor), but the references from each participant type matched almost exactly across the two schools.

Chapter Summary

Three major themes were identified in the data from École Universelle participants: (a) the coaching experience fostered teacher growth through guided questioning, (b) the coaching experience contributed to teaching practice through support and facilitation, and (c) the coaching experience contributed to teacher confidence through encouragement and a focus on strengths. The same three themes also emerged from the data provided by École Mondiale participants. A cross-case analysis was conducted to assess common themes and discrepancies across the data from the two case schools. The cross-case analysis indicated that the three themes were strongly confirmed by both case schools. Not only did identical numbers of participants indicate seven of the nine categories (with the two discrepancies being minor), but the references from each participant type matched almost exactly across the two schools. In Chapter 5, the researcher presents the conclusions derived from these findings.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the integration of guiding (reflective) questions used by school administrators in their coaching strategies with ECTs. The study sought to describe the perspectives and experiences of ECTs who have been coached using the reflective questioning model while concurrently reporting the perspectives and experiences of school administrators (i.e., principals and vice-principals) who have adopted this coaching model in their professional practice while supervising, evaluating, and monitoring teachers.

This research was qualitative in nature, and a multiple case study research design was utilized to achieve the purpose and goals of the current study (i.e., the comparison of two elementary Francophone public schools in Ontario within the same school board). Data were collected using interviews which were then analyzed inductively in order to search for patterns and generate themes that captured the experiences and perceptions of the participants.

The findings of the data analysis produced three themes, which served as the foundation of the study’s research findings. Three major themes were identified in the data from participants at École Universelle and École Mondiale (pseudonyms) schools: (a) the coaching experience fostered teacher growth through guided questioning, (b) the coaching experience contributed to teaching practice through support and facilitation, and (c) the coaching experience contributed to teacher confidence through encouragement and a focus on strengths.

This chapter first includes a discussion of the above themes in relation to the extant literature. The researcher then provides the limitations of the study. The next section focuses on the implications to practice and future research. The researcher ends the chapter with a reflection on their research journey.
Interpretation of the Findings

This section includes a presentation of the interpretation of the findings as the researcher describes the ways in which the themes confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline based on the literature. The interpretation of the findings has also been informed by the conceptual framework of Lave and Wenger’s CoP (1991). This section is organized based on the themes that emerged from the analysis.

Guided Questioning from Coaching Led to Teacher Growth

The first theme that emerged from the analysis was that the coaching experience fostered teacher growth through the use of guided questioning. Guided questioning encouraged self-reflection that allowed ECTs to be more mindful about their choices and decisions during teaching. According to Varadharajan and Buchanan (2021), reflective questioning can be regarded as a form of theorizing that encourages teachers to make positive changes within their pedagogical practices. Hence, the current study supports findings about the beneficial effect of exposure to reflective questioning in the professional development of ECTs.

Mentorship and induction programs during educators’ early years of teaching has been inadequate in fostering teacher growth (Kutsyuruba et al., 2018). Teachers need to be more proactive and self-initiated with their own growth in order to be less dependent on mentors (Brock & Grady, 2006). Engaging in reflective questioning provides teachers the opportunity to build the necessary skills in order to take ownership of their own learning through self-reflection (Admiraal et al., 2016). The current findings of this study highlight the facilitating role of guided questioning in the growth of ECTs.

Previous research on the benefits of guided/reflective questioning in coaching had generally shown positive outcomes in terms of learning and overall growth (Pylman & Bell,
The mechanism in which the growth is encouraged among teachers through guided questioning is the ability to think through and find solutions for the complex problems to which teachers are often exposed as educators. For instance, guided questioning involves asking questions about the different aspects of teaching, the application of knowledge to develop plans, the decision-making process, and how these decisions are made (Pylman & Bell, 2021). These reflective questions are hypothesized to bring positive change in the behaviors or thinking processes of teachers (Varadharajan & Buchanan, 2021).

When interpreted using the lens of Lave and Wenger’s CoP (1991) framework, the outcome of reflective questioning is consistent with the anticipated growth made possible by this type of learning experience. More specifically, communities of practice can be instrumental in facilitating the engagement of ECTs to think critically about pedagogy and instructional techniques (Gabay et al., 2019). In this study, the mechanism in which CoPs help teachers is through the collaborative practice of using reflective questioning in the process of coaching.

**Support and Facilitation from Coaching**

The second theme that emerged from the data analysis was that the coaching experience contributed to teaching practice through support and facilitation. This means that reflective questioning was perceived both by school administrators and by the ECTs as contributing positively to their development as teachers. From the perspectives of school administrators and ECTs, reflective questioning appears to be an effective method of professional growth.

The current findings regarding school administrators somewhat differ from what some researchers found. For instance, Walker and Kutsyuruba (2019) found that the effect of school administrators’ support on ECTs is indirect in nature. More specifically, some ECTs have reported that they do not receive direct support from school administrators. Instead, this support
manifests in the overall school climate that facilitates teacher growth such as through the availability of policies and access to programs. Hong et al. (2018) also underscored the indirect effect of school administrators in developing ECTs’ ability to cope and develop the skills necessary to enhance their professional identity as educators. In the context of this study, the ECTs received direct support from their school administrator, demonstrating that principals and vice-principals can help to facilitate a CoP that allows for ECTs to flourish, all while providing direct coaching to improve specific professional skills. Thus, the study confirms that school administrators can concurrently have a direct and indirect impact on the professional growth of ECTs.

The current study adds to the body of literature affirming the effectiveness of the use of reflective questioning in coaching novice educators versus the traditional forms of PD offered in today’s schools. Receiving coaching and mentoring from other professionals in the field is generally considered an important resource for preservice and ECTs to enhance their teaching skills (Wetzel et al., 2018). As noted from the major themes that emerged in this study, the coaching experience fostered teacher growth through guided questioning, contributed to teaching practice through support and facilitation, and contributed to teacher confidence through encouragement and a focus on strengths. Some other types of support that can be provided to ECTs include instilling a sense of belongingness, offering emotional support, pedagogical assistance, and the availability of space (Shields & Murray, 2017). Through collaboration with their administrator coaches, ECTs are able to gain the skills needed in order to learn various aspects of teaching that could be difficult to accomplish without the assistance of others. Despite this beneficial outcome, the use of reflective questioning is not widely practiced when providing support to new teachers (Matsko et al., 2020). The standard coaching format remains rooted from
the traditional sit-and-get setup, formally known as traditional PD offered through workshops that often remove teachers from their classroom, wherein ECTs do not receive consistent support and training (Toll, 2018).

