Exploring the relationship between context, process and outcome factors associated with a Solution Focused Coaching Programme for school staff.

Natasha Louise Ellis
Submitted by Natasha Louise Ellis to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology in Educational, Child and Community Psychology, May 2013.

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I certify that all material in the thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other university.

Signed: …………………………...                      Date: ……………………………
Overview:

Paper 1 and Paper 2

The use of coaching interventions is on the increase, including within the field of education (Bennett & Monsen, 2011). However in recent years concerns have been raised regarding the lack of theoretical basis to many of these models, the limited research into their use as well as concerns relating to the lack of regulation amongst the coaching industry (Grant, 2011).

Subsequently focus is beginning to be placed on developing models of coaching which are based on psychological theory, exploring ways of teaching coaching skills and on exploring the outcomes associated with theory based coaching programmes (Grant, 2011a; Grant & Cavanagh, 2007).

One such theoretical approach to coaching which appears within the research literature and which is being used within schools are solution focused (SF) approaches, with evidence of psychologists including Educational Psychologists delivering programmes and delivering training for school staff to deliver SF peer coaching themselves (Brown, Powell & Clark, 2012; LDP, 2011).

However as is the case with SF approaches and coaching programmes more broadly the research evidence regarding SF coaching programmes is in its infancy, particularly in relation to their use within the education sector (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006). In particular limited focus has been placed on exploring the experiences of those involved in the coaching programme, the processes which may underpin such approaches nor the outcomes associated with their use. The two studies reported within this thesis attempt to address some of these gaps in the research literature.
**Paper 1:** Focused on exploring a model of SF coaching, developed and delivered by Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Advisory Teachers (ATs). A range of data sources were explored with the aim of gaining the perceptions of those involved in delivering and receiving the coaching. Specific focus was placed on exploring contextual, process and outcome factors associated with the programmes use. Themes which were identified included: poor initial communication of the aims of coaching, a significant emphasis being placed on relationship building within coaching sessions and difficulties in measuring the outcomes of the programme.

**Paper 2:** Focused on exploring the experiences of school staff involved in delivering and receiving SF peer coaching sessions, following training from EPs and ATs. A range of data sources were explored including interview, questionnaire, observational data gathered during coaching training sessions and video footage taken during a peer coaching session. Themes which were identified included a focus on ownership and relationship building within coaching sessions as well as a perception of changes in OFSTED ratings following coaching.

**Link between Paper 1 and 2:**

Findings from both these papers indicated that school systems and contextual factors within the field of education may impact on the processes underpinning SF coaching approaches and can also present challenges in relation to measuring outcomes. Further themes evident across both papers were that school staff were not always clear about the aims and purpose of the coaching and that building relationships and coachees’ sense of ownership were an
important area of focus within sessions whether delivered by peers or executive coaches.

**Positioning myself as a researcher**

I am a white female trainee EP. During the period in which the data was gathered I was on placement within the local authority in which the coaching programme was delivered.

Prior to beginning data gathering I had taken part in a two day SF coaching training session delivered by the coaching team. Besides this I had no previous involvement or experience of coaching or of working with or alongside the coaching team.
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<td>Solution Focused</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFA</td>
<td>Solution Focused Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFCP</td>
<td>Solution Focused Coaching Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>Educational Psychologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>Advisory Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOWW</td>
<td>Working on what works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Senior Leadership Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HT</td>
<td>Head Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDT</td>
<td>Self determination theory</td>
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<td>TTM</td>
<td>Transtheoretical Model</td>
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Paper 1
Abstract

The use of coaching programmes is on the increase, including within the field of education. However critics have raised concerns regarding the limited research base concerning their use and the fact many models do not appear to be underpinned by a theoretical basis. One psychological approach to coaching used within the education sector are Solution Focused Approaches, with psychologists including Educational Psychologists taking on the role of ‘executive’ coaches. This paper explores the experiences of school staff and executive coaches involved in one such Solution Focused coaching programme delivered within schools. The paper focuses on exploring the impact of and relationship between contextual, process and outcome factors. Key findings included the fact school staff were not always clear about the aims and purpose of the coaching, that factors such as relationship building and increasing coachees’ sense of ownership were central processes within sessions and that measuring the outcomes of the coaching presented a range of challenges. Within the paper the findings are explore in relation to psychological perspectives including Self-determination theory.
Chapter 1

Introduction and Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

This is the first of two papers which together explore a Solution Focused Coaching Programme (SFCP). Within this paper particular consideration will be given to exploring the relationship between the contextual factors, processes and outcomes associated with the programmes use, when delivered by executive coaches including Educational Psychologists (EPs). The paper will consider data relating to each of these areas before exploring possible relationships between the three, with particular emphasis placed on exploring the experiences of coaches and coachees.

1.2 Literature Review

The aim of this review is to provide a critical account of the literature surrounding the use of SFCPs in schools. Given the limited research within this area consideration will also be given to the literature and debates surrounding coaching and Solution Focused approaches (SFAs) more broadly. The articles highlighted were located using academic search engines such as Psych Articles and EBSCO. As coaching programmes cross disciplinary boundaries care was taken to vary search terms. For instance to identify models of coaching relevant to Head Teachers, the term ‘executive coaching’ was used when searching the business literature. Other key words and phrases searched for included ‘coaching psychology’, ‘teacher coaching’, and ‘solution focused
coaching’. Additional materials were located by searching the internet using these same key words and phrases. Policy and programme documents were also requested from the Local Authority where the research took place.

In recent years there has been a rapid increase in the popularity of coaching and it is now used widely within the fields of business (Feldman & Lankau, 2005), healthcare (Green & Plsek, 2002) and recently in education (Bennett & Monsen, 2011). This increased use of coaching with teachers, may have been driven by the fact the national strategy for the continuing professional development of teachers (DfEE, 2001) and the OFSTED inspection framework for schools have both supported the use of coaching approaches (OFSTED, 2011).

However, despite such support, the increased growth and popularity of coaching, within the education sector and beyond, has been met by concern from psychologists who highlight that there is limited methodologically sound research into its outcomes (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). Concerns have also been raised regarding a lack of formal regulation and agreed standards of training for coaches (Grant, 2011; Rauen & Eversmann, 2011). Perhaps fundamental to these issues is the fact that there is also much debate as to what coaching actually is.

1.2.1 Coaching: A Definition?

At present there is no universally agreed definition of ‘coaching’, perhaps reflecting the large differences in models between and within fields (Cavanagh & Palmer, 2011).
Attempts at defining coaching have included a focus on what coaching involves, for instance it has been claimed that coaching is a means of improving performance through ‘facilitation’ (Downey, 2003), ‘assisting’ (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002) and ‘instruction’ (Parsloe, 1992). Other definitions focus on highlighting who coaching is ‘for’, with Bluckert (2005) claiming coaching is for ‘non-clinical populations’, that is people without mental health issues.

Within the field of education the term ‘coaching’ is used to refer to a range of practices (Grant, Green & Rynsaardt, 2010). Most frequently cited are models of peer coaching often involving the sharing of best practice and curriculum knowledge (e.g. Veenman, De Laat & Staring, 2006). Also highlighted are articles reporting the use of external ‘executive coaches, who are not necessarily teachers (Allan, 2007). The term ‘executive coach’ is used broadly within the coaching literature (e.g Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009) to refer to ‘professional coaches’ bought in from an external organisation to deliver coaching sessions to staff. The expertise of these individuals relates to their coaching skills and they do not necessarily have experience of working in the same field as the people they are coaching. Whilst such coaching models do not appear widely within the research literature, they are being marketed to schools, with executive coaches targeting the education sector having a strong online presence (Grant et al. 2010).

In line with coaching in other domains, many of the models marketed as ‘coaching’ within the education sector do not appear to be underpinned by a theoretical basis. This has led to calls for a distinction to be made between ‘coaching’ and those models of coaching which are underpinned by psychological theory and techniques (Palmer & Whybrow, 2006).
For instance within the research literature ‘psychological’ approaches to coaching are emerging which build on the principles of: Positive Psychology (Biswas Diener & Dean, 2007), Cognitive Behavioural approaches (Palmer & Gyllensten, 2008) and Psychodynamic approaches (Kilburg, 2000).

SFA to coaching are also increasingly cited within the psychological coaching literature (Williams, Palmer & O’Connell, 2011), with evidence suggesting such models are being used within the education sector with teachers (eg. Grant et al. 2010).

Whilst these models may ‘fit’ with the notion of ensuring coaching is underpinned by theory, it is important to highlight that the increased use of SFA to coaching may itself raise questions for those keen to develop an ‘evidence based’ field of coaching as the research base regarding SFAs is in its infancy.

1.2.2 Solution Focused Approaches

SFAs originated within the field of family therapy (Rhodes & Ajmal, 2004). Within this context de Shazer and colleagues worked inductively, analyzing the content of therapy sessions attempting to identify ‘the difference which made the difference’ (de Shazer & Berg, 1997).

Within this analysis they noted that key turning points seemed to be when the client and therapist were discussing solutions and not problems. In light of this SFAs arose based on the overarching principle that focusing on the dimensions of the problem is not necessary for the development of solutions (de Shazer, 1985).

Other key principles of SFAs are that they presume people want change to happen and that at least part of the solution is already happening (Kelly &
Bluestone-Miller, 2009). Within sessions individuals are viewed as active in constructing meaning based on the selection and interpretation of information, influenced by social and cultural factors (Boyle, Stobie, Ingeberg & Woolfson, 2005). These principles and assumptions have given rise to the development of SF questions which are central to SFAs (including SFAs to coaching) (see appendix one for further information).

Over the years a number of criticisms have been levied at SFAs, for instance it has been claimed they do not account for the fact the client may not be able to identify or achieve a solution, for instance if the ‘cause’ of the problem is beyond their control (Cavanagh, 2006; Clark-Stager, 1999). Furthermore it has been claimed that by suggesting the client holds the solution, there is a risk they will feel blamed for the problem’s existence (Walsh, 2010) or feel invalidated if the ‘problem’ is not explored (Nylund & Corsiglia, 1994). Further criticisms centre around the fact that there has been limited focus on exploring how SFAs work (Grant, 2011) and the outcomes associated with their use (Woods, Bond, Humphrey, Symes & Green 2011).

However, despite such concerns a large SF industry has developed and SF techniques and principles are now applied outside of the therapeutic arena including within the education sector (Kim & Franklin, 2009). One group of professionals involved in the delivering of SFAs within schools are EPs, with evidence suggesting many apply SFAs when working with individual children, within consultations and when delivering training (Boyle et al, 2005). In addition there is evidence of EPs becoming involved in the delivery of SF coaching sessions for teachers (e.g. Lloyd, Bruce and MacKintosh, 2012).
1.2.3 Solution Focused Coaching Frameworks

Whilst there are no clear figures to indicate how frequently SF coaching is being applied in schools, there is evidence that it is often psychologists, including EPs, who are involved in adopting the role of ‘executive’ coach. There exist a number of frameworks which are used by these coaches to structure sessions, drawing on the principles and questions at the core of SFAs (see above).

For instance, there is evidence of EPs being involved in the delivery of the ‘Working On What Works’ (WOWW) coaching programme (Brown et al, 2012). This approach involves an ‘executive’ coach working with pupils and teachers, focusing on identifying strengths and resources through using observations, and SF questions (Kelly & Bluestone Miller, 2009).

A further example of a SFA to coaching is reported by Grant et al (2010) who have applied SF and cognitive behavioural principles to the ‘GROW’ coaching framework (Goal, Reality, Options, Ways Forward). The GROW model arose within the field of business (Whitmore, 2002) and is claimed to be one of the most commonly used approaches to structuring coaching conversations (Edgerton & Palmer, 2005). Nonetheless, in isolation it does not appear to be itself underpinned by a clear theoretical basis. Whilst Grant et al’s SF adaptation of GROW has been reported within the research literature there is a lack of evidence to suggest it is being applied in schools, outside of research studies. Furthermore, the research concerning this model has all been carried out by this single research team within Australian independent schools.

