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Instructional Coaching as a Tool for Professional Development: Coaches' Roles and Considerations

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Abstract

In this study, we primarily aimed to investigate coaches' roles and their considerations in shifting coaching roles they perform. Employing a qualitative descriptive research, we conducted semi-structured interview sessions with ten instructional coaches to determine their roles and considerations in shifting roles during coaching English teachers in primary schools. Utilizing Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach, we employed thematic analysis to analyse the desired data collected in the study. The findings suggested that there were three roles instructional coaches enacted, namely, the role of the implementer, advocate, and educator. The roles were influenced by coaches' considerations of teacher readiness, coaching style and coaches' qualities. The findings also showed that the coaches performed a non-authoritative approach in their coaching and constantly role-shifted between the roles according to the demand of different situations. Influencing their decision in role-shifting, the coaches' roles and their considerations provide insights into instructional coaching. As such, practitioners and stake holders can reflect and enhance the implementation of the coaching programme to encourage supportive coaching activities. Because there is a need to conduct adequate research on instructional coaching specifically in the context of Malaysia, this study offers an insight into coaches' specific roles in Malaysia. Future research can take a closer look at the "in-the-moment" coaching process to determine the professional development programmes designed based on coaches' understanding of role-shifting.

Keywords

Instructional Coaching, Teacher Education and Professional Development, Qualitative Research, Coaching Roles, Elementary Education and Teaching, In-service Teacher Training, Coaching and Mentoring in Education

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Instructional Coaching as a Tool for Professional Development: Coaches' Roles and Considerations

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In this study, we primarily aimed to investigate coaches' roles and their considerations in shifting coaching roles they perform. Employing a qualitative descriptive research, we conducted semi-structured interview sessions with ten instructional coaches to determine their roles and considerations in shifting roles during coaching English teachers in primary schools. Utilizing Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach, we employed thematic analysis to analyse the desired data collected in the study. The findings suggested that there were three roles instructional coaches enacted, namely, the role of the implementer, advocate, and educator. The roles were influenced by coaches' considerations of teacher readiness, coaching style and coaches' qualities. The findings also showed that the coaches performed a non-authoritative approach in their coaching and constantly role-shifted between the roles according to the demand of different situations. Influencing their decision in role-shifting, the coaches' roles and their considerations provide insights into instructional coaching. As such, practitioners and stake holders can reflect and enhance the implementation of the coaching programme to encourage supportive coaching activities. Because there is a need to conduct adequate research on instructional coaching specifically in the context of Malaysia, this study offers an insight into coaches' specific roles in Malaysia. Future research can take a closer look at the "in-the-moment" coaching process to determine the professional development programmes designed based on coaches' understanding of role-shifting. Keywords: Instructional Coaching, Teacher Education and Professional Development, Qualitative Research, Coaching Roles, Elementary Education and Teaching, In-service Teacher Training, Coaching and Mentoring in Education

Teacher professional development is considered a crucial factor in influencing the quality of teaching profession (Gore et al., 2017; Kyriakides, Christoforidou, Panayiotou, & Creemers, 2017). With this in view, school improvement efforts have focused on enhancing the quality of teaching through reviewing the teacher professional development activities. As a professional development tool, instructional coaching has been widely implemented across Malaysia by focusing on providing pedagogical support to teachers and acted to bridge the gap between low-performing and high-performing schools (Malaysian Education Ministry, 2013). Instructional coaching therefore presents a teacher professional development model by

providing on-going activities tailored to the specific needs to improve and sustain effective teaching practices.

As a form of instructional coaching programme, the School Improvement Specialist Coaches Plus (SISC+), hereafter referred to as coaches, was introduced in the respective district education offices through the District Transformation Programme (DTP) under the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2017). Coaches in Malaysia are full-time teacher professional learning developers that serve several schools in their particular districts they are attached to. Coaches play a crucial role in improving standards and performance of schools to support the aim of the Second Wave of the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025 by working with teachers in the lower performing schools and also schools in the rural areas. This is specifically to enhance the current education system.

As stipulated in the main official guidelines of the coaching programme, coaches act as teacher support in the aspects of pedagogy, assessment, and curriculum. More specifically, there are four main areas of responsibilities of coaches according to the DTP guideline. It is expected that 60% of coaches' time is used on coaching activities such as data-based planning, providing support for teachers in lower performing schools and enacting the role of a pedagogy and curriculum (learning) specialist to teachers (School Management Division, 2017). 20% of coaches' work is dedicated to providing training (teacher professional development) and establishing professional learning community (PLC) networking in schools. Coaches are also expected to employ 15% of their time on developing reports on post-mortem actions and teacher interventions which will later be presented to the head of department in each district for further actions and interventions. Last, 5% of the time would be utilised to complete either coach-related work or administrative work directed by the head of department. The allocation of percentages suggests that coaches would enact roles which include data-based planner, teacher supporter, pedagogy and curriculum specialist, training provider, and catalyst of PLC networking. The roles that coaches play show unique promise in supporting teacher professional development which would help improve teaching practice.

Embedded within the allocation of percentage of each role, coaches act as a medium between the Ministry of Education and the schools in terms of curriculum and assessment implementation. They are expected to monitor the effectiveness in the newly revised curriculum (i.e., Primary School Curriculum Standard; Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), and assessment on providing support to teachers. Apparently, the roles enacted by coaches are multifaceted and complex because there might be more than one role that coaches need to assume at a time. In practice, coaches often involve shape-shifting between the different roles which may depend on varying situations such as how districts envision using the coaching position within their reform efforts and the unique situations and needs of the teachers (Mudzimiri, Burroughs, Lueback, Sutton, & Yopp, 2014). Coaches would, therefore, be left to perceive their coaching roles in coaching teachers as challenging due to the diverse nature of the job (Smith, 2007). The need to adopt multiple roles of coaching seems challenging to most coaches because although the coaches have teaching experience (previously assigned teachers), few have extensive experience with standards-based reform and organising teacher professional development activities.

While the coaching programme could serve as a handy reference in understanding the job description of coaches, it is essential to study how coaches perceive their roles in order to ensure they know what their roles are. What is not yet clear is understanding the complexities of coaching including what instructional coaches do (Poglinco & Bach, 2004). This shortcoming is not only peculiar to coaching in the local context but also in the international context. Recent studies have indicated that the coaches' roles included a multifaceted nature of roles that reduce the coaches' focus and time when engaging in one-to-one coaching

(Heineke, 2013; Mudzimiri et al., 2014; Vanita, 2016; Wang, 2017). Researchers have composed various role descriptions of an instructional coach; however, researchers have yet to agree upon a universally accepted description (Vanita, 2016). Therefore, there is still insufficient data for the coaches' roles, the reasons behind the selection of roles, and what influences the coaches on enacting the multiple roles or role-shift. As such, the central question is how coaches describe their coaching roles and what their considerations are in making their decisions about their coaching roles. Consequently, coaches are facing a high level of uncertainty because coaches' functions are as varied as the teachers and students that they serve. This discussion then logically leads into an investigation on the coaches' roles as a condition to optimise teacher learning. A thorough understanding of the coaches' roles would help coaching practitioners to align the multiple expectations of their coaching work with the actual, on-the-ground level of coaching.