When interpreted within the lens of Lave and Wenger’s CoP (1991) framework, support and facilitation from the school administrators are consistent with the social interaction component of this model. Lave and Wenger (1991) described communities of practice as environments in which learning is achieved through participation or through situated learning. The finding is also consistent with the work of Cox (2013) who found that, through CoP, ECTs are able to further develop their interest in the science of the teaching process, enhance their level of comfort as part of the university community, and further increase their knowledge of and interest in the profession of teaching and learning. As McDonald and Mercieca (2021) noted, CoP is valuable to ECTs as a result of being involved in learning groups and exchanging ideas. Through guided/reflective questioning, coaches are able to offer ECTs the support they need and facilitate opportunities to learn, reflect, self-assess, and self-evaluate in order to be critically engaged towards different aspects of teaching that can further enhance their knowledge and skills.

**Encouragement and Strength-Based Coaching**

The third and final theme that emerged from the data analysis was that the coaching experience contributed to teacher confidence through encouragement and through the school administrators’ focus on ECT’s strengths. This theme highlights the importance of positive reinforcements in enhancing the effectiveness of coaches in facilitating better learning outcomes and insights among ECTs. Both encouragement and strength-based coaching from the school administrators are consistent with the positive approach to mentoring or supervision wherein
principles of positive psychology are adopted in order to focus on the positive aspects of individuals. As Kutsyuruba and Godden (2019) noted, mentoring and coaching are mechanisms that facilitate the support of educators, particularly their well-being and ongoing development and learning. Mentoring and coaching can help ECTs thrive, foster a healthier work-life balance, develop a support system, increase agency, and enhance access to opportunities.

The literature generally supports the importance of encouragement in the ability of ECTs to develop and enhance their skills as educators (Ketsing et al., 2020; Pylman & Bell, 2021). Encouragement through coaching facilitates more reflection on particular aspects that are relevant to the responsibilities of teachers, which may include how certain decisions can be better conceptualized and implemented (Pylman & Bell, 2021). The current research study reaffirms the importance of encouragement even when delivered through the strategy of reflective questioning.

In terms of the focus on the strengths of the ECTs, the use of positive psychology principles such as encouragement and positive support have been found to be beneficial to teachers (Lowery, 2019). The current study supports this strength-based principle based on the experiences of teachers who have been exposed to reflective questioning in their coaching sessions. The strength-based emphasis of coaching also means that learning is facilitated not just by the content/curriculum, but also in terms of the environment that is cultivated during the process. Coaches can play a role in helping ECTs become more proficient in various aspects of being an educator (Kutsyuruba & Godden, 2019).

When interpreting this theme within the lens of Lave and Wenger’s CoP (1991) framework, the role of having an encouraging environment in enhancing the effectiveness of teachers is highlighted. Communities of practice are successful because they provide an
environment where ECTs can engage in reflective practices regarding their own teaching (Ketsing et al., 2020). These environments should facilitate “deep listening, respecting others, suspending assumptions, and voicing personal truths” (Ketsing et al., 2020, p. 375). Schön’s (1987) “reflection-on-action” used within CoPs can help learners reflect on how their professional practice can be altered after the learning experience has already happened. In this study, principals in the CoP used this form of reflective coaching through guiding questioning in order to help provide high quality feedback to teachers. The supportive benefits of being part of a CoP is expansive in that they encompass professional and personal development as an educator (Cox, 2013). CoP gives support to ECTs through access to learning groups and exposure to different ideas that may not always be available without being part of a professional community (McDonald & Mercieca, 2021). Although the ECTs in this study had not been explicitly integrated into learning groups, such as professional learning communities (PLCs), they had the opportunity to work with different professionals within their respective CoPs: administrators, lead teachers, and mentors. This difference demonstrates that the various interactions within a school, whether they be facilitated or not, can act in the place of formal learning groups contributing to the professional growth of ECTs. The social aspect of coaching also maximizes the learning that ECTs are able to be exposed to as a result of the CoP created from coaching and reflective questioning.

The Outcome of Trust

The outcome and impact of trust were equally important findings contributing to overall encouragement and strength-based coaching in the relationships between ECTs and school administrators. This study proposes that trust was an important foundation in nurturing a positive coaching experience for PD, while contributing to teacher confidence. Kutsyuruba and Walker
(2021) have described trust as “the extent to which one engages in a reciprocal interaction and a relationship in such a way that there is a willingness to be vulnerable to another and to assume risk with positive expectations and a degree of confidence that the other party will possess some semblance of benevolence, care, competence, honesty, openness, reliability, respect, hope, and wisdom” (p. 27).

Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999), have noted that one of the most important elements in the relationship of trust is benevolence, which contributes to establishing confidence. This sense of benevolence seemed to transpire through participant responses, as an important quality upheld by school administrators in this study. According to Kutsyuruba and Walker (2021), “creating, sustaining, and fostering trust are imperative activities for school leaders” and that “trust and trust dynamics are essential for successful principalship” (p. 47). Thus, the findings suggest that school administrators in this study, through the facilitation of trust, were able to establish outcomes of confidence and encouragement among ECTs in their respective schools, emulating qualities of successful principalship.

**Limitations of the Study**

This research study had several limitations that may have potentially compromised the scalability of the findings and the overall trustworthiness of the study. These study limitations included potential researcher bias, small data set (i.e., French schools that practice educational coaching), language barriers, contextual bias, and the use of self-reported data. These limitations are identified and discussed in this section.