A final SFA to coaching which has not received attention within the research literature, yet which anecdotal evidence indicates is being applied by psychologists within schools, is BRIEF’s SF coaching framework (BRIEF,
The framework advocated by BRIEF is based simply on the premise that a coach will meet with a coachee, for a number of sessions adhering to the core principles of SFAs and drawing on some specific SF questions (George, Iveson & Ratner, 2011). An adaptation of the BRIEF coaching model is the focus of this thesis with specific information regarding its content provided within appendix two. Throughout this thesis this particular model will be referred to as the ‘Solution Focused Coaching Programme’ (SFCP) in order to maintain the anonymity of participants and the Local Authority in which the research took place.

Whilst such models of SF coaching have differences in structure, the core principles and theoretical basis underpinning their use remains the same (although Grant et al’s model also incorporates Cognitive Behavioural principles). A further factor which SFAs to coaching have in common is that their use has been subject to limited focus within the research literature. This lack of research is not an uncommon complaint with regards to SFAs or coaching approaches more broadly (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). Indeed whilst SFAs are increasingly popular, particularly with regards to their application to coaching, concerns have arisen regarding the fact that the research evidence supporting their use is in its infancy (Gingerich & Eisengart, 2000).

### 1.2.4 Solution Focused Coaching Approaches - the research literature

Part of the reason for SFAs receiving limited research consideration may come from the fact there was an initial resistance to research by the developers of the approach. These therapists argued that in the search for effectiveness, the focus on clients and their subjective experience could be overshadowed by the
research process (de Shazer & Berg, 1997). However, as pressure has increased to ensure practice is evidence-based (McKibben, 1998), research into SFAs is beginning to emerge.

For instance, reviews by Gingerich and Eisengart (2000) and Woods et al. (2011) highlight there is early tentative evidence that SFAs may be effective but that the picture is far from clear. Specific criticisms made by these authors and others relate to methodological limitations such as the use of largely within subject case study research designs (Gingerich, Kim, Stams & Macdonald, 2011).

With regards to the application of SFAs to coaching and to the use of such programmes within the field of education, the research literature is even more sparse. For example, although Grant et al. (2010) reported positive outcomes in relation to factors such as a teacher’s sense of well-being, this evaluation was of a combined SF and cognitive behavioural coaching approach. This makes it hard to draw firm conclusions as to how much the SF elements themselves contributed to outcomes.

A further criticism regarding SFAs is that there has been limited focus on exploring the processes underpinning their use (Grant, 2011a). Such criticisms have also been levied at coaching approaches more generally, as there has been limited focus on identifying ‘how’ they may promote change (Spence & Oades, 2011). Another gap within the research literature relates to the limited focus which has been placed on exploring the experiences of coaches or coachees. One exception is a study by Brown et al. (2012), which explored the perceptions of teachers and children involved in the WOWW programme.

Whilst psychologists such as Grant may be critical of the use of qualitative approaches, instead calling for a focus on ‘scientific’ methods, it may be argued
that exploring individuals experiences may add depth to our understanding of how and why particular coaching outcomes may occur.

Overall, the research base surrounding SFAs, and particularly SFAs to coaching within the education sector, is in its infancy (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006). Nevertheless, SFCPs within the UK are being marketed to schools, with professionals such as EPs playing a role in their delivery (Brown et al, 2012; LDP, 2011). Yet, as highlighted above this practice is not being reported widely within the research literature. In keeping such practice private, it may be argued the EPs, particularly given their training in research skills, are missing an opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base regarding coaching and indeed SFAs in general (Boyle et al, 2005).

1.3 Summary and Research Questions

SFCPs used within the field of education have received limited attention within the research literature. The specific SFCP discussed within this thesis (see appendix two) has itself not been subject to any formal research.

In addition, the research regarding SF coaching models that does exist contains a number of significant gaps. For instance, the experiences of those involved in coaching has received limited consideration. Furthermore limited focus has been placed on exploring the processes underpinning SF coaching, nor how these may relate to outcomes and contextual factors relevant to the education sector.

It is these gaps in the literature which this study proposes to address, giving rise to the overarching research aim of exploring a SFCP, considering the experiences of those involved in delivering and taking part in sessions.
Particular focus will be placed on exploring the relationship between contextual, process and outcome factors.

This aim encompasses the following related questions:

**Research Question 1:** What are the impacts of contextual factors on the SFCP?

**Research Question 2:** What are the processes involved in the SFCP?

**Research Question 3:** What are the outcomes associated with the SFCP?

**Research Question 4:** What is the relationship between contextual, process and outcome factors?
Chapter 2
Design and Methodology

2.1 Methodology

Within the data gathering period I experienced a number of challenges which impacted on my proposed research plan. Consequently a new research design was developed, allowing me to explore the SFCP whilst capturing some of the contextual challenges which I experienced with regards to gaining access to participants and the concerns of the coaching team regarding ‘researching coaching’. (See Appendix three for further details).

The design I eventually adopted has the features of an exploratory ethnographic approach (Robson, 2011). Ethnographic approaches draw on different sources of data, considering multiple perspectives with the aim of ‘telling the story’ of individuals experiences (Walford, 2005). Ethnographic researchers aim to explore and generate understanding concerning their cases.

The eventual approach I adopted aligned with Walford’s claims that:

“natural science research is frequently not carefully planned in advance and conducted according to a set of procedures, but often centers on compromises, short-cuts, hunches and serendipitous occurrences” (p1 Walford, 2005)

However, whilst my approach to the research process was flexible and evolved over time it was not entirely unstructured. In gathering data I drew on a framework based on Pawson and Tilley’s (1997) model of realist evaluation, centered around the notion of considering ‘what works, for whom and in which circumstances’.

In order to address this question Pawson and Tilley (1997) propose exploring the relationship between contextual, mechanism and outcome factors. This
broad focus was flexible enough to account for the uncertainties I encountered at the start of the data gathering process. Within this thesis the term 'process' will be used in place of 'mechanism'. The reason for using the term process is that within the coaching and SF research literature the word ‘process' has been used when highlighting the need to explore how coaching approaches work. A focus on exploring such ‘processes’ is one of the central aims of my research. In addition it should be noted that within my research I have not attempted to rigorously adhere to a realist evaluation framework but have instead sought to draw on elements of the approach.

Within the current study contextual factors were taken to be anything which impacted on the delivery of the coaching. For instance the reasons why a Head Teacher commissioned coaching. Process factors concerned the specific process of coaching. For instance the questions used. Outcome factors were taken to be any outcomes reported as being associated with the programme.

Whilst there has been some debate concerning whether realist approaches are compatible with ethnography, Hammersley argues it is possible for the two to be compatible if a ‘subtle’ form of realism is adopted. For instance Hammersley proposes that researchers can believe there exist phenomena ‘independent’ of their claims whilst also accepting that they cannot assume their knowledge of these claims is certainly ‘true’. A subtle realist approach therefore acknowledges a level of subjectivity in researchers interpretations with knowledge being viewed to be beliefs about which one can be relatively certain (Hammersley, 1992). This assumption underpins the data gathering, interpretation and discussions of findings within this thesis.
2.1.1 Procedure

The teachers who took part in the research project reported in this paper each received an observation from the coaching team (comprising EPs and an AT) followed by a one off coaching session (lasting approximately an hour) with a member of this team. The teachers then attended a group debrief session exploring 'general themes' which emerged across all the coaching sessions within their school. During the data gathering period the coaching team reported that the observations were not a core part of the framework but that schools sometimes request them (this will be discussed in further detail later within this paper).

2.2. Participants and Sampling

Participants were recruited from a large local authority in South West England. All participants were provided with an overview of the research study (see appendix four) and completed a consent form prior to participating (see appendix 5).

Executive coaches (n=3)
All coaches involved in delivering coaching sessions during the data gathering period (September 2011-January 2013) were contacted and all agreed to be interviewed about their experiences of the SFCP. This included two EPs and an AT. These participants were identified as a result of my work as a trainee EP, within the service.

School staff (n=11, across four schools)
In order to recruit school staff to take part in the research, the executive coaches notified me of the schools who commissioned coaching sessions
during the data gathering period. They then acted as an initial point of contact, introducing me to potential participants. In total 11 teachers from four schools participated in the research (for further information regarding the participants see appendix six). This sample included both males and females and included participants of a range of ages and levels of teaching experience.

This method of identifying participants is referred to as ‘snowball sampling’ as it involved identifying individuals from the population of interest and using these participants as informants to identify further potential participants (Robson, 2011). Limitations relating to this approach will be discussed within chapter four.

2.2 Measures and Procedures

2.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews (SSIs) were carried out with school staff after their participation in a coaching session/s, and with the EPs and AT involved in delivering the coaching. The aim of these interviews was to gather in-depth information regarding the participant’s perceptions and experiences of the SFCP. The interview schedules (see appendix seven and eight) contained open-ended questions relating to contextual factors, process factors and outcomes.

2.2.2 Field notes

During the data gathering period I observed an initial briefing session and a group feedback/coaching session, taking detailed observational notes during
these occasions (see appendix nine for an extract from the field notes).
I also spoke frequently with the coaching team regarding their work, taking
notes and, on occasions, recording these conversations on a Dictaphone
(enabling me to transcribe them later). I also kept a reflective log of my
experiences throughout the data gathering period.

2.2.3 Video data

During the data gathering period the coaching team filmed two coaching
sessions, to support their own professional development and for use within
coaching training. After gaining the consent of the coaches and coachees I was
provided with copies of the footage, for use within this research study. I watched
each session twice transcribing the content in order that it could be analysed
thematically.

2.2.4 Questionnaire data

Within school S4 a number of teachers reported that they were unable to
commit to being interviewed but were willing to complete a questionnaire
regarding their experiences (see appendix 10). Consequently I developed and
distributed a questionnaire which was structured to explore contextual, process
and outcome factors. The questionnaire was also distributed within school S3
although no staff responded. Plans were made to distribute the questionnaire
within school S2 although data gathering within this setting was ceased prior to
distribution as a result of the contextual issues detailed in appendix three.
2.2.4 Ethical Considerations

Approval from the University of Exeter's ethics committee was gained on the 22\textsuperscript{nd} January 2012. The Code of Ethics and Conduct set by the British Psychological Society (2009) was adhered to throughout this research. Written informed consent was gained from all participants (see appendix five) and they were made aware of the fact that their responses would be treated as confidential.

See appendix 11, for further information regarding the ethical considerations adhered to during this study.

2.3 Data analysis

\textbf{Figure 1: Overview of analysis procedures and how these related to the research questions.}

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<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| \textbf{Research Question 1 (Context)} | • Interviews with coaching team  
• Interviews with teachers  
• Questionnaire data  
• Field notes | Thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke's 6 stage framework (see appendix 12). |
| \textbf{Research Question 2 (Process)} | • Interviews with coaching team  
• Interviews with teachers  
• Questionnaire data  
• Video data  
• Field notes | Themes grouped into 'contextual' 'process' and 'outcome' themes. |
| \textbf{Research Question 3 (Outcomes)} | • Interviews with coaching team  
• Interviews with teachers  
• Questionnaire data  
• Field notes |                                             |
| \textbf{Research Question 4 (Relationship between context, process and outcomes)} | Draws together the above data sources and methods of analysis |                                             |
All data was analysed using Braun and Clarke’s six stage thematic analysis framework (Figure 1; Braun and Clarke, 2006) (see appendix 12 for further information). Using this approach I searched for themes related to my aim of exploring contextual factors, process factors and outcomes.

The first step of analysis involved transcribing and familiarising myself with all data sources, making notes and recording initial codes for each case using NVIVO v10. These codes were grouped under the headings of contextual factors, process factors and outcomes (see appendices 9, 13 and 14 for examples).

Following this, I reread and refined the codes, condensing codes into themes within individual data sets (e.g. within the coach interview data or within the field note data) (see appendix 15).