Instructional Coaching and Teacher Professional Development

The significance of teacher-related factors such as teacher self-efficacy and interest influence student learning. This is particularly true that teacher-related factors improve student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hegedus, Tapper, & Dalton, 2016; Tella, 2017). Studies indicate that the quality of individual teachers contributes up to 30% of the variance in student outcomes. Therefore, teaching improvement is essential for school improvement (Hawley & Valli, 1999) which uses teacher professional development (TPD) activities as a means to raise teacher effectiveness. Traditionally, TPD in-service trainings are "brief, often one-shot sessions" that "offer unrelated topics" and "expect passive teacher-listeners" (Hawley & Valli, 1999, p. 134). In contrast, TPD that employs context-specific approaches which assist teachers in creating practical applications of pedagogical strategies to the unique teaching situations would be more likely to lead to transformative change (Fraser, Kennedy, Reid, & McKinney, 2007). Most professional development opportunities for educators have shown that exposing a teacher to a new concept or skill has little to no classroom impact because the TPD activities are still lecture style—telling, showing, and explaining the way something should be done—which was described by Thornburg and Mungai (2011) as top-down remediation approaches to fixing teachers. The impact of TPD activities are often short-lived because teachers are given very little or ineffective on-going support after the TPD sessions are completed.

Research has identified that traditional models of professional development in large group settings lack the effectiveness of providing high quality professional learning to teachers. Therefore, instructional coaching is establishing its crucial role as a form of teacher professional development (Chen, Chen, & Tsai, 2009). In contrast to traditional TPD, instructional coaching is featured as shoulder-to-shoulder, on-going process and non-evaluative form of TPD in which the coaches engaged the teachers in the planning and instruction of the teacher practice (Knight, 2007; Mudzimiri et al., 2014). Coaches and teachers work collaboratively through coach-teacher interactions during coaching sessions that include three different stages namely pre-observation conferences, classroom observations, and post-observation conferences or debriefing (Franey, 2015). In the coaching sessions, coaches and teachers work shoulder-to-shoulder to identify issues in the teachers' practice and to reach mutually agreed upon learning goals. Unlike the conventional TPD, instructional coaching is an on-going process because coaching is a change process that takes time to develop the teachers' competence, confidence, performance, and insight (Reiss, 2007). The non-evaluative nature of instructional coaching is demonstrated through providing non-judgemental feedback to teachers regarding their teaching practices to maintain an equal coach-teacher relationship (Taylor, 2008).

The school-based, supportive, and on-going guidance that instructional coaching provides could bring about some promising benefits (Hunzicker, 2011). Previous research has revealed positive outcomes of coaching teachers in different aspects of improving student achievement (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2016), teacher practices and strategies (Spelman, Bell, Thomas, & Briody, 2016), teacher empowerment (Goelman Rice, 2016), and teacher collaboration (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009). The effect size of instructional coaching of teachers shows significantly better teacher practice, from .22 to an effect size of .68 when coaching is considered (Markussen-Brown et al., 2017). The many benefits that could be yielded from instructional coaching programmes highlight the importance of analysing the factors that contributed to coaching effectiveness. One of the factors would be to understand coaches' roles, specifically on how coaches work and why they act in a certain way.

Coaching approach is categorised into a directive and non-directive continuum (Hughes, 2009). While the directive approach was characterised by telling, self-focused or coach-centered stance, the non-directive approach focused rather on listening for meaning and client-centered stance. Others have identified other coaching approaches. For example, Knight, Knight, and Carlson (2015) categorised three widely used approaches, namely, facilitative, directive, and dialogical. Further, Hauser (2014) identified two continuums to depict coaches' behaviours which are directive and dialogic. On the basis of roles and approach as a guideline, coaches are able to carry out their coaching responsibilities. Commonly, the coaching process is described as a three-step process that includes a pre-observation conference, the observation of instruction and post-observation conference (Franey, 2015).

Instructional Coaches' Roles

A plethora of literature on the roles of the coaches have acknowledged the multiplicity of the coaches' roles (Heineke, 2013; Mudzimiri et al., 2014; Russell, 2017; Vanita, 2016; Wang, 2017). The main role that the coaches enact is to provide support to teachers in meeting the aims of school or district-based educational reforms (Gallucci, Van Lare, Yoon, & Boatright, 2010). In a study conducted by Wang (2017), four coaching roles were found, namely, facilitator, instructor, collaborator, and empowerer. However, the description on how and why the coaches chose to enact the identified roles should be addressed. Further, in identifying the roles of the executive coaches in team coaching, Hauser (2014) found that four role behaviours were depicted by coaches (i.e., advisor, educator, catalyser, and assimilator).

Passmore (2010) revealed that being non-directive empathetic was among the key coaching behaviours, and one of the prevalent themes was humanizing coaching by being empathetic and holding coachees' emotions. Further, Van Nieuwerburgh (2017) argued that the "coaching way of being" is the most human part of coaching that makes ideas and notions emergent and will vary depending on the nature of the coach and each coaching conversation. Put simply, both Passmore (2010) and Van Nieuwerburgh (2017) affirmed that to be an effective coach, embracing the humanitarian principles is central. This suggests that the notion of humanising coaching shares similarity to teacher-centred coaching where coaches do not take the instructive role in coaching teachers (Wang, 2017). Central to this, humanising coaching and teacher-centred coaching can be regarded as the client-centred approach to prioritize the coachees' concerns. This notion is further supported by Rogers's theory (2003) in the field of humanistic psychology, holding that the client-centred approach requires the client (in this case, the teachers) to take an active role in the client's learning with the therapist (i.e., the instructional coach). This suggests that teachers should be dealt with respect which offers them the impression of confidence and confidentiality. Therefore, it was

the researchers' concern to study coaches' roles and their considerations in shifting them during coaching.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical base of this study is built on the conditions of vulnerability, social interdependence, and pastoral power which are central in how instructional coaches positioned themselves in their social interactions with teachers. Coined by Hunt (2016), conditions of vulnerability refer to the sense of guilt, shame, and fear which are co-constructed and negotiated between coaches and teachers. Instructional coaching relies on coach-teacher social exchanges, and it involves negotiation of social power and competence expectations that influence coaches' roles that they should assume and determine when they should role-shift in order to gain teacher's trust. Within the social exchanges, teachers are usually positioned to experience conditions of vulnerability, with or without their conscious effort. For example, teachers face the state of vulnerability when the coaches conduct pre-observation conferences, classroom observations and post-observation conferences in which the coaches would comment on the teachers' teaching practices, lesson plans and their decisions in choosing certain teaching strategies. Classroom observations, which are part and parcel of the coaching process, will become counter-productive, arousing resistance and suspicion from the teachers once badly handled (Wragg, 2002). To encourage moving forward in coaching, however, the vulnerability can be positive for the teachers if coaches and teachers are able to engage in dialogues in which they trust each other and feel safe in sharing thoughts and ideas (Hunt, 2016). This proposed study is to contribute to the body of knowledge based on the enactment of coaches' roles under the conditions of vulnerability the teachers experienced.