The first limitation was potential bias given that the researcher conducted this study as a practitioner and school administrator who is familiar with the approach of reflective questioning within educational coaching contexts. This could have an effect on the interpretation and even
collection of data, as the researcher holds a position of power that creates a power dynamic between himself and the teacher participants. To mitigate possible influences by the researcher on the teacher participants, a graduate student conducted the interviews with the ECTs. This decision helped to avoid possible biases and mitigated the power dynamics felt between the participants and the interviewer. Furthermore, the literature review was written using a deductive, rather than inductive approach. This may have created bias by omitting studies that discredited, criticized, or questioned the use of coaching for PD using reflective questions. The majority of the studies cited viewed coaching and reflective practice as positive elements for PD.

Another limitation was the small data set to be collected and analyzed. Only two schools in a small, Francophone school board participated in this study. The small scope of the research context potentially created a possible issue with regard to the small data set. The researcher, however, was able to produce themes that suggest sample sufficiency. It is also important to mention that the schools were not chosen randomly by the Superintendent they were “lighthouse institutions” that had proven best practices in the field of reflective coaching for PD.

Another limitation was the language barrier between the researcher and the participants, given that French was their first language. The researcher translated the interview protocol, and the interviews were conducted in French. For the ECTs, the interviews were conducted by a Francophone graduate student. However, the methodological procedures relating to coding and interpretation of data were conducted in English. Even though professional translations were sought, the language barrier posed potential limitations because the translation may not have fully captured the nuances and overall meaning of what was said by the participants.

Another potential limitation of the context of the study was time-sensitivity, as the data collection was conducted at the end of the school year in single interviews. Moreover, due to the
COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher was unable to observe the participants in their professional settings, creating a barrier in terms of interpreting each school climate and contextual descriptions of the two sites. Thus, there was little time to acquire all of the rich data that could be gathered in a longer, more comprehensive and elaborate study. Certain approaches and strategies are constantly changing within the educational system, which could have affected the way in which educational coaching through reflective questioning was perceived and interpreted.

Finally, the use of self-reported data was a potential limitation of this study. Self-reported data can be a limitation as a result of selective memory, inaccuracies, and exaggeration (Brutus et al., 2013). Using observation as an instrument for data collection was neither practiced nor adopted in the context of this study. Semi-structured individualized interviews were used as the main method for gathering salient participant data. Hence, it was not possible for the researcher to evaluate the veracity of the data as the participants were self-reporting through the answers provided during the interviews. This limitation, however, permitted the researcher to truly understand the perceptions of the participants.

**Implications**

Based on the findings that were reported in this study, there are corresponding implications to future research. In the sections to follow, the researcher discusses the implications for policy, theory, practice, and further research.

**Implications for Policy**

Reflective questioning is one of the least provided types of support to ECTs (Matsko et al., 2020). The lack of use of reflective questioning in supporting teachers further emphasizes the failure of school administrators to contribute in positive ways to the professional growth of ECTs. The direct approach of coaching is the key element of this style of PD, as it reduces the
gap between teachers and administrators. This study reinforces the need to integrate reflective questioning in various training programs for ECTs. Based on the findings reported from this study, school administrators should be able to promote the use of guided questioning in structured learning programs and other learning opportunities for ECTs. This model of PD is inexpensive when compared to formal workshops that require paid facilitators and relies solely on the expertise of the CoP (i.e., administrators and teachers), wherein the professionals within the school exchange experience, expertise, and contribute to a flourishing professional environment for ECTs.

The implication of the findings for policy is that the use of guided or reflective questioning in the coaching of ECTs could lead to more effective professionals who are able to engage in meaningful pedagogical instruction. The findings of the current study add to the need to have a more concerted effort to integrate this type of strategy in the coaching of Ontario’s NITs. When ECTs have access to effective PD through coaching, they are more likely to provide quality education to a diverse group of students.

Implications for Theory

The current study was framed by Lave and Wenger’s CoP (1991) model. The theoretical implication of the study is that Lave and Wenger’s CoP (1991) framework provides a conceptual foundation for the effectiveness of reflective questioning in the coaching process of ECTs. CoPs have been regarded as an important source of learning and support among teachers (Patton & Parker, 2017; Shields & Murray, 2017). It is important to note that CoPs are not defined by a specific number of participants, but rather “a group of people who share a common concern, set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 4). According to this definition,
the coaching relationship and interactions between ECTs and administrators may constitute a CoP. Thus, the current study adds to the body of literature regarding CoPs in the educational setting by focusing on the use of reflective questioning and coaching as mechanisms for learning among beginning career teachers.

The current study adds theoretical support for the CoP as the theoretical foundation for reflective questioning. Because the current study was qualitative in nature, the findings were intended to be the foundation of future quantitative research that may also utilize the CoP as a framework for theoretically situating why ECTs can benefit from reflective questioning during coaching sessions. Hence, the current study provides a theoretical rationale for why the use of reflective questioning is an effective coaching strategy for enhancing the learning and overall professional growth of ECTs.

Another theoretical implication of the findings is that this study adds support for the beneficial effects of CoP to educators. Previous researchers have highlighted the benefits of CoP in terms of gaining access to coaching, being exposed to different ideas that facilitate growth, and enhancing overall well-being (Cox, 2013; McDonald & Mercieca, 2021). The current study reaffirms the benefit of CoP to ECTs and highlights the theoretical strength of CoP as a framework for understanding professional growth among teachers.

**Implications for Practice**

The practical implications of the research hinge on the use of reflective questioning in the coaching process so that teachers flourish as new educators and school administrators become more effective and efficient supervisors, assuming their role as educational leaders. The efficacy of teacher achievement may be influenced by increased contact with an effective coach who can help facilitate reflective practice (Ross, 1992; Schön, 1987). Further, certain qualities should be
demonstrated by a coach working in an effective coaching relationship: connectivity, acceptance, and trustworthiness (Toll, 2018). The ECT participants in this study mentioned these three qualities among their administrator coaches. The school administrators corroborated these findings with the same responses, recognizing the importance of these key coaching qualities. Thus, the findings suggest that the reflective questioning process contributed not only to the professional growth of ECTs, but also the coaching skills of school administrators. Reflective questioning is not widely practiced when providing support to new teachers (Matsko et al., 2020). Thus, this lack of implementation of reflective questioning underscores the practical significance of the research findings in terms of affirming the need to expand the use of guided questions in the professional development of ECTs.