I then re-read then entire data set, exploring and condensing themes resulting in the identification of key themes, common across the entire data set, which addressed the research questions. Appendix 16 provides examples of how initial codes and themes related to overarching themes.
The higher order themes identified across the data set are presented within tables and explored in the sections below.

### 3.1 Results: Section A

**Research Question 1: What are the impacts of contextual factors on the SFCP?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sources of evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication and understanding the aims of coaching</td>
<td>Interviews with coaching team</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
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<td>Field notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial scepticism/resistance to coaching</td>
<td>Interviews with coaching team</td>
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<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>School systems impacting on coaching</td>
<td>Interviews with coaching team</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
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<td>Field notes</td>
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</table>

**Contextual theme 1: Communication and understanding of the aims of coaching**

Across the data set there was evidence that coachees were not always initially aware of the aims of the coaching or what the process would involve.

> “I think the message got lost somewhere…cos I thought I was being observed and was going to get my lesson judged so I didn’t realise what it was” (Dave-coachee S4)
One of the coachees involved in my research did attend a ‘briefing’ session with the coaching team prior to the coaching and made reference to the impact of this on his subsequent engagement.

“the only reason I was as open as I was, was because we had that first session where we all sat around the table and a few of us said ‘what’s going on, what’s this all about?”

(Jamie-coachee S3)

**Contextual theme 2: Initial scepticism/resistance**

A second contextual theme identified was that there appeared, initially, to be an element of scepticism and reluctance to engage amongst some coachees. For instance within my field notes I recorded the following quotes from coachees during a briefing session:

“I’m not being funny but how exactly would it work given you know nothing about my job”

(Amy-coachee S3)

“coaching sounds like it’s a one off. To me you’re just dipping your toes, not getting your feet wet. You’re wasting your time” (Nick-coachee S3)

Further evidence of initial scepticism/resistance was evident within the interview data with coaches and coachees. For instance one coachee stated:

“i think when you don’t know anything about it what happens is…it’s that word coaching, you automatically feel that you are going to have someone coming in and telling you how to do your job” (Ed-coachee S3)

**Context theme 3: Existing school systems impacting on coaching**

A third contextual theme identified was that school systems appeared to impact on the delivery of the coaching. Firstly, within the interview data all three executive coaches reported that some schools specifically commission coaching as a form of school improvement, for instance following a poor OFSTED. Of the schools taking part in the research, one was in special measures and the coaching team highlighted that the coaching was commissioned as a result of this. Unfortunately within the data gathering period
I was unable to speak directly with the staff who had commissioned the coaching, to confirm this or to explore the reasons for commissioning coaching in the other schools. However it was evident that within the interviews with coachees many perceived the coaching as being linked to OFSTED. There was also evidence that schools were commissioning observations which two executive coaches described as not fitting within the coaching framework. Despite such protestations, within my sample of schools two out of the four cohorts involved in coaching received an observation of their practice from the coaching team prior to their coaching session. When I queried this the coaches stated that whilst they tried to ‘persuade’ schools not to use them, some schools continued to ‘request’ observations. Within my field notes I was left reflecting whether the team would feel more confident in keeping rigorously to their preferred model if the coaching was not ‘sold’ to schools.

3.2 Results: Section B

**Research Question 2: What are the processes involved in the SFCP?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sources of evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships and trust</td>
<td>Interviews with coaching team</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
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<td>Field notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ownership/Coachee drives session</td>
<td>Interviews with coaching team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Video data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-advice giving focus</td>
<td>Interviews with coaching team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Process theme 1: Relationships and trust

Across the data sources there was evidence that building relationships was a clear feature of the SFCP.

“I think in so much of this sort of work is the ability to be able to develop rapport and get on with people. It’s fundamental. If you don’t do that you might as well give up, whatever you are doing” (Murray-Executive coach)

Within the interview data coachees described feeling that they had been rapidly able to build a relationship with their coach during their session, with many feeling comfortable discussing areas which they would not have felt able to discuss with colleagues.

“I was able to completely off load and say things that I probably wouldn’t say to people that I work with…. I felt like I could to that with X” (Aimee coachee S2)

During a briefing session at one school, I noted within my field notes that a key role of the coaching team, at that early stage, was to attempt to persuade the coachees that they could be trusted and that their aim was to adopt a supportive, non-judgemental role.

This fitted a comment made by a member of the coaching team that:

“the first part is to very quickly know that a. we are human beings, b. we are nice, c. we are not OFSTED, d. we will be working in a respectful, helpful, confidential way” (Bevan-Executive coach)

Process theme 2: Ownership/Coachee drives session

A further ‘process’ theme identified was that the focus of coaching sessions appeared to be driven by the coachees, who could select any area of their choice to discuss.

Across the schools there did not appear to be a clear theme in relation to the areas which the coaching sessions addressed, with areas selected including
developing a better work/life balance, and improving knowledge of an ICT programme.

Within the interview data it was reported that this focus on the coachee retaining ownership of the session was perceived as central when the commissioner of the SFCP has a particular ‘agenda’ for what the coaching would address.

“I think the role of the coach is to always establish what the plan is and how they (the coachee) are going to use that time effectively for their own use, regardless of what the overarching aim of the head teacher might be” (Murray-Executive coach)

Within one of the focus schools the coaching team described that the commissioner was very clear the coaching should ‘improve the department’ (following a poor OFSTED).

Interestingly this focus was not reported to me by the coachees. This may have resulted from the fact the coaching team were successful in giving the coachees ownership of the session rather than focus purely on the aims of the commissioner. Although it may also have related to the fact that the initial aims of the coaching did not appear to have been communicated to the coachees.

Within field notes, interview and video data there was also evidence that it is the coachees who set their own next steps/goals following their coaching session. Furthermore it was apparent that no plans were made to ‘monitor’ progress towards these next steps, instead emphasis was placed on giving the coachees ownership of their own professional development:

“you have got to believe that the people you are coaching can come up with the solutions themselves and can move forward” (Bret-Executive coach)

**Process theme 3: Non-advice giving focus**

Linking in with the above theme regarding ownership, across the data sources there was evidence that coaches aimed not to offer advice or opinions. Instead within the video data and within my field notes taken during an observation of a
group debrief, the coaches focused purely on asking SF questions, encouraging the coachees to reflect on previous successes and to identify a preferred future (how the situation would be if the ‘problem’ had been solved). The coaching team did not appear to share their knowledge or skills gained through working as EPs and ATs. Indeed on a number of occasions within my field notes I recorded that the coaching team informed school staff of this key feature of the SFCP. For instance saying

“It’s very much not about giving advice. It’s not important I have not done your job before”. (Field notes)

However contrary to this theme of ‘non-advice’ giving, it must be noted that where observations had been used the team did provide feedback, focused on the positive aspects of the teachers’ practice. Whilst members of the coaching team claim that these observations are not part of their SFCP, they were commissioned for two out of the four cohorts involved in this study.

It may be argued that in feeding back on the ‘positive’ aspects of the teachers’ lessons the coaching team are passing judgements and offering advice based on what they perceive to be good practice, which is somewhat at odds with a SFA.

However, despite this apparent discrepancy between the non-advice giving focus of the model and the use observations, all the coachees I met who had received an observation themselves maintained the perception that the coaching was non-advice giving:

“a coach can help you setting your own agenda...and then helping you to feel positive about what's going on and therefore more able to solve problems for yourself” (Dave-coachee S4)
3.3 Results: Section C

Research Question 3: What are the outcomes associated with the SFCP?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sources of evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in assessing outcomes</td>
<td>Interviews with coaching team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Field notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal well-being/enjoyment</td>
<td>Interviews with coaching team</td>
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<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire data</td>
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<td>Field notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-going use of SFAs</td>
<td>Interviews with coaching team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
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<td>Field notes</td>
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Outcome theme 1: Difficulty Assessing Outcomes

A clear theme identified across the data set is that there are challenges in relation to assessing the outcomes of the SFCP. Firstly the coaching team reported concerns that attempts at measuring outcomes could impact the coaching process:

“it’s like if the experiment is observed it changes the experiment. I think if people feel like it’s going to be monitored and evaluated they might feel more..inclined to choose certain next steps” (Bevan-Executive coach)

Within field notes I reported that the coaching team appeared to have developed a ‘trust’ and a ‘belief’ in the model. During a training event run by the team for EPs, they shared their understanding of the ‘evidence base’ for SFAs which had been reported to them during their training at BRIEF, stating that it is “strong and of a gold standard”. Within my reflective log I pondered whether it was this belief which contributed to the teams apparent reluctance and lack of focus on assessing the outcomes associated with the SFCP. I also reflected
that the team seemed aware that there may be a need to shift to focus on outcomes in the future. For instance one coach informed me:

“it’s a development point for me to think about how schools can, if they have to monitor this stuff” (Bret-Executive coach)

The coaching team also highlighted that some school staff had queried how best to monitor the outcomes of the coaching themselves (in particular schools who have commissioned peer coaching, discussed in paper two). However as far as I am aware none of the schools involved in receiving coaching from the coaching team within my research made any attempts themselves to monitor outcomes.

A further possible explanation for the lack of monitoring may come from the fact that coachees took the lead, deciding what to focus on within the coaching and identifying their ‘next steps’. These next steps and areas of focus did not necessarily relate to factors, which would be easily quantifiable nor indeed which may be seen as of particular and immediate relevance to their professional practice. For instance, one coachee described how coaching had supported him in getting back into running.

**Outcome theme 2: Well-being/enjoyment**

Whilst there was some difficulty in assessing specific outcomes related to coaching, one outcome which was reported by coachees was that they found the coaching an enjoyable experience. Coachees also reported feeling the coaching had impacted specifically on their well-being. For instance in relation to areas such as their work/life balance, their fitness or their ability to feel positive during a stressful time in school.

“I haven’t walked away from things like that (courses/training) feeling like I did (following the coaching)” (Ed-coachee S3)
It is this positive feedback regarding how people ‘feel’ about coaching which appears to support the coaching team in sustaining their belief in the approach and which may contribute to their lack of specific focus on outcome measures:

“the feedback I get is that people really like the kind of coaching we do”, “It’s just that sort of anecdotal qualitative stuff that makes me think it’s effective” (Bret-Executive coach)

**Outcome theme 3: On-going use of SFA**

Within two of the three schools, coachees had requested some additional training in using SF coaching approaches, following the coaching.

Within my field notes I recorded the following quote from a coachee:

“If we can receive some training we could do this on a regular basis. It’s more sustainable” (Ed-coachee S3)

Within my interviews with the coaching team they also described to me schools in which staff requested training to implement coaching approaches themselves, following members of staff (often HTs) having received coaching from the coaching team. In addition to requesting training in using SFAs, coachees also made reference to drawing on aspects of their coaching experience within their practice. For instance:

“When colleagues come to me to talk about their issues and problems..I relay what was said to me at the coaching session” (Zoe-coachee S3)

**3.4 Results: Section D**

**Research Question 6: What are the relationships between the contextual, process and outcome factors involved in the SFCP?**

Figure two provides a pictorial representation of possible relationships between contextual, process and outcome factors regarding the SFCP.

It may be argued that a lack of clarity about the aims of the coaching and an
initial resistance of coachees to take part, perhaps contributed to emphasis being placed on putting coachees at ease, building rapport and giving them a sense of ownership. Such a focus may have been further impacted by the fact schools chose to commission observations alongside the coaching, something which the coaching team appeared to feel uncomfortable with.

**Figure 2: Diagram showing possible relationships between contextual, process and outcome factors.**

It may be argued that the breadth of topics covered in sessions presented challenges in terms of monitoring the outcomes of the coaching. It may also be argued that the coaching teams’ focus on building relationships and on putting coachees at ease, may also have contributed to their lack of focus on the outcomes associated with the SFCP.

A further alternative is that it may be the fact that the schools commissioned one off coaching sessions which contributed to the challenges in monitoring outcomes. Although this arguably gave the coaches an element of freedom in not needing to ensure that coaching sessions addressed the initial best hopes of the commissioner.
Chapter 4
Discussion

This discussion section will be structured according to the research questions, with the results outlined within chapter three being explored in further detail. Overarching conclusions relevant to papers one and two, as well as recommendations for practice, are reported in chapter nine.