The view of social interdependence and systematic functioning is in relation to the work of Coleman (1990) who theorises that the formation of social relationships is the result of the various kinds of exchanges and unilateral transfers of control that actors persistently engage to achieve their interests. In the coaching context, coaches and teachers are the actors in the social practice. The coaches acted on different roles in supporting ongoing teacher learning. The teachers may, however, choose to be disinterested and resist the event of coaching (Kraft et al., 2016) expressed through their actions and emotions (Hunt, 2016). This unsatisfactory concern happens when authority relations (Foucault, 1983; Hunt, 2016) and relations of trust (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998) are renegotiated to achieve consensual agreement in participating in coaching events. Hence, it is crucial to consider what type of roles could be enacted with regards to the social power influence and how trust could be gained within the teachers' conditions of vulnerability through coaching roles.

Pastoral power is the process by which experts, for instance, teachers and managers understand and control others' thoughts, emotions, and needs (Foucault, 1983). The interaction between coaches and teachers is often influenced by what Cartwright and Zander (1968) referred to as social power or the potential influence of one person over another. This is particularly to cause a total possible change in another person's attitude, behaviour, and beliefs by the more powerful individual (Swasy, 1979). Moreover, Foucault (1983) used the term "pastoral power" to describe the process by which experts (the coaches) understand and influence others' (the teachers') thoughts. The instructional coaches are coaching positions working under the education ministry. The coaches' positions as one of the education officers often place them as the authorities with the power and responsibility to convince and evaluate teachers to implement new practices and to enforce implementation. Although instructional coaching is explained to be a non-evaluative or non-supervisory form of professional development (Gallucci et al., 2010), in the eyes of the teachers, the coaches are always seen

as “powerholders that possess a higher status or rank than the target of the influence attempt” (Elias, 2008, p. 269). The coaches are viewed as holding the power to influence the teachers to adopt the suggested teaching strategies and might exert power over the work of teachers (Goelman Rice, 2016, p. 23). The pastoral power that the coaches have towards the teachers often placed the coaches as the higher authority.

In the coach-teacher relation, teachers usually take on the subordinate role to seek, perhaps anxiously, continual improvement according to dominant notions of the ideal teaching self. As argued by Filerman (2003), teachers comply with coaches’ advice fairly due to the competence gap that exists between the two parties. Coaches are able to give professional suggestions on district-sanctioned practices, and since teachers cannot validate the competence or integrity of the professionalism, they can merely trust to some degree in the pastoral power that the coaches possessed to a certain extent. Coaching, however, depends on what Parsons (1963) described as mutual confidence or trust towards the pastoral power that the coaches are entrusted with to provide constructive suggestions in improving teacher practice. The inclusion of the theory of pastoral power allows the interpretation of the data in the present study which would require the examination of potential coaches’ roles perceived by the coaches themselves in relation to pastoral power.

We are a group of collaborating researchers from different universities who are interested specifically in the TPD of in-service teachers. Having teamed-up previously in other projects regarding the professional development of Malaysian teachers under the School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, in the present study we hope to zoom in at the fairly new, instructional coaching programme in Malaysia. We intend to expand the limited literature with regards to the coaching practice—especially in understanding how instructional coaching is being practiced in the Malaysian context in helping educators to improve instructions. Our team believes that understanding the roles of the coaches is the first and most crucial step in ensuring the quality of coaching in enhancing teachers’ ability to implement effective teaching strategies and innovations in their classrooms.

Methodology

Research Design

This paper is part of a larger study (EPRD Ref. No.: KPM.600-3/2/3Jld50(79)) which examines the partnership between instructional coaches and teachers. In this study, we made use of the qualitative data collection method of a semi-structured interview to gain insights into the roles of instructional coaches. Given the evidence that the success of reform efforts that adopt a coaching model often hinge on the understanding and mastery on the coaches’ roles, it is important to investigate the key issue of coaches’ roles as recognized in the discussion previously. This study intended to investigate coaches’ roles as a condition to optimise teacher learning. Specifically, this study addressed two research questions:

1. How do coaches describe their coaching roles?
2. What are coaches’ considerations in making decisions about their choice of coaching roles?

Participants

A total of ten coaches of English as a subject (two males and eight females) in the state of Sarawak, Malaysia who had a minimum of two years’ experience in coaching English

teachers in primary schools voluntarily participated in the study. Each participant was required to have attended and completed the fundamental coach training and professional development programmes organised by the Ministry of Education Malaysia. Prior to taking the role as a coach, the participants had at least five years of teaching experience in public schools. Among the participants, seven of them had taught in the same district where they were coaching whereas three of them had taught in districts different from the district that they were coaching at the time of this study.

Instrument

We developed a semi-structured interview protocol to answer the research questions addressed in this study. Comprising ten items, we used the interview protocol to gather the necessary data to elucidate coaches' description of their coaching roles and their considerations in making decisions on their choice of roles (Appendix). In the semi-structured interview protocol, we dedicated five items to answer research question one and designed five items to answer research question two. The logic in the choice of using semi-structured interview protocol was to allow the coaches to have a platform to share their experience and provide a deeper insight into how their roles were enacted and how they shifted their roles at different points in their coaching process. On the basis of the two research questions, we designed an initial interview protocol to ensure that the questions could yield data intended in the main study as closely as possible. We developed the set of interview items using the interview questions matrix. This is to keep the items appropriate, related to the study's purpose and to avoid straying from the intended study.

The literature on the research method of interviewing and conducting pilot study specifically has revealed the importance of pre-testing the research instrument (Burke & Miller, 2001; Creswell, 2012; Dikko, 2016; Turner, 2010; Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). A pilot study helps to ascertain how well a research instrument would work in the actual study by identifying potential problems and areas that may require adjustments (Dikko, 2016). We piloted the developed interview protocol over three participants. We selected the participants for the pilot study based on the same selection criteria in the present study. We did not include the data from the pilot study in the analysis. Responses gathered from the pilot study led to further refinement of the interview protocol. The refinement involved the addition of more appropriate items, a number of prompts, as well as omission of redundant items. The addition of prompts was to stimulate participants if limited responses were provided and the omission of items was to avoid redundancy. As highlighted by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013), this was seen as part and parcel of the study by the researchers because the study's findings rely on the quality of the instrument used to gather the desired data. Through the pilot study, we developed a revised set of interview items to appropriately answer the intended research questions of the study.

Data Collection Procedure

We collected the data upon receiving the administrative approval and participants' consent. The information and data gathered from the participants were assured of confidentiality unless required by law. Approval to conduct this research was gained from Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD), Ministry of Education Malaysia to ensure this inquiry is ethical, respectful, and focused on the aim and objectives that it is intended for—thereby causing no apparent harm to the participants in this research. A copy of the proposal of this study which includes the introduction, review of the literature, and

research methodology together with the research instruments were attached together for the application to get permission from the EPRD to conduct this study.