The current research study was based on the perspectives of both teachers and school administrators and provided a more nuanced and balanced understanding of how reflective questioning can help supervisors become more effective coaches as well as how reflective questioning can help ECTs grow as educators. The findings of the current study highlight the need to use reflective questioning in various types of PD such as workshops, within mentoring relations, and during coaching sessions.

**Implications for Further Research**

Recommendations for future research pertain to expansion of research on the benefits of reflective questioning among ECTs, validation of the findings using quantitative research designs such as correlational design, and the congruence and divergence between coaches and ECTs regarding the effectiveness of reflective questioning in training and professional development.
Expansion of the Understanding of the Benefits of Reflective Questioning

One recommendation for future research is to expand the findings regarding the benefits of reflective questioning in the coaching process among ECTs. More specifically, future researchers could further examine the different ways in which reflective questioning can benefit school administrators and ECTs. For instance, future researchers could examine how the use of reflective questioning may help school administrators, coaches, or mentors become more effective trainers. Conversely, future researchers could focus on the different aspects of the professional identity and responsibility of ECTs that can be enhanced through reflective questioning.

Validation Through Quantitative research

Another recommendation for future research is to conduct several quantitative studies in order to confirm, validate, and expand the findings of the current study. More specifically, conducting a correlational research study may provide further empirical support for the effectiveness of reflective questioning in coaching in terms of teacher growth and teacher competence. Similarly, it is important to further explore the effectiveness of school administrators as educational leaders and supervisors to understand how their professional competencies affect the results of the reflective questioning coaching model for PD. Other concepts such as encouragement, support, and strength-based assistance can also be quantitatively analyzed in relation to the use of reflective questioning in coaching ECTs.

A more advanced experimental or pretest/posttest study could also be utilized in order to determine the effectiveness of an intervention that uses reflective questioning in mentoring or coaching of teachers. These types of research studies could advance the professional literature on
the use of guided/reflective questioning in principal-to-teacher coaching by providing additional empirical support for its relevance and significance in this type of educational setting.

**Convergence and Divergence of School Administrators and Teachers**

The final recommendation for future research is to expand the research findings regarding the congruence and divergence between coaches and ECTs regarding the benefits of reflective questioning. The current research supports that there is a high level of congruence between the coaches and ECTs regarding the positive perceptions and experiences of reflective questioning. A possible line of research is to find specific ways in which coaches and ECTs converge or diverge in terms of how reflective questioning can be better integrated into the training of teachers, including in different professional development opportunities for beginning teachers.

**Conclusion**

In the current study, the researcher explored the integration of guiding (reflective) questions used by school administrators in their coaching strategies with ECTs. The perspectives of both school administrators and teachers served as the basis for the findings, which means that their unique experiences were considered in this study. Hence, the inclusion of both the perspectives of supervisors (for the school administrators who provide coaching) and the educators is a strength of this study.

The findings suggest that both school administrators and ECTs find the use of reflective questioning beneficial in the coaching process and provides a more robust support for the use of this method of coaching strategy. The mutually beneficial perceptions about the use of reflective questioning suggest that this strategy is effective from the perspectives of coaches as the administrator-trainers as well as from the perspectives of ECTs as the trainees. This information
provides added empirical support for the use of reflective questioning to benefit both administrators and ECTs.

The findings that were reported in this study have both theoretical and practical implications. Lave and Wenger’s CoP (1991) framework was explored in this study as a theoretical basis for explaining why the use of reflective questioning is beneficial for improving the learning opportunities for ECTs. Specifically, CoPs facilitate better coaching and higher learning, due to the social connections built through the interactions between the coach and the coachee. This study affirms that this social interaction between coaches and teachers becomes more meaningful through the strategic use of reflective questioning.

In terms of the practical significance of this research, the use of reflective questioning in the coaching process enabled teachers to grow as educators. Likewise, school administrators also grew as educational leaders and supervisors. Reflective questioning is not widely practiced when providing support to new teachers (Matsko et al., 2020). Thus, this current research study adds to the body of literature supporting the need to use reflective questioning in the coaching process among ECTs.

My research journey made me reflect on the needs of ECTs in order to grow professionally. A combination of self-initiated efforts and school support network through school administrators and coaches can provide the groundwork needed to facilitate the growth of ECTs. As a researcher, I believe that scholars can contribute to this community of resources through the exploration of different strategies and methods that can further the growth of ECTs. The findings identified guided questioning as one of these methods that can be particularly helpful in the professional growth of ECTs.
I believe that the findings of study can be used as basis for more widespread use of guided questioning in the support of ECTs. ECTs are particularly in need of receiving effective support from coaches in order to be socialized more smoothly into the profession. The findings of this study can be a source of empirical evidence regarding the benefits of using guided questioning in enhancing the skills of ECTs in order to facilitate their growth and development.
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https://doi.org/10.1080/13674580500200277


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Appendix A: School Administrator Interview Protocol

Administrator Interview
Professional background; experiences with coaching as a teacher; knowledge of guiding questioning in educational coaching and theoretical frameworks; current use of guiding questioning in educational coaching; professional growth of newly inducted teachers following guiding questioning in educational coaching used by the principal; effects on the principal-teacher relationship in the context of educational coaching.

Research Questions
All research questions will be answered from the perspectives of teachers and principals. This study is guided by the following central research question:

What are the perceptions of Ontario’s school administrators and ECTs, regarding the use of reflective questions in principal-to-teacher coaching methods?

To address this research question, the following four sub-questions have been developed:

1) What do school administrators and ECTs identify as the benefits to the coaching model of PD?

2) What do school administrators and ECTs identify as the barriers to the coaching model of PD?

3) Based on their own experiences as coaches who use guiding questions to promote self-reflection, what recommendations and strategies do principals offer to peers new to the model of reflective questioning?

4) How do ECTs believe that the coaching experience contributed to their teaching practice and overall feelings of competence and confidence?