4.1 Research question 1: What are the impacts of contextual factors on the SFCP?

A number of themes emerged across the data set relating to contextual factors. Most notably, that information regarding the SFCP and its aims was not always communicated to coachees before coaching sessions. In addition it appeared that all coachees had been signed up to take part in the coaching, for instance by their line manager, rather than having volunteered to take part themselves. It may be argued that these factors were perhaps associated with a second contextual theme of initial scepticism amongst coachees.

The developers of SFAs have written about the challenges of working with clients who have been ‘told’ to attend sessions deeming them ‘visitors’ (de Shazer, 1988). deShazer highlights the potential for this situation to result in a ‘resistant relationship’. In order to avoid this he proposes the therapist (coach) focuses on building rapport, remembering they remain firmly on the side of the person taking part in the session (rather than the person who sent them). Such a focus on building relationships and attempting to give the coachee a degree of ownership appeared to be a central component of the SFCP.
Whilst little has been written regarding the potential ‘processes’ at play within SFAs, some tentative links have been suggested between SFAs and theories of motivation, particularly Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Spence & Oades, 2011). It may be argued that this theory offers a framework in which to explore the contextual themes, and latterly the process and outcome themes, identified within the present study.

According to SDT humans have an innate tendency to seek out experiences which promote personal growth (given the appropriate contextual conditions). Such growth and development is argued to involve the satisfaction of a number of core needs, proposed to be central to the development of motivation. These needs are autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

It is the need for autonomy which may arguably provide a framework in which to explore these first two contextual themes. Autonomy is proposed to be the extent to which a person perceives that they experience a sense of choice over a situation (Visser, 2010). It may be argued that if coachees are not given information or control regarding their involvement in coaching, then at least from the perspective of SDT, this could undermine the extent to which they may be motivated to engage with the process. Instead it may be argued that there is a possibility coachees could be starting their coaching session from a point of ‘amotivation’, that is a lack of intention to act (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This sense of amotivation is proposed to result in the possibility that an individual may just ‘go through the motions’ in this case of the coaching process. Researchers have suggested that an awareness of this potential challenge and of the coachees need for autonomy could provide a useful framework for focusing coaching sessions (Spence & Oades, 2011).
4.1.1 Consumer demands-applying the model in schools

A further contextual theme identified was that the SFCP appeared to be shaped by school systems and ‘demands’ from those commissioning the approach. For instance observations were commissioned alongside the coaching, despite the coaching teams’ claims they were not part of the model. It may be argued that the use of such observations does not sit well within a SF framework, given one of the overarching principles of SFAs is that the coach (or the therapist) is not further along the journey than the coachee (client) (deShazer, 1988). However it should be noted that using observations within school based SF coaching is not unique to this model. Indeed the school based WOWW programme also utilises observations with feedback being provided by an external coach (Kelly & Bluestone Miller, 2009). It may be argued that such use of observations perhaps relates to the fact they are a familiar tool already used widely within educational development initiatives (Richards & Farrell, 2011). Alternatively it may be that schools requested observations within the SFCP in response to demands and recommendations made by OFSTED following inspections. Indeed within my field notes I highlighted a number of occasions where, during informal conversations with the coaching team, coachees reported they were facing increased pressures regarding ‘results’ and ‘performance’ from OFSTED and the Local Authority.

A further possibility may be that the coaching team were facing pressures from their own employer to ‘sell’ coaching/adapt the model to meet the demands of consumers. Evidence for this possibility comes from my field notes where I highlighted that during some ‘team days’ there were discussions about ‘earning targets’, with the SFCP being highlighted as particularly popular (lucrative).
noted that there appeared to be some discomfort/concern amongst the coaching team members about this shift towards a business model and the focus on trading.

However given the SFCP is ‘sold’ to schools, it may be of little surprise that, despite their apprehension, the coaching team are attempting to find a compromise which suits the needs and desires of the ‘customer’ regarding observations, whilst attempting to retain the principles of a SFA.

Had I been able to interview any of the staff who commissioned the SFCP I would have liked to explore the commissioning process and the reasons given for requesting observations.

4.2 Research question 2: What are the processes involved in the SFCP?

4.2.1 Expertise, efficacy, competence and autonomy

As highlighted previously, limited focus has been placed on exploring how SFAs work. Psychologists argue this poses significant challenges to the development of the field of SF coaching, the development of models of teaching coaching skills and the development of outcome measures (Grant, 2011).

Within the current study a number of process themes were identified through exploring the data sources (outlined in section three). One such process theme was that a clear emphasis was placed on coaches not providing advice or sharing ‘expertise’ with coachees. Instead focus was placed on developing the coachees’ awareness of their strengths, their clarity around goals and plans to achieve these. This fits with the core principles of SFAs including the
assumption that the best steps towards meaningful change are identified by the coachee rather than the coach (Boyle et al, 2005).

The aforementioned SDT may again be viewed as a theoretical framework in which to explore this process theme, particularly in relation to the concept of ‘competence’. According to SDT a sense of competence is a core human need for development, central to motivational processes and particularly to intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Within the current study it may be argued that by not sharing their ‘expertise’ and instead focusing on the coachees strengths the coaches may have supported coachees need for a sense of competence, thus increasing the likelihood of them being motivated to engage in change following the session.

An alternative theoretical framework in which to consider why coaches refrained from sharing expertise is that they may have been attempting to build the coachees sense of self-efficacy. Within the coaching research literature there is evidence that SFCPs are associated with an increased sense of self-efficacy (Grant, 2012). However limited focus has been placed on exploring the processes which may underpin this change. From the perspective of Bandura’s social cognitive theory (1986) it may be hypothesized that through refraining from sharing expertise the coaches were attempted to ensure that the coachee would attribute positive outcomes to themselves as opposed to their coach, thus potentially impacting on their sense of self-efficacy. This could arguably promote coachees to develop an internal rather than an external sense of attribution (Weiner, 1979).

In addition, within social cognitive theory it is proposed that self-efficacy will increase as a result of ‘mastery’ (successful) experiences. It may therefore be the case that through encouraging a focus on success and strengths this may
have resulted in coachees reliving ‘mastery’ experiences thus again increasing their sense of self-efficacy.

4.2.2 Ownership

A second process theme identified was that coachees were given a high degree of ownership in terms of driving the session, selecting focus areas and next steps. Such an approach fits closely with the aforementioned principles of SFAs, particularly that the coach should not be further along the journey than the coachee (deShazer, 1988). It may be argued that this theme again sits well with psychological theories around promoting individuals need for autonomy as well as research indicating increased rates of goal attainment when individuals are actively involved in the goal setting process (Latham & Locke, 2007).

The fact coachees had such a high degree of control over the focus of their coaching session appears, in some ways at odds with the lack of control or awareness regarding their involvement at the start of the process. It may be that through promoting a sense of ownership, during the actual coaching session, the coaches were attempting to compensate for the initial lack of autonomy amongst coachees. In addition they may have been attempting to compensate for the fact coachees had no control over the lack of commissioning of follow up sessions.

4.2.3 Relationships

A final process theme identified was that significant emphasis was placed on building relationships, with the coach-coachee relationship frequently
highlighted as being of central importance to the SFCP, as opposed to any specific questions or techniques.

This focus is perhaps of little surprise given that SFAs emerged within the therapeutic arena, where much emphasis has been placed on the importance of the therapeutic alliance (Martin, Garske & Davis, 2000). In addition it may be that the focus on relationships was perhaps influenced by coachees' initial lack of clarity and scepticism about the process.

From a theoretical perspective it may be argued that SDT again provides a framework in which to explore this process theme with a third core human need for growth and development being proposed to be ‘relatedness’, that is the extent to which an individual feels connected to others (Lynch, Vansteenkiste, Deci & Ryan, 2011). Spence & Oades (2011) propose that coaches who build relationships with coachees based on factors such as trust, honesty and a sense of caring are well placed to promote coachees' need for relatedness, thus impacting on their potential for growth and development. It may be argued that within the current study such a process was perhaps at play, although the extent to which this ‘relatedness’ may have been perceived as meaningful was perhaps limited by the fact the coaching occurred as a one off.

4.3 Research question 3: What are the outcomes associated with the SFCP?

4.3.1 Difficulty assessing outcomes

Within the current study there was evidence that measuring the outcomes of the SFCP presented challenges, due to factors including the coaches' concerns that
measuring outcomes could impact on the coaching process.
The fact that individual coaching sessions appeared to be a ‘one off’ also presented a challenge in relation to measuring outcomes. Whilst department feedback sessions did occur after the coaching, these did not provide an opportunity to follow up specific features of individual coaching sessions. Such an approach is significantly different to other models of coaching which comprises multiple sessions (including the SF WOWW model). These differences may relate to the fact that the team involved in the current study are arguably at a more advance stage of ‘trading’ (selling) their services than other EP services in England (including those delivering WOWW), having been ‘sold’ in 2012 to a large business, following national changes to Local Authority budgets and structures.
From a practical perspective it would appear that the commissioners of the coaching would be well placed and would want to follow up outcomes, given their financial investment in the SFCP. It would have been useful to explore the apparent lack of monitoring further with commissioners, if any had been available for interview.

4.3.2 Wellbeing and enjoyment

In terms of the outcomes reported by participants there was a clear theme that coachees enjoyed coaching, feeling it impacted positively on their sense of well-being. Such a finding is somewhat surprising given the initial resistance and concerns reported by some coachees prior to the SFCP. Although these findings should be viewed tentatively, given I was unable to assess whether
coachees positive reports of changes to factors such as their ‘work life balance’ and ‘stress levels’ were sustained over time.

Nevertheless these findings fit with the results of previous research which has made links between SF, cognitive-behavioural coaching approaches and factors such as well-being and hope (Green, Oades & Grant, 2006), as well as decreased stress levels amongst teachers (Grant et al, 2010). Although as was the case within my study these researches also failed to gather follow up data to assess whether changes were sustained.

Given the increasing rates of work related stress amongst teachers (The Guardian, 2012), it may be argued that further exploration of whether SFCPs may promote sustained changes in wellbeing amongst school staff, could be an important area of focus for future research.

4.3.3 Ongoing use of SFAs

Interestingly given that the individual coaching sessions were commissioned as a relatively isolated incident, there was evidence of continued use (or planned use) of elements of the SFCP. This ranged from teachers repeating SF questions from their session, to staff commissioning training in coaching skills. Such an outcome was surprising given the initial scepticism reported by some coachees.

It may be the case that the one off individual coaching sessions were perhaps commissioned as a ‘taster’ opportunity allowing commissioners to explore coaching prior to committing to training staff in coaching skills and implementing a programme ‘in-house’.
4.4 Research question 4: What are the relationships between the contextual, process and outcome factors associated with a SFCP?

Within the current study there was evidence of particular contextual factors which it may be argued potentially impacted on the ‘process’ and the outcomes of the SFCP.

Within this discussion section SDT has been proposed as a framework in which the findings of the current study may be explored and is again useful in considering the potential relationship between contextual, process and outcome factors. Figure three provides a pictorial representation of such factors and will be expanded upon below.

**Figure 3: Pictorial representation of factors which may have impacted on autonomy, relatedness and competence within the current study.**

**Autonomy**
- **Limited by:** Poor communication of aims. Coachees having no control over sessions being a ‘one off’.
- **Promoted by:** Increasing coachees sense of ownership within sessions

**Relatedness**
- **Limited by:** Coaching as a one off.
- **Promoted by:** The focus on building relationships and giving coachees a sense of ownership.