Employing a qualitative approach, we carried out an approximately 40-minute audio-recorded and face-to-face interview with each of the participants. We conducted the interviews on a one-to-one basis between the interviewer and the participants individually in a quiet office in their respective schools. This was to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. We provided the participants with an in-depth explanation about the study and its purpose. Although they were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality of all the data collected, they were informed that they could discontinue the interview at any point during the interview. The primary interviewer noted necessary comments into a common matrix of the interview protocol. As such, we created full transcription of each interviewee manually, kept it in a secure location, and prepared for the analysis.

Qualitative Analysis

To analyse the qualitative data, we utilised thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is “a method for identifying and analysing patterns in qualitative data” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 121). The main researcher conducted thematic analysis on the data by creating codes based on the data through a bottom-up, inductive approach rather than top-down, deductive approach using a pre-existing theoretical framework, and the other researchers assisted in counter-checking the coded data. We used thematic analysis because it can be applied to produce “data-driven analysis,” as employed in this research (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 122). We imported the transcribed interviews into NVivo11 for analysis as a means to help organise the data, codes, concepts, and categories and exported the organised data from NVivo11 in order to rearrange the codes, sub-codes, and themes for easy access through Microsoft Word.

Following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) recommendation, we closely adhered to the six-phase approach for conducting thematic analysis as shown in Figure 1. The first step of the six-phase approach was to be immersed in and familiarised with the data through reading and re-reading the transcripts and listening to the audio-recorded interviews. From the data, we analysed statements or groups of statements which reflected single ideas or concepts, and we gave each idea or concept a code to employ a horizontal analysis of the data. We analysed all the interview responses from the participants at the same time to form a comparative analysis or cross-case analysis (Flores, 2005). By utilising the comparative analysis of data, we generated a new list of data. We collated all the codes and the relevant data extracts. From the generated codes, we identified the themes by searching the coherent and meaningful pattern in the data in relation to the two research questions. We created a visual mind map based on the data to note the consistencies and inconsistencies, surprises, patterns, and ideas for the development of initial codes.

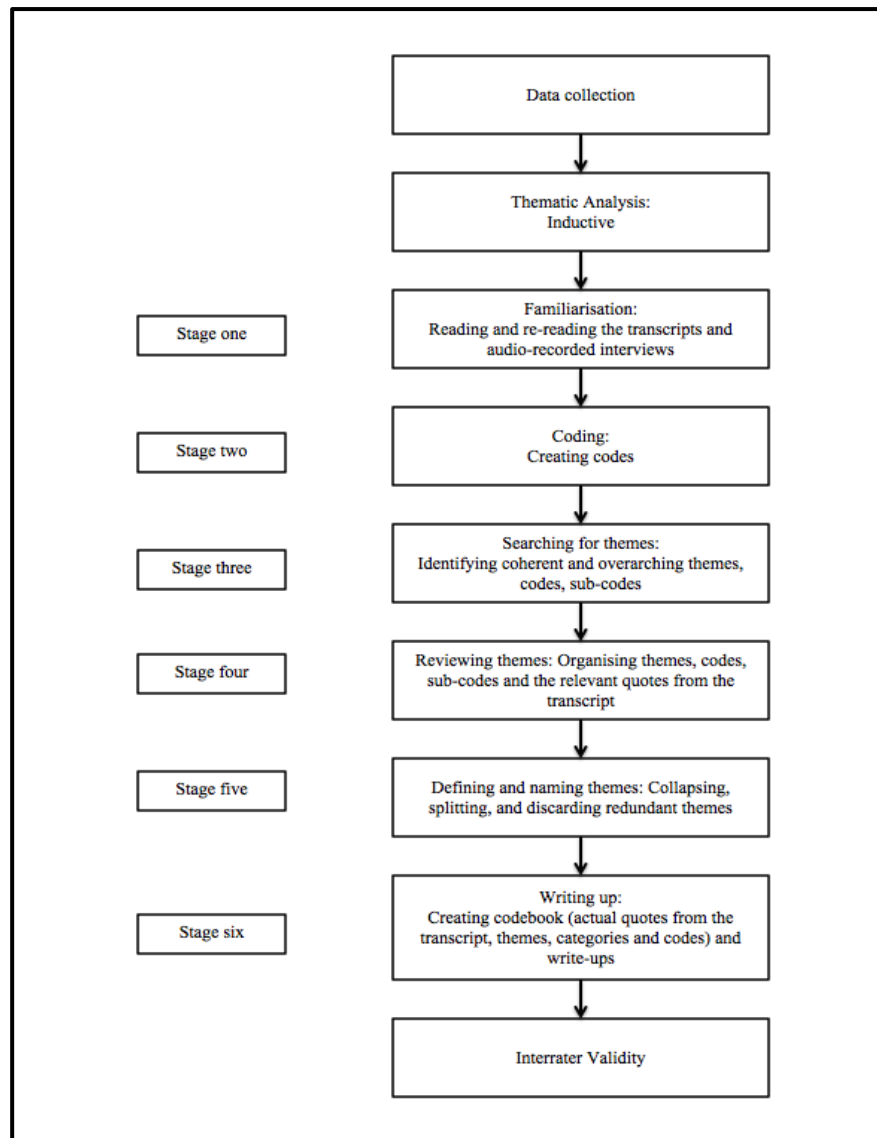


Figure 1. Stages of Research Method

The process of recursive reflection led to an initial theme or central category: The instructional coaches employ different coaching strategies through behaviours that change over time depending on the situation (e.g., teacher readiness, teacher progress, etc.). The coaches adapted their behaviours based on the changing conditions. Building friendship is in favour if compared to being authoritative.

We established a coding framework by synthesising the mind map and an initial list of 220 codes. We reviewed the themes through collapsing, splitting and discarding redundant themes. Eventually, the framework evolved as the data from the interviews was read and reread. Imperative to thematic analysis was ordering the themes in a way that best reflected the data (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Our team organised and reorganised how data were represented until consensus was reached. In the finalised coding framework, we identified 19 sub-codes, seven codes, and two main themes. Using these finalised themes, we defined the themes by identifying the detailed analysis of each theme. We recorded the themes, original transcript, and codes in a codebook.

We developed a thematic map, the Non-Authoritative Role-Shifting Framework, as illustrated in Figure 2.