Principal Interview Protocol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer:</th>
<th>Interviewee:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
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<td>Place:</td>
<td>Focus:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interview Questions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Patton’s Categories</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1) What led you to seek a position in administration as a Principal?</td>
<td>Behaviours and experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) How long have you been in the field of education?</td>
<td>Background</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Tell me about how you were introduced to the field of educational coaching?</td>
<td>Background</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) What do you know about the use of guiding questioning within the context of educational coaching?</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) What theories or approaches influence your use of guiding questioning in educational coaching strategies?</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
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<td>6) Please describe the professional development received by your school board, to help you develop your skills as an educational coach?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7) When reflecting back on your first years of teaching, what were your experiences with principal to teacher coaching?</td>
<td>Behaviours and experiences</td>
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<td>8) How did you feel as a teacher receiving coaching</td>
<td>Feelings and emotions</td>
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<td>9) Please provide some examples of how these experiences have an effect on your interactions and communications while using guiding questioning integrated into your coaching methods?</td>
<td>Sensory experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) How do you evaluate your effectiveness as a coach who uses guiding questions?</td>
<td>Opinions and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) What are some examples of the type of feedback you provide when using guiding questioning coaching methods with your newly inducted teaching staff?</td>
<td>Behaviours and experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) How do coaches promote a culture of professional learning and reflective practice through the use of guiding questions amongst newly inducted teachers?</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>13) How do newly inducted teachers demonstrate professional growth following your coaching sessions that utilize guiding questioning?</td>
<td>Sensory experiences</td>
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<td>14) Please provide examples of how</td>
<td>Sensory experiences</td>
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newly inducted teachers demonstrate their professional growth, as a result of your guiding questioning coaching methods?

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Experience Type</th>
<th>Question Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15) What recommendations would you offer to your school administrator peers that are new to the model of reflective questioning?</td>
<td>Sensory experiences</td>
<td>Direct question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) What coaching strategies would you offer to those same peers?</td>
<td>Sensory experiences</td>
<td>Specifying question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Why would you offer those strategies?</td>
<td>Sensory experiences</td>
<td>Probing question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) How do you feel about moving to the final question?</td>
<td>Feelings and emotions</td>
<td>Structuring question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) How has your role as a coach affected the relationship between principal-supervisor and beginner-teacher?</td>
<td>Feelings and emotions</td>
<td>Indirect question</td>
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Appendix B: Early Career Teacher Interview Protocol

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<th>Early Career Teacher Interview</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professional background; experiences with coaching as a teacher; knowledge of teaching and learning as well as important theoretical frameworks; professional growth opportunities following educational coaching sessions; effects on the principal-teacher relationship in the context of educational coaching.</td>
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<th>Research Questions</th>
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| *All research questions will be answered from the perspectives of teachers and principals.*  
This study is guided by the following central research question: |

*What are the perceptions of Ontario’s school administrators and ECTs, regarding the use of reflective questions in principal-to-teacher coaching methods?*  
To address this research question, the following four sub-questions have been developed: |

1) What do school administrators and ECTs identify as the benefits to the coaching model of PD?  
2) What do school administrators and ECTs identify as the barriers to the coaching model of PD?  
3) Based on their own experiences as coaches who use guiding questions to promote self-reflection, what recommendations and strategies do principals offer to peers new to the model of reflective questioning?  
4) How do ECTs believe that the coaching experience contributed to their teaching practice and overall feelings of competence and confidence? |

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<th>Teacher Interview Protocol</th>
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<td><strong>Interviewer:</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th>Place: Interview Questions</th>
<th>Patton’s Categories</th>
<th>Kvale’s Questions</th>
<th>Field Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) What led you to seek a position as a school teacher?</td>
<td>Behaviours and experiences</td>
<td>Introducing question</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) How long have you been in the field of education?</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Direct question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) How does your principal use educational coaching in your school setting?</td>
<td>Behaviours and experiences</td>
<td>Indirect question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Please describe your relationship with your school principal, focusing specifically of his or her role as a coach facilitating your professional growth.</td>
<td>Behaviours and experiences</td>
<td>Indirect question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) What type of professional development activities have been offered to you this year, that have been a direct result of educational coaching by your school principal?</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Specifying question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) How do you perceive the role of a school principal as an educational coach?</td>
<td>Behaviours and experiences</td>
<td>Indirect question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Please describe how you feel as a teacher receiving coaching from a school principal.</td>
<td>Sensory experiences</td>
<td>Probing question</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8) What are some examples of the guiding questions that your principal</td>
<td>Behaviours and experiences</td>
<td>Specifying question</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Type of Information</td>
<td>Type of Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>9) Please cite some examples of feedback your principal provides when using guiding questioning during your coaching sessions.</td>
<td>Behaviours and experiences</td>
<td>Probing question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) When it comes to your professional growth, how does your principal’s feedback affect your practice?</td>
<td>Opinions and values</td>
<td>Indirect question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) How has your principal’s role as an educational coach affected his/her/their perception of you as a teacher?</td>
<td>Opinions and values</td>
<td>Indirect question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) How do you demonstrate your professional growth during an observation by your school principal?</td>
<td>Sensory experiences</td>
<td>Specifying question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) How has your principal’s feedback contributed to your confidence and feelings of competency?</td>
<td>Feelings and emotions</td>
<td>Indirect question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) How has your principal encouraged you to improve and grow professionally through the use of guiding questions?</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Indirect question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) How do you feel about moving to the final question?</td>
<td>Feelings and emotions</td>
<td>Structuring question</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16) How has the principal’s role as a</td>
<td>Feelings and emotions</td>
<td>Indirect question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coach affected your relationship with him/her/they/them?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Letter of Information and Consent Form

Study Title: The perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice

Name of Principal Investigator: Thomas Rinshed, Faculty of Education, Queen’s University

Name of Supervisor: Benjamin Kutsyuruba, Faculty of Education, Queen’s University

I am inviting early career teachers (in their first five years of teaching), and their school administrator to take part in 60-minute semi-structured interviews for a research study. The study will seek to describe the perspectives and experiences of early career teachers that have lived through and have been coached using guiding questions. In contrast, the study will also explore the perspectives and experiences of school administrators (principals and vice-principals) who have adopted this coaching model in their professional practice while supervising, evaluating, and monitoring teachers. The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. There is little risk that some of the questions may upset you. If you feel upset after the interview, please call the Telephone Aid Line Kingston (TALK) at 613-544-1771. You will receive a $25 gift card to Staples for participating.