**Competence**
- **Limited by:** Initial perceptions of coaching as expert focused
- **Promoted by:** Non-advice giving focus, focus on identifying strengths.
Within the current study there was evidence that the aims of the SFCP were not always clearly communicated to coachees and that some coachees had initial reservations about their participation. From a SDT perspective, such factors may have impacted on the coachees need for autonomy. It may be argued that this lack of control and scepticism could explain why emphasis was placed on relationship building within the coaching. Whilst relationship building is a key component of SFAs in general, it may be argued that when coachees are feeling powerless with regards to their involvement in the process, it may become even more crucial. Such a possibility may be reflected in the fact that when describing their experiences, coachees focused on factors relating to having a positive relationship with their coach, rather than to the practice of coaching *per se*.

Furthermore, it may be argued that one way in which the coaching team attempted to build such relationships was through giving coachees a high degree of autonomy over the focus of the sessions and through attempting to promote their sense of competence. In relation to outcome factors it may be that the fact the coaching team were particularly focused on building relationships, and the coachees sense of ownership, perhaps contributed to their resistance to measure outcomes. Through avoiding such a focus the coaching team possibly found it easier to gain the trust of the coachees. Nevertheless it may be argued that the team have not adequately considered the possibility of gaining insight into outcomes through using open ended exploratory methods as highlighted in the present study.
4.4.1 Limitations and suggestions for future research

It should be noted that there are a number of potential methodological limitations which should be taken into account when considering the results of this study.

Firstly, the use of a snowball sampling approach may mean that the participants were not a representative sample of those taking part in the SFPC more broadly. Furthermore the fact the coaching team acted as gatekeepers to participants may have meant that they ‘steered’ me in the direction of particular participants. For instance it may be that only those coachees who were particularly confident or particularly enjoyed coaching were represented within my sample. Indeed there are elements of the current study which ring true with the claims of Groger, Mayberry and Straker (1999) whose experience of snowball sampling was described as ‘scrounging sampling’. This highlights the desperate attempts researchers may go to in order to try and recruit participants with relevant experiences which they are unable to capture (Groger et al.1999). Such challenges were evident in my failure to recruiting any of the commissioners of the coaching to participate in the research.

A further limitation is that I was unable to observe individual coaching sessions. Whilst I did carry out a video analysis of two coaching sessions, it may be argued that these may not have reflected ‘typical’ practice, although the sessions I did observe, arguably provide an insight into the SF coaching process which has received limited consideration with research literature.

Finally as highlighted within the discussion section I experienced difficulties in assessing the outcomes of the SFCP, mostly as a result of concerns raised by the coaching team about not ‘changing’ the coaching. Whilst the data I gathered
offers a valuable insight into the coaching process, combining interview data with additional measures such as Goal Attainment Scale ratings (which are beginning to form the core of coaching outcome research) would have added further breadth to the study.
Paper two
Abstract

Following the increased popularity and use of coaching approaches, including within the education sector there is evidence that training courses are being marketed to school staff wishing to implement peer coaching programmes ‘in-house’. Educational Psychologists (EPs) are one group of professionals involved in the delivery of such training and in supporting school staff in implementing coaching following training. This paper focused on exploring the experiences of school staff involved in a Solution Focused peer coaching programme, following training from EPs. Particular focus was placed on exploring the impact of and relationship between contextual, process and outcome factors. Key findings included evidence of potential challenges related to schools not commissioning follow up sessions after training and a perception that the peer coaching had resulted in improvements in OFSTED ratings. Implications for practice include the importance of EPs drawing on and sharing research literature regarding factors which may promote or inhibit changing practice and EPs supporting staff in developing outcome measures which can sit within a SF framework.
Chapter 5

Introduction and literature review

5.1 Introduction

This is the second of two papers which explores a Solution Focused Coaching Programme (SFCP) delivered in a Local Authority in the South of England. The SFCP is delivered in two formats, with coaching sessions either being delivered by a coaching team of EPs and ATs (as discussed in paper one) or with sessions being delivered by school staff, following training from the coaching team. This paper focuses on exploring the programme as delivered by school staff. Comparisons between the two approaches and themes identified as relevant across paper one and two will be discussed in chapter nine.

5.2 Literature Review

The aim of this review is to provide a critical account of the literature surrounding the use of peer SFCPs delivered by school staff. Consideration is also given to literature and debates surrounding peer coaching and SFAs within the education sector more broadly.

The articles highlighted were located using academic search engines such as Psych Articles, EBSCO and JSTOR. Key words and phrases searched for included ‘teacher coaching’, ‘solution focused coaching’, ‘peer coaching’, and ‘coaching training’. Programme documents relating to the peer SFCP were also requested from the Local Authority where the research took place.
As highlighted within paper one, the use of coaching programmes is on the increase including within the education sector (Bennett & Monsen, 2011). It has been proposed that the popularity of coaching within schools may have been driven by factors including dissatisfaction with traditional development models (Rhodes & Houghton-Hill, 2000; Williams, 2007) and the fact that national educational strategies (DfEE, 2001) and OFSTED frameworks (OFSTED, 2011) have advocated the use of coaching as a professional development tool. However despite this increased popularity, and having been advocated by key government bodies, a number of concerns have been raised regarding the use of coaching.

Firstly there is a lack of a clear definition as to what coaching involves, with the term being used to refer to a range of practices within the education sector (Grant, Green & Rynsaardt, 2010). Furthermore, it has been highlighted that many ‘models’ of coaching do not appear to have any clear theoretical basis, leading to calls for a differentiation between coaching and psychological models of coaching (as discussed within paper one).

The lack of regulation of the coaching industry and lack of guidelines regarding the training or skills required to become a coach has also led to concerns (Rauen & Eversmann, 2011). Furthermore the evidence base regarding the use of coaching programmes in all domains is currently limited (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). In particular little focus has been placed on identifying outcomes associated with theory based coaching models, exploring the processes which occur during such coaching nor the experiences of those involved.

Nevertheless despite these criticisms, coaching and peer coaching training programmes continue to be marketed and delivered widely, including within schools. The following section will consider the literature regarding such
models, firstly considering peer coaching programmes broadly before moving to focus on those which have psychological underpinnings.

5.2.1 Peer coaching within the education sector

Definitions

As highlighted above, there is currently no agreed definition of coaching, with the term being used to refer to a particularly wide range of practices within the education sector. For instance there is evidence of school based ‘coaching approaches’ involving external executive coaches who are not necessarily teachers (e.g. Allan, 2007). More commonly cited are models of peer coaching involving the sharing of practice and curriculum knowledge (e.g. Shidler, 2009; Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen & Bolhuis, 2007).

Confusingly within much of this peer coaching literature the terms ‘coaching’ and ‘mentoring’ appear to be used interchangeably. In their review Lord et al. (2008) attempted to differentiate the two approaches claiming that the term mentoring tends to refer to development programmes involving an ‘expert-novice’ relationship, whilst coaching has a narrower focus, being more closely linked to specific areas of performance. However it should be noted that such a definition does not account for some models, including those developed by governmental bodies, reported within the research literature. For instance within the literature there are programmes referred to as ‘peer coaching’ in which both coach and coachees are at a similar stage in their career, e.g. ‘trainee teachers’ engaging in reciprocal ‘coaching’ (Britton & Anderson, 2010). Other models of peer ‘coaching’ are described as involving experienced or ‘expert’ coaches (teachers), coaching less experienced colleagues (Ackland, 1991). For instance the ‘Fast Track Teaching Programme’ and the ‘Specialist Leaders in Education
Programme’ both involve experienced or ‘outstanding’ teachers using ‘coaching’ approaches to promote the development of more junior colleagues (DFE, 2013; Jones, 2010). By Lord et al’s (2008) definition, such models could arguably be viewed as involving mentoring rather than coaching.

The situation is further confused by the fact that it is often unclear from the literature as to what these ‘coaching’ (or mentoring) approaches precisely involve. Within some literature reference is made to providing a ‘teaching-learning process’, providing ‘challenges’, ‘scaffolding’ and opportunities for ‘reflection’ (Lord, Atkinson & Mitchell, 2008). Other researchers argue that peer coaching involves providing teachers with feedback on their practice, thus encouraging self-reflection (Veenman & Denessen, 2001).

It may be argued that one factor which peer coaching models and training programmes for coaches in the education sector do have in common is that they rarely appear to draw on a theoretical framework. As reported in paper one a lack of theoretical underpinning to ‘coaching’ approaches is not unique to the field of education, leading to calls for a distinction between ‘coaching’ and models of coaching underpinned by theory (Palmer & Whybrow, 2006).

5.2.2 Theory based peer coaching

Solution Focused (SF) coaching training

One theory based approach to coaching and peer coaching training reported within the research literature are SFAs. As highlighted in paper one, SFAs emerged within the therapeutic arena based on a set of core principles, namely that it is not necessary to focus on ‘problems’ to identify ‘solutions’, that part of the solution is already happening and that the client is the expert in their life
(Bannink & Jackson, 2011). Such principles have given rise to a range of SF questions and techniques now used outside of therapeutic contexts.

In relation to the proposed definitions of coaching highlighted above, it may be argued that SF coaching approaches fit with claims that coaching is non-hierarchical. For instance SF coaching involves coaches drawing on ‘expertise’ in relation to SF questioning techniques as opposed to any specific knowledge relating to the areas which coachees are choosing to address (eg. Teaching skills). It may also be argued that SFAs fit with definitions of coaching as being about encouraging ‘reflection’, as emphasis is placed within SF coaching on coachees reflecting on their strengths, successes and on identifying ‘exceptions’ to the problem. For further detail regarding principles, techniques and criticisms surrounding SFAs see (appendix one and page 19 of paper one).

Paper one considered the use of a SFCP as delivered by ‘executive coaches’ (EPs and AT) who had received training in SFAs. Such training is not only open to psychologists or those in advisory roles, indeed in 2013 BRIEF (Europe’s largest provider of SF training) are offering a ‘Solution Focused Practice in Schools’ course aimed at staff working in schools, including teachers (BRIEF, 2013). The marketing materials propose attendees will leave the course able to apply SFAs within their work. No clear requirement is stated for participants to have existing knowledge or skills regarding coaching or SFAs, nor is reference made to the need for on-going supervision following the training. It may be argued that this lack of rigour in recruiting and supervising coaches adds weight to the concerns regarding the lack of regulation and clarity about training requirements within the coaching industry (Grant, 2011).

Nevertheless BRIEF are not the only organisation ‘selling’ coaching training, with EPs offering training, based on SFAs within the educations sector (LDP,
2012). One such training package is the focus of this thesis and an overview of the training content is provided in appendix 17.

In recent years within the EP profession focus has been placed on delivering training and working with school staff as opposed to working directly with children. Advocates of such an approach claim it has the potential to promote broader, wider, sustainable change in schools (Baxter & Frederickson, 2005; DECP, 1998). In addition shifts within the profession towards trading and privatisation of services (AEP, 2011) may also have influenced EPs to become involved in the delivery of coaching training. For instance, their relationships with client groups (schools) arguably make them well placed to capitalise on this potentially lucrative industry. It may also be that delivering programmes such as coaching ‘in-house’ is perhaps appealing to schools, offering a cost effective approach taking account of governmental recommendations around coaching, within the context of increasing budgetary pressures.

5.2.3 What are the outcomes associated with peer coaching programmes?

Despite the fact SF coaching training programmes are marketed to schools, at present there is little reference to the use of peer SFCPs in schools, within the research literature. Thus a number of important questions are currently unanswered, for instance are peer SFCPs being implemented in schools following training, and if so how are these programmes being delivered? In addition limited focus has been placed on exploring the experiences of those involved in the programmes or the outcomes associated with the coaching.

By contrast peer coaching programmes without a psychological theory base have received more attention within the literature, with evidence that such
approaches are delivered within schools following staff receiving training in their use. For instance, Simkins, Coldwell, Close and Morgan (2009) reviewed three leadership development programmes used within schools, each incorporating ‘coaching’. Using self-report measures they found that 84% of the staff involved in the delivery of peer coaching sessions, within one programme (Leading from the Middle), reported a positive impact on their leadership skills. Other positive outcomes reported related to career progression and a perceived change in teaching and learning.

However, these authors acknowledged that measuring the outcomes of such programmes is challenging, with contextual and individual difference factors relating to participants potentially contributing to the perceived ‘success’ of a programme.