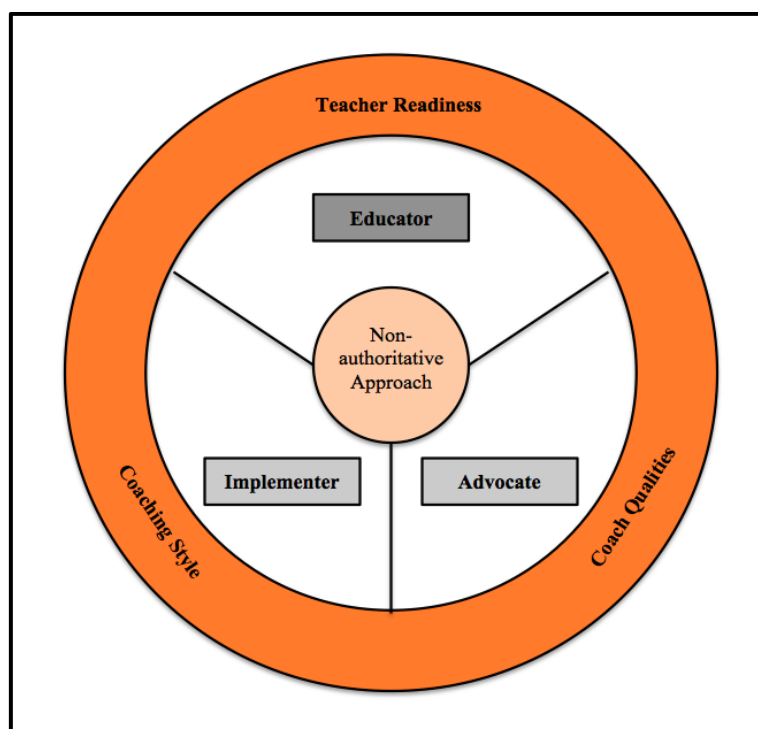


Figure 2. Non-authoritative Role-shifting Framework: Individual Coaching

Study Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of qualitative analysis results depends on the availability of rich and appropriate data; therefore, it is important to scrutinize every phase of the analysis, including data preparation, organization, and presenting the results. This was particularly followed to provide a clear presentation of the complete trustworthiness of the research. Because qualitative results show the participants' voice, experiences, and inquiry and not the researcher's biases, understanding, and perceptions (Polit & Beck, 2012), we used quotations based on the participants' perspectives to show the trustworthiness of the results (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Polit & Beck, 2012).

At the preparation phase, we maintained the rigour of the study through appropriate data collection method, implementing the suitable sampling strategy and selecting an apt unit of analysis (Elo et al., 2014). Semi-structured interviews through purposive sampling of the ten identified coaches who were coaching primary school teachers at the time of this study would be an appropriate method of data collection because coaches are the coaching agents who would best answer the objectives of this study which were exploring the coaches' roles and identifying the considerations that inform their choice of roles. In the present study, the researchers were careful not to steer the participants' answers to gather the inductive data during the audio-recorded interviews. As mentioned earlier, we conducted pilot tests on three independent coaches who were not involved in the main study to pre-test the interview items to improve the overall trustworthiness of the study.

At the organisation phase, we carefully explained the categorisation and abstraction, interpretation, and representativeness of the data to indicate the trustworthiness of the study. This study employed the inductive approach in data analysis. In the inductive approach, the organisation phase includes open coding, creating categories, and abstraction (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). We referred to the transcripts and audio-recorded interviews constantly in order to group and re-group the data to ensure that the abstraction process was completed and to

revise categories which may overlap with each other. This would add to the conformability of the findings because the data were not invented by the researchers but from the participants themselves which could accurately represent the opinions of the participants. We ensured the representativeness of the data by returning the data to the participants through member-checking to check whether what was interpreted was correctly representing the data.

Last, at the reporting phase, we implemented the procedure of checking the interrater reliability. Using Cohen's Kappa, two raters validated the analysed data to estimate the raters' level of chance agreement towards the coding of the data. The Cohen's Kappa value of .77 ($K = .77$) indicated a strong level of agreement (McHugh, 2012). A Cohen's Kappa coefficient of .40 – .60 qualifying as "fair" and .60 – .75 is suggested to qualify as a "good" score, and above .75 as "excellent" (Cohen, 1960; Reis & Judd, 2000). Therefore, the results of the Kohen's Kappa ascertain that the analysis reflected the participants' data in an effective way.

Research Findings

To analyse the qualitative data, we employed a thematic analysis. We interviewed the participants and analysed the gathered data to determine themes from the data. We used these themes to understand coaches' opinions about their coaching roles and their considerations in making decisions about their choice of roles in coaching.

Research Question 1

In the first research question, we investigated the coaches' roles. Coaches reported three main coaching roles when they were asked about their coaching work. We coded the roles and organised them into categories representing the three main responsibilities: implementer, advocate, and educator. The findings revealed that coaches reported enacting the role of the implementer the most, followed by the advocate, and the least frequently assumed role was the educator.

Implementer Role

The participants reported enacting role of the implementer in coaching the teachers. The behaviours displayed within the implementer role included conducting coaching sessions, conducting classroom observations, setting the coaching dates with the teachers, reporting, and improving the English standards. The coaches conducted coaching sessions through the stages of coaching cycle. Uma explained the stages of the coaching cycle:

To help them first with the lesson planning and so on . . . I'll go for pra bimbingan (pre-observation conference) . . . I . . . went there for that one la . . . coaching . . . after that we'll have some sort of discussion pasca bimbingan (post-observation conference).

Between the pre-observation and post-observation conferences, the coaches would conduct classroom observation on the teachers' lesson. Nat described how he conducted classroom observation on a teacher's lesson after discussion with the teacher during the pre-observation conference and prior to the lesson debriefing in post-observation conference.

I would go through the lesson with her (the teacher) and talk to her . . . specifically on what she's going to teach . . . and then usually (the teacher)

will show me (the) lesson plan and (the teacher) will tell me the concerns . . . any part that I can help them improve their RPH (lesson plan) . . . so then only we would go into the class with one hour of lesson. Watching. Observing. And then followed by half an hour to one hour of discussion . . . feedback.

Coaching sessions consisted of face-to-face discussions. Kara further highlighted the importance of informing the teachers about the coaches' visit to the school.

I'll inform the coachees (the teachers) first. I'll give them a call or I text them. Saying that I'm going to come this day . . . we are going to have a discussion face-to-face.

Nat also emphasised the importance of gaining the teachers' permission to conduct the coaching visit.

A day earlier I would have arranged a date a time with the teacher . . . I would have called the teacher and ask for her permission on whether I can coach him or her or not (for) the following day.

The coaches have the responsibility to produce coaching reports. These reports would be submitted to the coaching supervisors such as the head officer of the district education office and the state coaching programme coordinators. The process of coaching, both the coaching sessions and classroom observations conducted had to be documented in the form of reports. As Dora explained, the coaches had to prepare to present their findings of their coaching.

(I) will be preparing for meetings and report sessions . . . or doing online reporting.

The desired outcome of the implementer role was to help in improving the standards of English among the students. Nat expressed:

My main goal is to help to raise the standard of English . . . to expose the students to more English.

Based on the discussed points, the implementer role could be defined as fulfilling the official education ministry's requirements of coaches as stated in the coaching programme implementation plan, or more commonly known as the District Transformation Plan (DTP 3.0). In the official requirements of coaches, the role of the coaches include conducting coaching visits which include lesson observations and coaching sessions, receiving and conducting continuous professional development sessions, professional learning community sessions, and networking, reporting and completing other tasks as required by the ministry (School Management Division, 2017). The coaches in this sample demonstrated a clear understanding of the main roles which were stipulated in the official coaching manual.

Advocate Role

The participants described taking on an advocate role when coaching teachers. The behaviours related to the role of an advocate include supporting and assisting the teachers in the coach-teacher collaboration. When enacting this role, the coaches focused on supporting the teachers in their professional development in terms of improving teachers' pedagogical

content knowledge, teaching, and learning and in the teachers' lessons and activities. Neo explained the supportive nature of coaching in building teachers' confidence in their subject-matter:

The main responsibility . . . in my perspective is . . . to give support. Ok the main work for me is support to give support to my teachers in order to help them to build their own confidence . . . (not only) for the optionist (English option) teachers but (also) those who are non-optionist (Non-English option teachers).