Please note that I am a school administrator in the French Public School Board of Eastern Ontario. I will only be conducting the interviews for the principals and vice-principals participating in this study. A graduate student from the Faculty of Education will be asking the questions to the early career teachers who will be participating. There will be a 15-minute preparation period prior to the start of each interview. During this time, questions will be read aloud beforehand, with the intent of ensuring that participants understand the intended outcome of each question.

Participation is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. You can stop your participation at any time by telling the interviewer, without any impact on your professional standing. You may withdraw your participation from the study up until June 10th, 2021 by contacting me at 15trr1@queensu.ca. You may request to have your data withdrawn from the study up until July 2nd, 2021 by contacting me at 15trr1@queensu.ca. If a participant chooses to withdraw their data, they will still receive compensation for participating.

Your confidentiality will be protected to the extent permitted by applicable laws. I will do this by replacing your name with a pseudonym in all publications and a study ID number in all study records. The study data will be stored on an encrypted hard drive on Queen’s University servers. The code file that links real names with pseudonyms and study ID numbers will be stored securely and separately from the data on an encrypted USB key. Access to study data is limited to those researchers on the study team (myself and the supervisor), as well as the Queen's General Research Ethics Board (GREB) who may request access to study data to ensure that the researcher(s) have or are meeting their ethical obligations in conducting this research. The de-identified data set will be made freely accessible in the Queen's University's Institutional Repository after a 5 year embargo period. The code file identifying your pseudonym and study ID number will be permanently erased from the encrypted USB key five years after study closure.
To protect the professional and personal interests of early career teachers, additional measures of confidentiality will be implemented. The graduate student (RA) will provide the principal researcher with files that have all identifying information removed. Personal identifying information will never be shared with the researcher, or any other employee of the school board. The information collected will not be used for any professional purposes, and refusal to participate will not incur professional or personal repercussions.

I plan to publish the results of this study in my thesis and present them at conferences. I will be including quotes from the interviews when presenting my findings. I will never include any real names with quotes. I will do my best to make sure quotes do not identify participants. During the interview, please let me know if you say anything you do not want me to quote.

If you have any ethics concerns please contact the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or email chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact me at 15trr1@queensu.ca or 613-547-2556. You may also contact my thesis supervisor, Benjamin Kutsyuruba at ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca or 613-533-3049.

This Letter of Information provides you with the details to help you make an informed choice. All your questions should be answered to your satisfaction before you decide whether or not to participate in this research study. Keep one copy of the Letter of Information for your records and return one copy to the researcher, Thomas Rinshed.

You have not waived any legal rights by consenting to participate in this study.

By signing below, I am verifying that: I have read the Letter of Information and all of my questions have been answered.

☐ Yes, you have my permission to use quotes/audio record/video record
☐ No, you do not have my permission to use quotes/audio record/video record

__________________________________________  _____________________________  _____________
Signature of Participant   PRINTED NAME   Date

__________________________________________  _____________________________  _____________
Signature of Person Conducting   PRINTED NAME & ROLE   Date

the Consent Discussion
Hello;

My name is Thomas Rinshed and I am currently completing research for my Master of Education thesis, entitled “Perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice”. I am also a principal within your school board. The purpose my study will be to explore the integration of guiding questions used by school principals in their coaching strategies with newly inducted teachers. The study will seek to describe the perspectives and experiences of early career teachers [ECTs] that have lived through, and have been coached using the reflective questioning model, while concurrently exploring the perspectives and experiences of school administrators (principals and vice-principals) who have adopted this coaching model in their professional practice while supervising, evaluating, and monitoring teachers.

Your school board has nominated your school as an institution that integrates reflective questioning in principal-to-teacher coaching strategies. As such, I would like to invite your school to participate in this study.

If you agree, this research will entail interviewing one member of your school’s administration that has engaged in reflective questioning when coaching early career teachers within the current school year. On your part, I will require: a list of your school’s administrators; and a list of all ECTs at your school who are either participating in the NTIP program, or have five years of experience or less. Two ECTs currently registered in Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program who have been coached by the participating administrator, will also be recruited for the study. Participants will be recruited through emails sent out using your school’s staff directory.

Both ECTs and principals will be interviewed separately and only once, using semi-structured interviews, as the information collected cannot be directly observed. The interviews will occur over a period of four weeks, through pre-scheduled and confidential Zoom videoconferences. This study will rely upon reported information from participants being interviewed, to construct knowledge through collected interview data. The study would also consist of possible follow-up questions from our initial interview. At your request, you will also have the chance to review the transcript of our interview. The total time requirement for participating would be no more than one hour. Every effort will be made to protect both you and your school’s confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms.

Currently, there is a 25$ gift card offered to participants in this study.

Your school board, [insert name of school board] has given ethical clearance for this study to be conducted.

Please find attached both the Letter of Information for the Study, as well as a sample consent form. These should answer any additional questions you may have. However, if they do not, or you wish to ask me (the principal researcher) any additional questions, please do not hesitate to call me on my cell phone at 519-562-0037 or email me at 15trr1@queensu.ca.

Please let me know by May 1st whether you would like to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time. I hope to hear from you soon.
Thomas Rinshed, Master of Education Candidate
Queen’s University, Faculty of Education
Duncan MacArthur Hall
511 Union Street, Kingston, ON, Canada
K7M 5R7
Email: 15trr1@queensu.ca
Phone: 519-562-0037
Hello;

My name is Thomas Rinshed and I am currently completing research for my Master of Education thesis, entitled “Perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice”. I am also a principal within your school board. The purpose of my study will be to explore the integration of guiding questions used by school principals in their coaching strategies with newly inducted teachers. The study will seek to describe the perspectives and experiences of early career teachers [ECTs] that have lived through, and have been coached using the reflective questioning model, while concurrently exploring the perspectives and experiences of school administrators (principals and vice-principals) who have adopted this coaching model in their professional practice while supervising, evaluating, and monitoring teachers.