Other challenges highlighted by Simkins et al (2009), relate to the fact that peer coaching programmes often incorporates different strands, making it difficult to distinguish the impact of individual elements on practice (e.g. Joyce & Showers, 1996). The lack of an agreed definition of coaching provides further challenges as the models reported can appear to have little in common, with a particular lack of clarity as to whether the models described involve coaching, mentoring or indeed both.

Even when it appears to be ‘coaching’ which is taking place there is also evidence to suggest that there may be a degree of variability in the extent to which coaches ‘adhere’ to the framework in which they have received training. For instance in a review of a school based peer coaching programme Simkins, Coldwell, Caillau, Finlayson and Morgan (2006) found three quarters of dyads met for less than five coaching sessions, despite the programme requirement to meet for a minimum of seven. Such issues are not unique to coaching, indeed
much has been written about the threat of such ‘drift’ to the fidelity of interventions following training (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman & Wallace, 2005).

Additional findings reported by Simkins et al. (2006) were that with regards to the experiences of the coachees, whilst overall the programme was perceived positively there was significant variability in terms of the feedback provided by those delivering and those receiving the coaching.

This research is one of the few studies to explore the perceptions of those involved in a school based peer coaching programme. At present such an exploration does not appear to have focused on staff involved in peer teacher coaching programmes, underpinned by psychological theory (for instance SFAs).

The aforementioned confusion, lack of clarity and consistency highlighted within the non-theory based coaching literature is not unique to the field of education. Indeed concerns have been raised widely regarding the currently limited research base for coaching in all domains (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). Of particular concern to those keen to establish rigour and credibility to the coaching industry is that as highlighted above, limited focus has been placed on exploring models of coaching underpinned by psychological theory and techniques.

With regards to peer SFCPs such concerns are compounded by the fact that the research regarding SFAs more broadly is also in its infancy. The research which has begun to emerge concerning SFAs has identified tentative positive evidence regarding their effectiveness (Gingerich & Eisengart, 2000), however the picture is far from clear. It has been argued that a focus on exploring ‘effectiveness’ and ‘outcomes’ is made particularly challenging given that at
present little is known about how SFAs may work. This has resulted in calls to focus on exploring the processes underpinning SFAs to coaching as well as the outcomes associated with their use (Grant, 2011).

This review has highlighted that training providers are offering opportunities for school staff to receive training in SF coaching skills. However, at present there is limited research evidence concerning the implementation of such programmes following training. Furthermore from a review of the literature it appears that a lack of consideration has been given to exploring the potential contribution those involved in providing training in coaching skills (particularly theory based coaching) may play in supporting the on-going delivery of peer coaching and the supervision of those who may be involved. Other gaps identified within the literature include a lack of focus on exploring the experiences of the coaches or coachees and on the processes and outcomes associated with the programmes use.

Such research would add to the evidence base regarding coaching and particularly SF and other theory based peer coaching programmes within the education sector.

5.3 Summary and Research Questions

School based peer SFCPs have received limited attention within the research literature. The specific peer SFCP discussed within this thesis (see appendix 17) has not been subject to any formal research.

In addition the existing research regarding SF coaching models contains a number of gaps. For instance the perceptions and experiences of those delivering and receiving the coaching has received limited consideration. In
addition researchers have failed to explore the processes involved in peer SFCPs and how these may relate to outcomes and contextual factors, relevant to the education sector.

I propose that this is a current gap in the literature which this study will address.

This gives rise to the primary research aim to explore a peer SFCP, considering the experiences of those involved in delivering and taking part in coaching sessions, with particular focus placed on exploring the relationship between contextual, process and outcome factors.

This aim encompasses the following related questions:

**Research question 1**: What impact do contextual factors have on how school staff implement a peer SFCP?

**Research question 2**: What are the processes involved within a SFCP delivered by school staff?

**Research question 3**: What are the outcomes associated with the peer SFCP?
Chapter 6

Design and Methodology

The approach to data gathering used within the current study was shaped by a number of challenges (see appendix three) resulting in the need to adopt a flexible design, selecting a methodology which would account for the contextual issues I experienced. Consequently, as with paper one, I adopted an exploratory ethnographic approach to data gathering, seeking to consider multiple perspectives, with the aim of generating understanding through exploring a number of cases (Walford, 2005) These cases were four different schools attempting to deliver a peer SFCP.

As with paper one, whilst my approach to the research process was flexible and evolved over time I drew on a structured framework to inform data gathering and analysis. The framework I adopted was based on Pawson and Tilley’s (1997) model of realist evaluation, focused on considering ‘what works, for whom, in which circumstances’, by exploring the relationship between contextual, process and outcome factors. Through adopting a subtle approach to realism my aim was to explore multiple perspectives to provide a representation of reality and not to attempt to draw broad generalisations from my findings (Robson, 2011) (see paper one pages 26-27 for further information).

6.1.1 Procedure

This paper is specifically concerned with peer SFCPs as implemented by school staff. The staff involved in the delivery of these programmes received training in
SF coaching skills from a coaching team comprising EPs and ATs. Schools had flexibility in deciding how many training sessions to commission and whether or not the coaching team would provide any follow up (see appendicies two and 26 for further details).

6.2 Participants and Sampling

All participants were based within a local authority in the South West of England and were involved in delivering or receiving peer coaching or peer coaching training. They were provided with an overview of the research study (see appendix four) and completed a consent form prior to participating (see appendix five).

Coaching team (n=3)

As a result of working as a trainee EP within the local authority where the research took place I established which staff would be involved in delivering coaching training during the data gathering period (September 2011-January 2013) This included two EPs and one AT who all agreed to be interviewed about their experiences..

School staff (n=21)

Initially to identify potential participants, the coaching team introduced me to the school staff who had commissioned coaching training during the data gathering period.

Once data gathering commenced, and contextual challenges became apparent (see appendix three), they also provided me with contact details for schools who had recently established a peer SFCP. This resulted in a sample which
included one urban and one rural secondary school and one urban and one rural primary school (see appendix 18 for further detail).

In each of the schools the commissioners of the coaching, acted as ‘gatekeepers’, introducing me to further potential participants. Such an approach to identifying participants is referred to as ‘snowball sampling’, which has been reported to be an efficient, economical strategy for locating participants who may be hard to access through other means (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Possible limitations regarding the use of such an approach are explored in pages 53-54.

6.3 Measures and Procedures

6.3.1 Semi-structured interviews (SSIs)

Semi-structured interviews (SSIs) were held with participants aiming to provide an in-depth exploration of their experiences of the peer SFCP.

A broad framework covering the areas of context, process and outcomes structured the open ended interview questions. There were slight variations in the wording of questions depending on whether the interviewee was a member of the coaching team (see appendix seven), a member of school staff involved in the coaching (see appendix eight) or the commissioner of the coaching (see appendix 19).

In addition to the questions detailed within the SSI frameworks, supplementary questions were also asked to further explore contextual, process and outcome factors depending on the responses given by interviewees.
SSIs are used frequently within flexible research designs, being particularly appropriate when the person carrying out the interview is closely involved with the research, i.e. when the interviewer is also the researcher (Robson, 2011), as was the case within this study.

All interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone and were transcribed and inputted into NVIVO v.10.

6.2.2 Questionnaires

Within school P2 the Head Teacher (HT) indicated there were staff who were willing to participate in the research but did not have time to be interviewed. For this reason a questionnaire was developed aimed at exploring these participants’ experiences of the peer SFCP. The questionnaire focused on the same broad areas covered within the SSIs (see appendix 20).

The questionnaire was also distributed within school S2 where a peer SFCP was not implemented due to contextual issues highlighted within appendix three, for instance the death of a teacher.

6.2.3 Video data

During the data gathering period I was informed by the coaching team that a peer coach in one school (P1) had videoed a coaching session to support their own professional development. As it was not possible for me to be involved in the filming of coaching sessions, I contacted this teacher and requested permission to use the footage within this research. Permission was also sought from the coachee and both participants were informed of the ethical principles
(see section 6.4) which would be adhered to in the analysis and reporting of the video recording.

6.2.4 Field notes

During the data gathering period I attended peer SF coaching training alongside staff within two schools, during which I recorded detailed field notes. I also recorded field notes following interactions with the coaching team and other staff involved in the peer SFCP (see appendix 21 for an extract from these field notes). Figure 4 provides an overview of how the individual data collection methods relate to the research questions within the current study.

Figure 4: Table showing how research questions relate to data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data collection method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What impact do contextual factors have on how school staff implement a peer SFCP?</td>
<td>SSIs, questionnaire data, field notes, video data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are the processes involved within a SFCP delivered by school staff?</td>
<td>SSIs, questionnaire data, video data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are the outcomes associated with a peer SFCP?</td>
<td>SSIs, questionnaire data, field notes, video data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Data analysis

All data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stage thematic analysis framework (see appendix 12). Using this approach I searched for
themes relating to my aim of exploring contextual factors, process factors and outcomes.

The first step of analysis involved transcribing the interview, video and field notes and familiarising myself with these as well as the questionnaire data. Whilst familiarising myself with the data I made notes and recorded initial codes for each case using NVIVO (see appendix 22 for an example). These codes were grouped under the headings of contextual factors, process factors and outcomes (see appendix 12). I then reread and refined codes, condensing them into themes (see appendix 23), before finally re-reading the entire data set, exploring and condensing themes, identifying a number of higher order themes common across the entire data set. Appendix 24 provides an overview of how initial codes related to initial and then higher order themes.

6.4 Ethics

Ethical approval for this research was granted by the University of Exeter’s ethics committee (see appendix 11). The ethical principles and guidelines outlined by the British Psychological Society’s Code of Ethics and Conduct were closely adhered to at all times (BPS, 2009). All participants were briefed about the aims of the study (see appendix four), gave their informed consent to take part (see appendix five), and were informed they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Appendix 25 provides further information regarding ethical considerations of particular relevance to the present study.
Chapter 7

Results & Analysis

The higher order themes identified across the data set are presented within tables and explored in the sections below.

7.1 Results: Section A

Research Question one: What impact do contextual factors have on how school staff implement a peer SFCP?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sources of evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the purpose and aims of coaching</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-going support from the coaching team</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching to address performance issues</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from senior leaders</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Contextual theme 1: Understanding the purpose and aims of coaching

Within schools P1, P2 and S2 there was evidence that staff had a clear understanding of the structure and aims of the programme. Such awareness appeared to result from the fact within P2 and S2 all staff would be acting as both coach and coachee they all attended the coaching training. In school P1 coachees attended sessions informing them about the theory and aims of SFCPs.
Conversely within school US1 only coaches attended the coaching training and no briefing sessions took place. One coach commented:

“None of the coachees had the training so they didn’t really get it” (Beth-Coach US1).

Furthermore there appeared to have been limited communication with the coachees about the fact they had been enrolled in coaching by a member of the SLT, prior to the initial sessions commencing.

“it was kind of like ‘we’ve got a meeting in an hour for coaching’ and I was like ‘what’s that?’ so yeah it was a bit of a surprise, I didn’t really know why (I was being coached)” (Jack-coachee US1)

**Contextual theme 2: On-going support from the coaching team**

Within schools S2, P1 and P2 the coaching team provided on-going support following the training. This included ‘refresher’ sessions, supervision for coaches as well as individual coaching for staff to run alongside the peer coaching. For instance:

“Bevan (executive coach) is timetabled to come in each term and to work with Alfred (the HT) and I and to do some coaching. Also to give us some new skills, to sort of keep topping up with some questions” (Zoe-coach/coachee P1).

Within school S2 the coaching team provided individual coaching sessions for staff in place of the planned peer coaching (delayed as a result of the contextual issues detailed in an earlier section of this thesis).

Within school US1 no on-going support was commissioned during the data gathering period. Appendix 26 provides further details regarding the amount of training staff received, the identity of those who took part in the coaching and the frequency of the coaching and follow up sessions.