The coaches added that when they provided support and help to teachers, they avoided portraying themselves as someone superior with authoritative power. The teachers would be more open to coaching when the coaches provide them with the guidance that they needed. In this, Teri expressed:

They feel that . . . these SISC+ (are) non-threatening . . . people . . . they are coming to help us with (the) knowledge so anytime when (the teachers) ask for something . . . they ask for guidance (the coaches should) be willing to give them (and) to guide them . . . (when) you help them they will come to you. They are sure to come for you.

Rudy added that when the coaches take on a friendlier approach in coaching and help teachers to improve their teaching, the purpose of ensuring that student learning would take place could be met. She explained:

I'm like a buddy to help support them in terms of their teaching and learning . . . so meaning that we want to make sure that the students do learn something from it.

In elaborating on their role in providing the teachers with professional assistance in improving instructions, the coaches explained that these teachers were not problematic teachers but there was a need to help them with certain areas in their teaching. Teri explained:

Helping teachers who are . . . not to say that they are not good but they have problems in certain areas in their PDP (teaching practices).

Educator Role

The participants reported using the role of an educator in coaching the teachers. The educator role was characterised as sharing knowledge and being a point of reference to the teachers. The coaches in this sample reported that they need to have a thorough knowledge of the teaching practices to be shared with the teachers through effective communication skills. Some of the knowledge shared included choices in teaching strategies to strengthen classroom delivery, as Mary shared:

To share with someone (the teachers) the best options that they can get . . . in the development (of) the teachers in the teaching profession.

Along the same vein, Neo explained that as a coach, he often shared "skills and knowledge" and "good practices from the other schools" with the coached teachers. Maya explained that

through the coaches' sharing of innovations in teaching and learning, the coached teachers could implement interesting lessons that the students look forward to.

The kids enjoy . . . the lesson is very interesting . . . so they know the class will be interesting (because) the teacher will do a lot of activities in the class.

Coaches' sharing of knowledge was also reported to take place during coach-organised courses to address the problems the teachers faced in their teaching practice, workshops, and through video-taking of the teachers' lessons. The coaches and teachers engaged in video-critique sessions whereby the coaches used the videos of the lessons and show it to the teachers. Sara shared some examples of the professional learning sessions that were organised for her coached teachers who had less confidence in conversing in the English language in their English lessons:

We have workshops . . . the course or workshop . . . I always give them (the teachers) . . . examples about a few teachers that are good in teaching English in using English in the class. And how the class is actually becoming. And the students in the class . . . when I coach these particular teachers, I will take videos. I show it to them.

To ensure that the coaches could take on the responsibilities of an educator, the coaches in this study emphasised that getting the first-hand knowledge or the latest information were essential. Maya explained the reason of keeping up with the latest updates in the national education implementation:

To equip the teachers with the latest information . . . I should equip myself (as well). If they have any question that they don't understand, or they don't know and unaware of. When they ask me, I should be able to answer that . . . I don't want to be looked as somebody who is not informative (when) I'm coaching this teacher . . . everything should be under my fingertips.

Research Question 2

In answering research question two, this study explored the coaches' considerations in role-shifting between the multifaceted roles. Through the participants' narration about their past experiences in interacting with the teachers during coaching sessions and classroom observations, the participants were asked to reflect on their considerations that informed their choices of roles when they interacted with the teachers. Three key considerations were identified when coaches selected or shifted their roles. Among them, two considerations: coaching styles and coaches' qualities were innate characteristics to the coaches whereas teacher readiness was an external factor to the coaches.

Teacher Readiness

The participants reported that the coached teachers came from diverse backgrounds. These backgrounds varied in terms of the teachers' years of teaching experience in teaching English, the teachers' option that they majored in, and the teachers' personal attributes. The participants reported within the different roles they play, and their different strategies were employed, and they constantly made choices depending on the considerations. Uma shared her views:

You cannot use the same strategies. It depends on the different types of teachers.

In view of the teachers' differences, the level of teacher readiness in coaching also varied. Teachers differed in their attitude and acceptance towards coaching. The participants reported that the teachers did not have a positive attitude when they were being coached. For example, Kara explained one of the challenges in coaching was cultivating a positive attitude in teachers towards coaching. She added that some of the less proactive teachers had the unwillingness to change their teaching practice and felt that the coach was coming just to criticise them. She emphasised the importance to take on a subtler approach in coaching without forcing teacher implementation:

They (the teachers) need time to improve. If we keep forcing them . . . they will not be able to do everything because in our coaching tool there are so many elements to be (covered) . . . I just focus on certain element (at one time) and then we work on it.

The participants also pointed out that teachers' acceptance to coaching was one of the foremost considerations in selecting the coaching approach. Dora shared her views:

If they do not accept (to be coached) . . . just to give way for us to enter their class . . . the coaching session would not happen.

The coaches considered the teacher readiness in coaching before deciding on enacting a certain coaching role. For example, Uma explained:

I tried to take it slow (with teachers who were less cooperative) and tried to get them (to) accept me first. Only then I can slowly coach them.

For teachers with low teacher readiness in coaching, the coaches would opt for a milder approach of being an advocate instead of taking the role of the implementer, to allow change and achieve teachers' desired goals in their professional development.

Coaching Style

Embedded in many of the participants' narratives was the significance of employing the non-authoritative approach as the coaches' style of coaching teachers. Within the use of the non-authoritative approach, the coaches avoided imposing teaching practices and dominating or excessively controlling the interactions with the teachers. The participants stated that they were unfavourable towards being overtly authoritative in coaching or, in other words, showing that the coaches were an authority figure from the education department. For example, Uma explained that to encourage teachers who were more reluctant to try out new teaching strategies, she admitted having the tendency to use her authority power on the teachers to influence teachers' practice, but this would negatively affect the relationship between her teachers and herself. Neo described the use of a non-directive coaching language:

Coaching language is not a directive one . . . I'm trying not to use the word "must" . . . in coaching we give them options and they will choose by

themselves . . . except if . . . they have no idea . . . then it will be our part to help them to give them input.

Here, it was further emphasised that the coaching style would be one of the considerations that influence the coaches' portrayal of their coaching role. When the coaches decided on a more directive style of coaching to give input to the teachers regarding certain teaching strategy, the coaches would play the role of an educator to the teachers. On the other hand, the coaches often tend to use facilitative and dialogic style of coaching which would involve the usage of the coaching language. In other words, the coaches would pay great attention in what they say while supporting the teachers in their learning. Therefore, the type of relationship that the participants reportedly have with the teachers was based on friendship which was built on trust and understanding. Mary described:

I think the most important element is to be someone who is approachable . . . you need too present yourself as someone who is (the type of) person that (the teachers) would like to be with.