Your school administrator has identified you as an early career teacher who engages in principal-to-teacher coaching sessions. As such, I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Both ECTs and principals will be interviewed separately and only once, using semi-structured interviews, as the information collected cannot be directly observed. The interviews will occur over a period of four weeks, through pre-scheduled and confidential Zoom videoconferences. This study will rely upon reported information from participants being interviewed, to construct knowledge through collected interview data. The study would also consist of possible follow-up questions from our initial interview. At your request, you will also have the chance to review the transcript of our interview. The total time requirement for participating would be no more than 1 hour. Every effort will be made to protect both you and your school’s anonymity through the use of pseudonyms.

Currently, there is a 25$ gift card offered to participants in this study.

Your school board, [insert name of school board] has given ethical clearance for this study to be conducted.

Please find attached both the Letter of Information for the Study, as well as a sample consent form. These should answer any additional questions you may have. However, if they do not, or you wish to ask me (the principal researcher) any additional questions, please do not hesitate to call me on my cell phone at 519-562-0037 or email me at 15trr1@queensu.ca.

Please let me know by May 1st whether you would like to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time. I hope to hear from you soon.

_______________________________________
Thomas Rinshed, Master of Education Candidate
Queen’s University, Faculty of Education
Duncan MacArthur Hall
511 Union Street, Kingston, ON, Canada
K7M 5R7
Email: 15trr1@queensu.ca
Phone: 519-562-0037
Appendix F: Supervisory Officer Recruitment Email

Hello;

My name is Thomas Rinshed and I am currently completing research for my Master of Education thesis, entitled “Perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice”. I am also a principal within your school board. The purpose of my study will be to explore the integration of guiding questions used by school principals in their coaching strategies with newly inducted teachers. The study will seek to describe the perspectives and experiences of early career teachers [ECTs] that have lived through, and have been coached using the reflective questioning model, while concurrently exploring the perspectives and experiences of school administrators (principals and vice-principals) who have adopted this coaching model in their professional practice while supervising, evaluating, and monitoring teachers.

I have identified your school board as an organization that integrates reflective questioning in principal-to-teacher coaching strategies within many of its schools. As such, I would like to invite two schools from your board to participate in this study.

If you agree, this research will entail interviewing one member of each school’s administration team, that has engaged in reflective questioning when coaching early career teachers within the current school year. Two ECTs currently registered in Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program (or who have five years of experience or less) who have been coached by the participating administrator, will also be recruited for the study. Participants will be recruited through emails sent out using each school’s staff directory.

Both ECTs and principals will be interviewed separately and only once, using semi-structured interviews, as the information collected cannot be directly observed. The interviews will occur over a period of four weeks, through pre-scheduled and confidential Zoom videoconferences. This study will rely upon reported information from participants being interviewed, to construct knowledge through collected interview data. The study would also consist of possible follow-up questions from the initial interviews. At the request of the participant, it will be possible to review the transcript of the interview. The total time requirement for participating would be no more than 1 hour. Every effort will be made to protect both the participants’ and the schools’ anonymity through the use of pseudonyms.

Currently, there is a 25$ gift card offered to participants in this study.

Your school board, [insert name of school board] has given ethical clearance for this study to be conducted.

I will require your help in identifying one school from your catchment area, that may be an appropriate candidate for the study. You may use the following criteria when nominating participating schools:

1) The school administrator (principal or vice-principal) has used reflective questions in his or her coaching strategies during the current school year.

2) The school has at least five ECTs who have been coached using reflective questions during the current school year.
3) The school administrator has engaged in coaching with the ECTs during the current school year.

4) Among all schools that you supervise, the nominated school has the best reflective coaching methods currently in practice.

Please find attached both the Letter of Information for the Study, as well as a sample consent form. These should answer any additional questions you may have. However, if they do not, or you wish to ask me (the principal researcher) any additional questions, please do not hesitate to call me on my cell phone at 519-562-0037 or email me at 15trr1@queensu.ca.

Please let me know by May 1st whether you would like to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time. I hope to hear from you soon.

_______________________________________
Thomas Rinshed, Master of Education Candidate
Queen’s University, Faculty of Education
Duncan MacArthur Hall
511 Union Street, Kingston, ON, Canada
K7M 5R7
Email: 15trr1@queensu.ca
Phone: 519-562-0037
Appendix G: Confidentiality Agreement for Graduate Student Interviewer

Project Title: Perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice.
PI/Researcher(s): Thomas Rinshed

I, ______________________ have read and retained the Letters of Information concerning the study titled Perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice.

I understand that maintaining confidentiality means that: I agree not to reveal in any way to any person, other than the principal researcher (Thomas Rinshed), any data gathered for the study by means of my services as a Graduate Student Interviewer. I will comply with the requirements for confidentiality.

Upon the termination of the work assigned by Thomas Rinshed, I will return all confidential information and project materials to Thomas Rinshed. I will permanently delete copies from any electronic devices used for the purposes of completing the assigned tasks.

Identification and Signature Indicating Agreement
Name: _______________________
Email: _______________________ 
Telephone: _____________________
Mailing Address: ____________________________________________________________________________________

Signature: _______________________

Contact Information:
Questions about this agreement or the study may be directed to:
Thomas Rinshed, Faculty of Education, Queen’s University, Kingston, ON K7L 3N6
Tel: 519-562-0037
Email: 15trr1@queensu.ca
If you have any ethics concerns please contact the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.
Appendix H: Confidentiality Agreement for Translator

Project Title: *Perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice.*
PI/Researcher(s): Thomas Rinshed

I, _______________________ have read and retained the Letters of Information concerning the study titled *Perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice.*

I understand that maintaining confidentiality means that: **I agree not to reveal in any way to any person, other than the principal researcher (Thomas Rinshed), any data gathered for the study by means of my services as French-English translator.** I will comply with the requirements for confidentiality.

Upon the termination of the work assigned by Thomas Rinshed, I will return all confidential information and project materials to Thomas Rinshed. I will permanently delete copies from any electronic devices used for the purposes of completing the assigned tasks.