**Contextual theme 3: Coaching to address performance issues**

Within all of the schools involved in the peer SFCP there was evidence of some previous or current ‘performance issues’, for instance in relation to the schools
OFSTED ratings.

“we were going to (use coaching to) work with the teachers that we have got…..use what we consider to be a more sustainable approach to developing them…it was our last roll of the dice really” (Zac-Coach/Coachee/SLT-P2).

Within school US1 the coaching was specifically targeted at teachers with ‘consistently poor’ OFSTED ratings. Teachers who were identified as being ‘outstanding’ then acted as coaches.

“too many of our teachers were teaching at satisfactory levels and we sought to move them to teaching as good. We decided that coaching was the vehicle in which to do that” (Maggie-Coach/Commissioner-US1).

**Contextual theme 4: Support from senior leaders**

Within all the schools members of the SLT were involved in the peer SFCP.

Within school US1 a member of the SLT commissioned and attended the training then acted as a coach but not a coachee. This differed from the other schools where the members of the SLT involved in the coaching training all received coaching themselves, whether from peers or from a member of the coaching team.

Within schools S2, P1 and P2 there was also evidence that the HT had an understanding of the approach, either having received SF coaching or having attended coaching training. However the HT of school US1 did not attend the training or partake in any coaching and consequently appeared to have limited understanding about the approach. Indeed the coaching team informed me they had to meet with this HT after he raised concerns as to the fact coachees had been able to select their own focus area of development.

Within all schools, bar US1, there was evidence that having support from members of the SLT was perceived positively:
“I think you need to have 100% support from the head to provide the time for everybody to be involved in it, for people that are doing the coaching to be trained, (and) the coachees” (Fred-coach/coachee P1).

Within school P1 the HT felt so strongly about the benefits of the SFCP that they funded a supply teacher to cover lessons enabling coaching to take place regularly.

7.2 Results: Section B

Research Question two: What are the processes involved in the peer SFCP?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sources of evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-advice giving focus</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Video data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coachee takes ownership of their own development</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Video data</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Process theme 1: Relationships

Across the data set there was evidence of a perception that relationships between staff may impact on the coaching process.

“I think there is a conflict between colleagues delivering coaching because they want to save them or hug…flattering them, by saying ‘you’re not a four on the scale you’re an eight” (Bevan-Executive coach).

School based coaches also acknowledged this conflict and talked about the fact it could be hard not to get side tracked into offering support and advice when coaching someone you have an existing relationship with.
However interviewees also highlighted feeling that having an existing relationship with the person being coached can facilitate coaching:

“I think knowing each other helps with the ethos of feeling confident and interested in the person you are talking to” (Zoe-Coach/Coachee P1).

Other evidence of the impact of relationships came from the fact that interviewees reported feeling power differentials impacted on staff’s engagement with the coaching. Indeed within school US1, one coachee opted out of the programme. Their coach reported feeling this may have been in part because they found it uncomfortable being coached by a member of staff who was less experienced than themselves. The coaching team also highlighted this issue as being of concern.

“when you have some outstanding teachers and they become coaches and coach satisfactory teachers, I think it’s so much harder to coach in that situation because of the imbalance of power, the hierarchy, the cynicism” (Murray-Executive coach).

**Process theme 2: Non-advice giving focus**

Within the interviews conducted in schools P1 and P2 there was evidence that the role of the coach was not to provide advice or suggest solutions. Instead there was an emphasis on asking SF questions and drawing resources and ‘next steps’ from the coachee. This process was also evident in the video data (see appendix 27 for an extract from the video transcript).

Some coachees reported finding adopting a non-advice giving focus initially challenging:

(coaching involves)“not giving the solutions and at first that was really..I had to be really conscious that wasn’t what I was trying to do” (Fred-Coach/coachee P1).

Interestingly within school US1 one interviewee described how their coach had suggested resources and shared ‘expertise’ during sessions. When asked to
consider whether they felt that they would have the skills to act as a coach, this coachee informed me

“I don’t know, I feel a bit awkward when I observe people about giving feedback. I feel that I’m not really qualified to tell them...I can imagine a teacher that was getting outstandings..if they were being coached then there wouldn’t be that much to talk about I guess..its better that they are used for coaching”.

Within the other schools coaches and coachees highlighted feeling that this was not the case and that it was the specific use of SF questioning and the ability to ‘set aside’ knowledge and ‘expertise’ and draw solutions from the coachee which were central to the coaching process.

**Process theme 3: Coachee takes ownership of their development**

Across the data set there was evidence that within coaching sessions coachees exerted at least some control over their own professional development. This took the form of selecting their own focus area and setting their next steps to achieve this aim.

Within school US1 despite coaches appearing to make suggestions to coachees, one coachee described feeling that the coaching felt ‘different’ to traditional models of development:

“my PGCE was much more like you need to try this..this is the next stage in your development you need to do this..whereas this (coaching) is more what I think” (Jack-coachee US1).

This coachee expanded on this point highlighting that they had made changes to their practice without being ‘told to do so’.
7.3 Results: Section C

Research Question three: What are the outcomes associated with the peer SFCP?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sources of evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased reflection on practice</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>School staff developing systems to monitor outcomes</td>
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<td>Coaching attributed as contributing to improvements in teaching/OFSTED ratings</td>
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<td>SF coaching approach being used outside of formal coaching sessions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire data</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Outcome theme 1: Increased reflection on practice**

Within all the schools there was a perception that the SFCP had led to staff becoming increasingly reflective:

“none of them (previous mentors/managers) had managed to get X to reflect. It had all been about telling him what to do and this time he would frequently say to me..maybe I could try this idea” (Maggie-Coach/Commissioner US1)

Other interviewees supported this point, highlighting that since the peer SFCP staff had been more confident and honest in discussing the areas they needed to develop:

“one of the outcomes is that we have got teachers who are genuinely open and honest about reflecting on their practice” (Alfred-Coach/Coachee/HT P1).

**Outcome theme 2: School staff developing systems to monitor outcomes.**

Across the data set there was evidence that school staff were attempting to monitor the outcomes of the coaching. Within the video data, this involved recapping whether the ‘next steps’ from a previous session had taken place.
Within the interviews it was reported that a range of additional ‘monitoring’ systems had been developed including classroom observations (based on SF principles).

Between the schools there were differences in terms of whether exploring outcomes was perceived as happening in partnership with the teachers or whether it was perceived as something which was ‘done to’ them. In schools P1 and P2 it was highlighted that teachers were viewed as being trusted to monitor their own progress with ‘feedback’ following observations being based on reflections from the coachees.

By contrast in school US1 the ‘monitoring’ of outcomes appeared to adopt more of a ‘top down approach’, with the specific aim of identifying if the coaching was ‘effective’ at improving ‘poor’ performance.

When I met with the commissioner of the coaching in school US1, to discuss this research project, they explained to me that they were under lots of pressure from the HT “to prove” coaching worked. I had to make very clear that research data could not be used as part of the schools ‘proof’ regarding the outcomes for individual teachers.

**Outcome theme 3: Coaching perceived to have contributed to improvements in teaching/OFSTED ratings.**

Within all of the schools interviewees described coaching outcomes as being linked to OFSTED ratings. For instance in schools P1 and P2 interviewees reported the following:

“this school was in special measures ten years ago but coaching has made a massive difference” (Alfred-Coach/Coachee/HT P1).

“we have just had OFSTED.. and we have done very well..one of the features that they liked was the way we had targeted extra support through coaching” (Zac-Coach/Coachee/SLT P2).
Within school US1, all those involved in the coaching had received observations from the SLT, focused on identifying whether there had been improvements in their teaching following the coaching. The commissioner of the coaching informed me such observations indicated ‘improvements’ in OFSTED teaching ratings following coaching, for at least some teachers.

**Outcome theme 4: SF coaching approach being used outside of formal coaching sessions.**

Within schools P1 and P2, there was evidence of elements of the SFCP being used outside of coaching sessions. For instance when evaluating programmes, and when writing ‘Individual Educational Plans’.

Within school P2 one interviewee described the fact that care is taken to ensure that new programmes and initiatives ‘fit’ within the school’s SF ethos. Within school P1 another interviewee highlighted feeling that coaching approaches may have extended outside of coaching sessions due to the fact they commissioned peer rather than executive coaching:

“I wanted people to use it literally in conversations at the photocopier...in everything they did and so if I bought in somebody just to coach people it wouldn’t have helped with our unit meetings where they plan evaluations...it wouldn’t have helped with the atmosphere in school” (Alfred-Coach/Coachee/HT P1).

With regards to school US1 there was no evidence within the data that the use of SFAs had expand outside of coaching sessions.
Chapter 8
Discussion

This discussion section will explore how the findings outlined in chapter seven relate to existing literature and psychological theory. Focus will also be placed on exploring possible relationships between the contextual, process and outcome factors identified within the current study.

8.1 Contextual factors and the peer SFCP

Within this study it was found that school staff appeared to perceive the peer SFCP as an approach to addressing performance issues, which had not responded to traditional development strategies. However there were differences in terms of how the schools utilised the coaching to address these issues. Within school US1 ‘weak’ members of staff were targeted and paired with more ‘successful’ colleagues. Conversely within schools P1 and P2 the coaching approach to addressing performance issues appeared to involve a whole school approach. Such differences perhaps related to the fact US1 were in the initial stages of implementation.

When commissioning the SF coaching training, schools had a high degree of flexibility in selecting who would attend and whether follow up support would be provided. Whilst such flexibility may have been useful in meeting the differing needs of schools, it resulted in at least one school (US1) implementing a model which did not necessarily fit with the coaching team’s espoused model of coaching, with some ‘drift’ from its SF theoretical basis. Such drift is widely reported within implementation literature with evidence suggesting that the
likelihood of changing practice, and of this practice adhering to the principles taught, increases when training is combined with support and follow up sessions (Fixsen et al, 2005). Other factors identified as increasing the likelihood of successful implementation of interventions following training include support from senior managers and staff ‘signing up’ to the approach (Denton, Vaughn and Fletcher, 2003; Spouse, 2001). It may be argued that as such features did not appear to be present within school US1 this may have undermined the coaching process. Furthermore it may be argued that the differences between the schools in relation to the presence or absence of such supporting factors may also have impacted on the coachees engagement in change processes. Such a possibility will be discussed further below.

8.2 What are the processes involved in the peer SFCP?

Within the research literature limited focus appears to have been placed on exploring how SFAs, including peer SFCPs may work. Within the present study one process theme identified, was that emphasis was placed on coachees taking ownership of their own development within SF coaching sessions. Within the psychological research literature there exist theoretical explanations as to why a focus on ownership may be an effective means of promoting change. For instance with regards to Self Determination Theory (SDT) (as discussed in detail within paper one), it may be argued that increasing the coachees sense of ownership may fulfil a human need for a sense of autonomy, potentially impacting on motivational processes (Ryan & Deci,2000). Another psychological framework which may explain this focus on ownership is Prochaska and diClemente’s (1982) Transtheoretical Model (TTM), which
attempts to conceptualise when and how behaviour change may occur. These authors propose a number of distinct stages to the change process (see Figure five), which have been discussed within the coaching psychology literature (Moore, Highstein, Tschannen-Moran & Silverio, 2009). With regards to the TTM it may be argued giving coachees a sense of ownership perhaps prompted them to ‘contemplate’ change, within the coaching session. If individuals were given less encouragement to engage with their development they may have remained in a position of ‘pre-contemplation’, therefore being less likely to move forward to a position of action. Arguably there may have been differences in relation to the schools in which coachees were initially clear about the process of coaching compared to the school where coachees were less clear. For instance in school US1 the lack of initial control and awareness amongst coachees may have impacted on their ‘engagement’ with the change process.