The friend-to-friend interactions in coaching suggested that the coaches were taking on a more teacher-centred type of coaching that prioritised the teachers' ideas and feelings by putting the teachers at the center of the coaching process. The coaches would provide support to the teachers in an approachable way through enacting behaviours such as getting to know the teachers better, being patient with the teachers, and trying to listen to their problems.

Coaches' Qualities

We found that the participants embraced four primary types of coaches' qualities during coaching teachers that guided the coaches' considerations in enacting their coaching roles: (a) being understanding; (b) being appreciative; (c) being flexible; and (d) having patience. These qualities were the attributes innate to the coaches that also served as a firm basis regardless of the coaching roles enacted in the course of the coaching engagement. In elaborating on the coaches' qualities of being understanding, Dora shared that as a coach, she often put herself in the teachers' shoes and constantly try to understand the situations pertaining to the teachers. She explained:

As much as we (the coaches) want the session to be successful they are bound to be factors that are beyond our control.

Before becoming a coach, Kara explained that she was a teacher and she could truly understand what the teachers were going through. She added being understanding towards the teachers also meant that the coaches had to be helpful to the teachers.

So, we can imagine if we were there (in the teachers' position) we will not be able to cope also. There are . . . (a) lack (of) facilities . . . they (the teachers) don't have enough resources also. . . so . . . be helpful to our coachee (the teachers).

The participants expressed the need to be flexible in their work since their job required them to change their plans at times to meet the changing needs of the teachers, as influenced by their unique contexts and situations. Maya shared her encounter with her teachers when they

required for a change of time of her visit for the coaching sessions. She explained the need for her to be flexible and allow for changes. She added:

I don't force them I just said it's ok. I'll come another day. So, they feel more comfortable.

Sara added the teachers appreciated her flexibility by describing her as “adjustable”:

[. . .] some of them said I'm adjustable. Yeah, they used that word . . . no it's not adjustable I said it's flexibility. Sort of like I'm flexible right.

The findings of this study suggested that the coaches were aware of the coaches' qualities that distinguish a good coach from a great coach. The coaches' qualities guided the coaches' in enacting their different roles based on the differing context and situation of the teachers. The key qualities served as the considerations that informed how the coaches could portray their roles in the moment-to-moment coaching interactions with the teachers.

Discussion

The current study set out to investigate the coaches' roles and their considerations in making decisions to shift roles among coaches of the English subject in primary schools in East Malaysia. In this section, we discuss and interpret the significance of the findings in relation to the existing literatures on coaching.

Multiple Roles

According to Bray and Brawley (2002), an individual's higher role clarity on how to perform the official tasks demanded by his or her job scope would improve the individual's performance at work. Having a clear understanding of one's roles could help increase effectiveness in the employee's performance and thus create greater chances for successful programme implementation in an organisation. The participants in this study could clearly define their roles in coaching teachers. The findings of the study revealed that the participants assumed three different roles which were the implementer, advocate, and educator. The present study was found to be in line with earlier studies that the coaches took on multiple roles in coaching teachers (Heineke, 2013; Mudzimiri et al., 2014; Russell, 2017; Vanita, 2016; Wang, 2017). The instructional coaches' roles served to move the coaching session forward depending on the teachers' stages of learning in the coaching cycle (Wang, 2017). While our findings corroborate some of the evidence presented in prior research, this study uncovered another important new insight. The findings suggested that with regards to the different stages of coaching or timing (pre-observation or post-observation conference), the coaches enacted multiple roles in order to enhance the teaching quality of the teachers. More specifically, teachers' stages of learning varied in terms of the teachers' ability to reflect and make conclusions and action plans for the improvement of their teaching.

As Hauser (2014) argues, coaches engage in the multifaceted coaching roles in accordance to the context of the coaching situation. Relevant to this finding, this study showed that within the different roles the coaches played, different strategies were employed, and they constantly made choices depending on the considerations that informed their choices on certain roles or role-shifting among the three different roles. The notion of shape-shifting characterises the coaches' ability to shape-shift or adopt and adapt within the different roles (Hauser, 2014). This study revealed that the coaches' decision to enact a certain role was

informed by considerations which exist within the contextually distinct coaching environment.

The finding of this study did not echo the previous study by Heineke (2013) in which the instructional coaches' roles consisted of a wide variety of responsibilities that affected the coaches' focus and time to perform face-to-face coaching sessions with the teachers. Similarly, Vanita (2016) reported that instructional coaches were said to perform clerical work that were not consistent with the prerequisite coaches' roles. The participants of this study, however, did not identify roles that were not adhering to the official expectations of the coaching, suggesting that role clarity was not an issue for the coaches in implementing the coaching programme. However, further research in the direction of role ambiguity and inconsistency is merited regardless to enhance the coaching research literature.

Fulfilling Official Expectations

Primary school English coaches frequently reported being the implementer in their coaching, suggesting that the coaches worked towards fulfilling their official duties as stipulated in the coaching guidelines in the DTP 3.0 (School Management Division, 2017). The responsibilities of the implementer, which were aligned with the job scope in the official expectations of coaches, were to set coaching dates with the teachers to arrange for school visits, classroom observations, coaching sessions, and coaching-related clerical work (e.g., producing coaching reports for the district). The results of our study showed that when the coaches enacted the role of the implementer during coaching sessions, teachers were reported to comply with the coaches' advice fairly due to the competence gap that exists between the two parties. The coaches reported the use of what Cartwright and Zander (1968) referred to as "social power" or the potential influence of one person over another (p. 316) in order for the more powerful person to cause a total possible change in another person's attitude, behaviour, and beliefs (Swasy, 1979). Further, Foucault (1983) used the term "pastoral power" to describe the process by which experts (e.g., the coaches) understand and influence others' (e.g., the teachers') thoughts. However, the use of "social power" or "pastoral power" was only up to a certain extent as the coaches needed to role-shift when this coaching strategy did not work due to unique coaching context.

The coaches in this study also reported their responsibility, within their role as an implementer, to improve students' English acquisition which is one of the goals of coaching within the DTP 3.0. This adds credibility to Russell's (2017) study's finding that ultimately the instructional coach's role was about supporting the English language learners. As Heck (2009) concluded, teacher effectiveness in terms of their ability to provide quality education is central to school improvement efforts to enhance student outcomes. When instructional coaches provide support to the teachers in relation to teaching strategies, content, and pedagogical knowledge that could improve the quality of the teaching processes; the schools' achievement level would be positively affected. The overarching goal of coaching is to support teachers and improve the quality of education that the teachers could provide—particularly to improve the academic performance of students who struggle to learn.

Non-Authoritative Approach to Coaching

Previous studies have identified a non-authoritative approach in coaching teachers (Heineke, 2013; Mudzimiri et al., 2014; Wang, 2017). This coaching approach is designed so that coaches are not "judging" the teachers and "treating them in an authoritative and patronising manner" which could result in making teachers "put up a wall" towards coaching (Heineke, 2013, p. 417). Instead, the coaches in previous research reported taking the teacher-

centred approach whereby the coaches would position themselves mainly as the facilitators to support teacher learning (Wang, 2017). Relevant to this finding, the analysis of the present study uncovered that the participants reported to primarily adopt the non-authoritative coaching approach which was especially prominent when they enacted the role of an advocate and educator. These two roles were characterised by low level of use of imposing authority role behaviour. Rather, the participants employed a questioning technique to ask for permission from the teachers when making coaching appointments, to develop the teachers' understanding and reflection on certain teaching strategies, and to reach teacher learning autonomy.