**Identification and Signature Indicating Agreement**
Name: _______________________
Email: _______________________
Telephone: ___________________
Mailing Address:

Signature: _____________________

**Contact Information:**
Questions about this agreement or the study may be directed to:
Thomas Rinshed, Faculty of Education, Queen’s University, Kingston, ON K7L 3N6
Tel: 519-562-0037
Email: 15trr1@queensu.ca

If you have any ethics concerns please contact the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.
# Appendix I: Interview Questions Provided to Early Career Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) What led you to seek a position as a school teacher?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) How long have you been in the field of education?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) How does your principal use educational coaching in your school setting?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Please describe your relationship with your school principal, focusing specifically of his or her role as a coach facilitating your professional growth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) What type of professional development activities have been offered to you this year, that have been a direct result of educational coaching by your school principal?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6) How do you perceive the role of a school principal as an educational coach?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7) Please describe how you feel as a teacher receiving coaching from a school principal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8) What are some examples of the guiding questions that your principal poses to help stimulate your reflective practice?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9) Please cite some examples of feedback your principal provides when using guiding questioning during your coaching sessions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10) When it comes to your professional growth, how does your principal’s feedback affect your practice?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11) How has your principal’s role as an educational coach affected his/her/their perception of you as a teacher?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12) How do you demonstrate your professional growth during an observation by your school principal?</td>
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<tr>
<td>13) How has your principal’s feedback contributed to your confidence and feelings of competency?</td>
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<tr>
<td>14) How has your principal encouraged you to improve and grow professionally through the use of guiding questions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>15) How do you feel about moving to the final question?</td>
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<tr>
<td>16) How has the principal’s role as a coach affected your relationship with him/her/they/them?</td>
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# Appendix J: Interview Questions Provided to School Administrators

1) What led you to seek a position in administration as a Principal?

2) How long have you been in the field of education?

3) Tell me about how you were introduced to the field of educational coaching?

4) What do you know about the use of guiding questioning within the context of educational coaching?

5) What theories or approaches influence your use of guiding questioning in educational coaching strategies?

6) Please describe the professional development received by your school board, to help you develop your skills as an educational coach?

7) When reflecting back on your first years of teaching, what were your experiences with principal to teacher coaching?

8) How did you feel as a teacher receiving coaching from a school principal?

9) Please provide some examples of how these experiences have an effect on your interactions and communications while using guiding questioning integrated into your coaching methods?

10) How do you evaluate your effectiveness as a coach who uses guiding questions?

11) What are some examples of the type of feedback you provide when using guiding questioning coaching methods with your newly inducted teaching staff?

12) How do coaches promote a culture of professional learning and reflective practice through the use of guiding questions amongst newly inducted teachers?

13) How do newly inducted teachers demonstrate professional growth following your coaching sessions that utilize guiding questioning?

14) Please provide examples of how newly inducted teachers demonstrate their professional growth, as a result of your guiding questioning coaching methods?

15) What recommendations would you offer to your school administrator peers that are new to the model of reflective questioning?

16) What coaching strategies would you offer to those same peers?

17) Why would you offer those strategies?

18) How do you feel about moving to the final question?

19) How has your role as a coach affected the relationship between principal-supervisor and beginner-teacher?
Appendix K: Confidentiality Agreement for Transcriber

**Project Title:** The perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice.

**PI/Researcher(s):** Thomas Rinshed

I, _______________________ have read and retained the Letters of Information concerning the study titled *The perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice.*

I understand that maintaining confidentiality means that: **I agree not to reveal in any way to any person, other than the principal researcher (Thomas Rinshed), any data gathered for the study by means of my services as a transcriber.** I will comply with the requirements for confidentiality.

Upon the termination of the work assigned by Thomas Rinshed, I will return all confidential information and project materials to Thomas Rinshed. I will permanently delete copies from any electronic devices used for the purposes of completing the assigned tasks.

**Identification and Signature Indicating Agreement**

Name: _______________________
Email: _______________________
Telephone: ____________________
Mailing Address: _______________________

Signature: _______________________

**Contact Information:**
Questions about this agreement or the study may be directed to:
Thomas Rinshed, Faculty of Education, Queen’s University, Kingston, ON K7L 3N6
Tel: 519-562-0037
Email: 1sttrr1@queensu.ca
If you have any ethics concerns please contact the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.
Appendix L: School Board Ethical Clearance Letter

Le 28 mai 2021

M. Thomas Rinshed
Queen's University

OBJET : Projet de recherche – Perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice.

Monsieur Rinshed,

Par la présente, nous vous donnons la permission d’entrer en communication avec les directions des écoles dans le cadre de votre étude : *Perceptions of school administrators and early career teachers regarding questions used to prompt reflection on practice.*

Veuillez noter que la décision finale revient à la direction de l’école de participer ou non au projet de recherche.


Recevez, monsieur, l’expression de nos sentiments distingués.

Christian Charle Bouchard,
Surintendant de l’éducation
May 17, 2021

Mr. Thomas Rinshed
Master’s Student
Faculty of Education
Queen’s University
Duncan McArthur Hall
511 Union Street West
Kingston, ON, K7M 5R7

Title: "GEDUC-1055-21 Perceptions of School Administrators and Early Career Teachers Regarding Questions Used to Prompt Reflection on Practice;" TRAQ # 6032621

Dear Mr. Rinshed:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS 2) and Queen’s ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (Article 6.14) and Standard Operating Procedures (405), your project has been cleared for one year.

You are reminded of your obligation to submit an annual renewal form prior to the annual renewal due date (access this form at http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html; click on "Events;" under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Annual Renewal/Closure Form for Cleared Studies"). Please note that when your research project is completed, you need to submit an Annual Renewal/Closure Form in Romeo/traq indicating that the project is 'completed' so that the file can be closed. This should be submitted at the time of completion; there is no need to wait until the annual renewal due date.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one-year period (access this form at http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html; click on "Events;" under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Adverse Event Form"). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.
You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To submit an amendment form, access the application by at [http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html](http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html); click on "Events;" under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Request for the Amendment of Approved Studies." Once submitted, these changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, GREB, at University Research Services for further review and clearance by GREB or the Chair, GREB.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Sincerely,

Chair, General Research Ethics Board (GREB)
Professor Dean A. Tripp, PhD
Departments of Psychology, Anesthesiology & Urology Queen’s University

c: Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba, Supervisor
   Dr. Saad Chahine, Chair, Unit REB
   Lyle Cummings-Bentley, Dept. Admin.