The analysis revealed that the role of an educator engaged in both instructive and dialogical conversations to achieve coach-teacher mutual understanding. The role of the educator was characterised by being a point of reference with regards to the knowledge and skills of pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, and the education policy of the country. The educator role shared the characteristics of a facilitator as the educator shows low level in the use of authority. The teachers in this study were encouraged to be active learners in identifying and solving problems while the coaches particularly intervene to help improve teachers' identification of problems in pursuit of solving them.

Another coaching role that was found in the analysis was the role of an advocate. The coaches acted by helping, giving support, and guiding the teachers in their teaching practices through identification of the teachers' needs. The coaches expressed their aim to help the teachers take autonomy in their learning—without asserting the coaches' authority upon the teachers and making them implement the suggested strategies. The role of an advocate in this study seems parallel to Rogers's (2003) approach that encourages the teachers to take an active role in their learning with the coaches being non-directive and supportive (Wilson & Ryan, 2005). Therefore, coaches experienced an emphatic understanding through active listening to the teachers' internal frame of reference and endeavours of what the teachers are going through by engaging in coach-teacher dialogue. This would include discussions based on the teachers' perceptions, ideas, meanings, and the emotional-affective components in the coaching interactions. The coaches extended these efforts by reaching mutual understanding with the teachers on the areas of learning for the teachers and, from that point onwards, facilitate the teachers' progress.

Three Key Considerations

The non-authoritative approach was also evident in the three key coaching considerations identified in this study. Previous research showed that coaching is informed and reflects influencers, facilitative factors and features that could affect the coaches' choices about how to interact with the teachers and to role-shift between the multifaceted roles (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Hauser, 2014). This study showed that one of the considerations that inform the coaches' role choice was teacher readiness. The evidence from this study reveals that teachers differed in their attitude and acceptance towards coaching. Consistent with findings by Jacobs, Boardman, Potvin, and Wang (2017), we found that coaches reported facing teacher resistance in their coaching. Some of the teachers showed reluctance to engage with the coaches and the resistance was expressed both in subtle forms and outright responses. This study has found that generally the coaches took into account teacher readiness and enacted the appropriate role through role-shifting in order to make coaching work. By acknowledging teacher readiness, the coaches could get the buy-in from the teachers that they worked with.

This study has shown that coaches considered the coaching styles that they could employ. The coaching styles ranged from being directive, dialogic, or facilitative. In relation

to the non-authoritative approach, the coaches appeared to avoid imposing teaching strategies and prevented themselves from dominating or excessively controlling interactions with the teachers. Based on the findings that emerged from the study, participants suggested that the role of an implementer was characterised by high directive, low dialogic, and low facilitative behaviours; the role of an educator was highly directive, highly dialogic, and highly facilitative; and the role of the advocate was characterised as highly dialogic, highly facilitative, but low directive.

As the results revealed, the third major consideration was the coaches' qualities. The coaches adopted characteristics of being understanding, being appreciative, having flexibility, and having patience in the coach-teacher interactions which were treating teachers as "human beings." Coaches' practice of the "human" part of coaching is also evident in other parts of the world (Passmore, 2010; Van Nieuwerburgh, 2017). By humanising coaching, elements of trust could be established within the coaching conversation between the coaches and the teachers. This finding is in the lines with previous literature (Parsons, 1963) that found mutual confidence is when the teachers would not feel inhibited to share their opinions with the coaches.

These three considerations served as a basis in the individual coaching interactions when the coaches work one-to-one with the teachers. The results of this study enhance our understanding of the roles the coaches encompassed largely in helping and providing support to the teachers. This is particularly to safeguard the overall interest of the national coaching programme and also, at a very minimal level, to act as a sort of pastoral authority for the teachers through the coach-teacher interactions.

Pedagogical Implications

This study holds a number of significant pedagogical implications for instructional coaching in improving the professional development of coaches. First, the fact that the coaches enacted various roles in their daily work and may even play different roles at a time, coaches need to prioritise their focus as their main goal would be maximising teacher learning and improving student achievement. Second, the roles of the coaches and the considerations that influence their decision in shape-shifting between the roles could give insights to practitioners of coaching and stake holders. This is specifically to improve the implementation of the coaching programme, and, in particular, to navigate their roles in the interactions with the teachers. The coaches' roles and the considerations would allow deeper understanding to the coaches' positions that are "socially produced within the local context" of coaching (Hunt, 2016, p. 341). Therefore, the usefulness of the coaches' roles and their considerations should be embarked upon to provide coaches the central ideas about instructional coaching and its pedagogical applications. A further implication of this study is its commitment towards instructional coaching and monitoring by the education offices which should also be considered seriously for effective and fruitful implementation of instructional coaching. In essence, coaches and teachers need to prepare to take responsibility for developing the practice of instructional coaching and to be willing to accept change in pursuit of their professional betterment.

Conclusion

The instructional coaching literature indicates that coaching is an emerging and complicated role (Obara & Sloan, 2010). This study investigated coaches' roles and their considerations in making decisions on shifting roles in the process of coaching in East Malaysia. The findings indicate that within the responsibility of being a coach, there are

multifaceted roles that coaches need to assume and the coaches' choices on role-shifting were informed by numerous considerations. In addition, due to the reason that instructional coaching heavily relies on how effectively the coaches could coach the teachers, the performance of the coaches seems to be based on their ability to understand, perform, prioritise, and role-shift between their coaching roles. More importantly, this study sheds light on the role clarity of the coaching programme where coaches clearly understand the scope of their coaching role. This study has attempted to make contributions to an area of professional learning, specifically instructional coaching in Malaysia.

Limitation and Future Research

Findings of this study provide future insights for further investigation. Although this study looked at coaches' roles and their considerations, future work should be established for the implementation of instructional coaching as a form of TPD in Malaysia, particularly in taking a closer look at the coaching process. The larger study would explore the need to understand the in-the-moment coaching process of what is being practiced: How does it differ from the coaching principles and how important is relationship building in sustaining the teacher change? This study could only focus on coaches' opinions about their roles and their considerations. Future considerations should therefore concentrate on opinions of other stakeholders (e.g., teachers, school administrators, policy makers, and district and national coaching programme implementers). Last, what is now also needed is to look at determining professional development programmes specifically designed to help instructional coaches for effective coaching.

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Appendix

Interview Items

1. Can you tell me about your coaching background?
2. What are your beliefs about coaching teachers?
3. Can you briefly describe your typical day coaching your teachers?
4. What do you understand about the roles of your work as a coach?
5. How important do you think for you to understand the coaching roles?
6. What do you think inform your choice of the coaching roles?
7. What are the challenges in coaching teachers?
8. How do you deal with these challenges?
9. What are the other difficulties that you faced in enacting the coaching roles?
10. What do you think you need to do more in your work as a coach?

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