The differences between whether schools commissioned on-going support from the coaching team may also be argued to have impacted on the extent to which coachees were likely to engage in ‘action’ and maintenance of such changes.
8.2.1 A non-advice giving focus

A second process theme identified was that in schools P1 and P2 focus was placed on not offering advice and instead on supporting coachees to identify strengths resources and next steps. From a psychological perspective it may argued that such a focus perhaps provided a means to build the coachees sense of self-efficacy, or from a SDT perspective, their sense of competence (as discussed in paper one). It may be argued that an increased sense of competence and self-efficacy could increase the likelihood of coachees being motivated and feeling confident in entering the ‘action’ phase of the TTM of change.

By contrast within school US1 there was evidence that coaches shared ‘expertise’ and offered advice. Such practice is contrary to one of the core
principles of SFAs that the therapist (coach) should not being ‘further along the journey’ than the client (deShazer, 1988) and raises questions as to whether the model being used within school US1 was actually SF. Such discrepancies between practice may relate to a number of factors. It may be that as the US1 coachees did not attend the initial training, and found themselves paired with ‘outstanding’ teachers, they may have entered sessions with an expectation of being offered advice. The fact no provision was made for on-going support or supervision by the coaching team may also have impacted on this drift.

8.2.2 Relationships and power

A final process theme identified was that there was evidence of a perception amongst coaches and coachees that relationships could significantly impact on the process of coaching. It may be argued that attempting to apply a peer SFCP within a school context presents particular challenges as coaches need to inhibit existing knowledge about the coachee as well as inhibit their own ‘expertise’ as a teacher.

Within school US1 an attempt was made to overcome this difficulty by ensuring coaching dyads worked in different departments. However there was a more significant factor impacting relationships within this setting, namely the power differential operating with outstanding teachers coaching ‘satisfactory’ teachers. With regards to the psychological literature it has been claimed that building a sense of empathy and trust may be crucial in supporting a move from a position of contemplation to action (Moore et al, 2009). Within SDT much has also been written about the importance of an individuals need for ‘relatedness’ relative to motivation and engagement (see paper one). From this perspective the fact the
coaching in schools P1 and P2 was perceived as non-hierarchical may therefore have supported coaching dyads in building positive relationships, perhaps contributing to the coachees motivation and action towards change.

8.3 What are the outcomes associated with the peer SFCP?

8.3.1 Increased reflection on practice

One outcome theme identified was that there was a perceived increase in reflective practice amongst coachees. Within the educational research literature much emphasis has been placed on the importance of such reflection (Leitch & Day, 2000), with researchers exploring how best to ‘teach’ engagement in such a process (Loughran, 2002; Russell, 2005). In light of the current study it may be argued that peer SFCPs are perhaps one means through which to promote reflective practice.

In relation to ‘why’ such an outcome was reported, it may be argued that links can be made with the focus placed on staff developing an increased sense of ownership over their development. This sense of ownership and attending coaching perhaps gave coachees additional time and a clear framework in which to enter the ‘cycle of change’ and begin ‘contemplating’ changing practice, which may have not otherwise been possible within their usual teaching timetable.

8.3.2 School staff developing systems to monitor outcomes

A second outcome theme identified was that school staff were measuring the
‘impact’ of coaching in a range of ways including gathering informal feedback from teachers and observing practice more formally. One reason for the focus on outcomes was perhaps that the schools felt additional pressure to monitor outcomes due to peer SFCP having been commissioned as a result of ‘performance issues’. It may also be the case that schools felt an increased sense of accountability when teachers were delivering sessions as opposed to when someone external to the school was involved (as in paper one). Such a focus on assessing outcomes is somewhat at odds with the coaching teams concerns regarding the potential impact of assessing outcomes on the coaching process (as discussed in detail in paper one). Given that schools commission coaching training it may be argued the team need to explore ways of meeting the desires of their clients (schools) in developing outcome measures, whilst ensuring they do not undermine the principles and processes of SFAs.

8.3.3 Using SFAs outside of coaching sessions

A further outcome theme identified concerned components of the SFCP being delivered outside of coaching sessions within schools P1 and P2 but not within US2. Within schools P1 and P2 it appeared that an ‘ethos’ of coaching had developed, with the approach being used informally within conversations, and to structure new initiatives within the school.

Such forms of adaptation may arguably reflect the fact these schools had been delivering the coaching over a longer period of time and were perhaps feeling more confident with using it, whereas school US1 was at an earlier stage of implementation. These differences may also relate to the way the coaching was set up as within school US1 only a select group of ‘outstanding teachers’
received the training, a factor which arguably restricted the likelihood of the approach extending beyond these individuals. Alternatively the differences may relate to contextual differences between primary and secondary schools. Had school S2 implemented a peer SFCP programme this possibility could have been explored further.

8.3.4 Coaching attributed to positive improvements in teaching/OFSTED ratings

A final outcome theme identified was that there was evidence of perceived improvements in teaching standards as a result of the peer coaching. In relation to the psychological literature it may be argued that such changes (if they are attributable to the coaching) may have resulted from a number of the process factors highlighted above. For instance there is research evidence linking teachers sense of self-efficacy with student attainment, as well as with teachers willingness and persistence in trying out new teaching approaches (Henson, 2001). It may also be the case that the coaching addressed some of the teachers needs for competency and autonomy, thus resulting in increased levels of motivation leading to changes in teaching practice. Or perhaps the coaching acted as a vehicle in which to ‘shift’ staff from a place of ‘pre-contemplation’ to ‘contemplation’, and then ‘action’, again resulting in changes in practice. It is interesting to note that such changes were also reported in school US2 where factors such as autonomy, relatedness and competence did not appear to be promoted. This will be discussed in further detail below.
8.4 Relationships between contextual, process and outcome factors

As highlighted above within the current study a range of similarities were identified between the ways in which schools P1 and P2 implemented a peer SFCP, with evidence of some differences in the approach adopted by school US1. Figure six provides a pictorial representation of the potential theoretical implications of such similarities and differences. In particular it may be argued that in school US1 contextual and process factors potentially impacted on the motivation of coachees, for instance through failing to meet coachees need for autonomy, competence and relatedness (as proposed within SDT). Furthermore the approach adopted may have impacted on other factors such as coachees sense of self-efficacy and their willingness and motivation to contemplate and engage in changing practice.

It is interesting to note that despite differences between the schools in terms of contextual and process factors there was consistency in terms of staff perceiving the peer SFCP to be associated with changes in teaching and indeed improved OFSTED ratings.

From a SDT perspective it may be hypothesised that the top down approach to engaging coachees in school US1 (where ‘poor teachers’ were enrolled in coaching by a member of the SLT), may have resulted in changes in practice arising due to coachees experiencing a sense of externally regulated ‘extrinsic motivation’ (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It has been reported that such a sense of motivation can over time result in decreased engagement and interest as well as a sense of reluctant compliance (Ryan & Connell, 1989). Ryan and Deci (2000) propose that such ‘extrinsic motivation’ operates along a continuum and
it is possible that through promoting a sense of autonomy, competence and relatedness, individuals may shift towards an increasingly internalised sense of extrinsic motivation in that they may begin to endorse and value the ‘goals’ and tasks they are being requested to engage in. It would have been interesting to explore possible shifts in motivation amongst coachees in school US1, over time and to explore whether the changes to teaching practice were sustained, given the apparent lack of focus on promoting autonomy, competence and relatedness (see Figure six).
Figure 6: Diagram showing possible theoretical implications of contextual, process and outcome factors within schools P1, P2 and US1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools P1, P2</th>
<th>School US1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication/Awareness of the aims of coaching</strong></td>
<td><strong>Communication/Awareness of the aims of coaching</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches and coachees were clear about aims/engagement.</td>
<td>Coachees did not attend coaching training. Coachees were initially unclear about their involvement in the programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased likelihood of contemplating change.</td>
<td>• Negative impact on likelihood of engaging with change cycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sense of autonomy promoted.</td>
<td>• Sense of autonomy not promoted-impact on motivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support from senior leaders</strong></td>
<td><strong>Support from senior leaders</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior leaders involved in coaching programme-acting as coachees and coaches.</td>
<td>Head teacher had lack of awareness about coaching programme. The senior leader who was involved acted only as a coach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased likelihood of adherence to programme principles.</td>
<td>• Possible threat to fidelity of programme-potential for drift from principles and lack of commitment to sustained use of programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased likelihood of ongoing use of programme.</td>
<td><strong>On-going support from the coaching team</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence of on-going support, supervision and training</strong></td>
<td>No on-going support, supervision or training was commissioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased likelihood of on-going use of programme</td>
<td>• Possible threat to the fidelity of the programme-potential for drift from principles and lack of commitment to sustained use of the programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased likelihood of adherence to programme principles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased likelihood of coachees engaging in action and maintenance of change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching viewed as non-hierarchical.</td>
<td>Coaching viewed as hierarchical. Evidence of coachees opting out of the programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting aside existing knowledge of coachees was reported as challenging but sessions felt supportive and knowing each other helped.</td>
<td>• Negative impact on areas such as self-efficacy, need for relatedness and sense of competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promotion of coachees need for a sense of competence and relatedness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promotion of coachees sense of self-efficacy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach used outside of formal coaching sessions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Approach used outside of formal coaching sessions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widespread use of coaching approaches across the school.</td>
<td>No evidence of the approach being used outside of sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promoted by factors linked to increased rates of implementation e.g. support from SLT, coaching team, staff awareness of approach.</td>
<td>• Restricted by factors known to inhibit successful implementation e.g. support from SLT, coaching team, staff awareness of approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changes in OFSTED ratings of teaching</strong></td>
<td><strong>Changes in OFSTED ratings of teaching</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching proposed to have led to improved OFSTED ratings.</td>
<td>Coaching attributed as playing a role in moving teachers practice away from satisfactory (school based ratings) using OFSTED criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers more motivated to reflect on practice and engage with cycle of change.</td>
<td>• Change due to extrinsic motivation (top down approach to coaching engagement). Possibility change may not be sustained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive impact on coachees sense of self-efficacy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.5 Limitations and suggestions for future research

The aim of this study was to carry out an exploratory analysis of multiple data sources drawing conclusions about who’s validity the researcher can be relatively confident (Hammersley, 1992), whilst not aiming to draw broad generalisable conclusions. In adopting such an approach this study offers insight into the experiences of school staff involved in a peer SFCP, adding to the limited research bases concerning peer SFCPs within the education sector.

Nevertheless it should be noted that in considering the findings of this study the reader should be aware that there are a number of potential limitations particularly relating to the possible impact of gate keeper ‘biases’ (as discussed in paper one pages 54-55).

Further limitations relate to the fact that it was not possible to follow up school US1 over time. It may be argued that the fact they received the coaching training at a later date than schools P1 and P2 may have contributed to the differences in implementation. The differences may also have related to the fact school US1 was a secondary school and it would therefore have been useful to have been able to gather further data within S2, had the contextual issues not arisen. It may also be argued that the culture and ethos of individual schools impacted on the delivery of the SFCP. For instance it may be that these factors contributed to some schools implementing coaching from a ‘top-down’ perspective, with specific individuals targeted to address ‘performance issues’.

Further exploration of SFCPs within a broader range of schools would allow the potential impact of ethos and cultural factors to be explored in further detail.
Chapter 9

Conclusions

9.1 Summary of conclusions from paper one and two

The studies reported in paper one and two add to the knowledge base regarding the use of SFCPs within the education sector, providing insight into the experiences of those involved in delivering and receiving coaching. This chapter will summarise and link the findings from both papers. Consideration is also given to the implications of these findings for the knowledge base regarding SF coaching and the implications for EPs.

In summary the findings from both papers were:

- School systems and procedures appear to impact on the delivery of SFCPs presenting potential challenges in terms of remaining true to the principles of the approach.
- School staff involved in the SFCP were not always clear about the aims and purpose of the approach. Staff were more clear when they had attended peer coaching training.
- Within the SFCP there was an emphasis within coaching sessions on giving coachees a sense of ownership over their development.
- Building relationships appeared to be a central process within the SFCP when delivered by executive coaches or by peers.
- Within the majority of schools the SFCP appeared to have a non-advice giving focus. A deviation from this model was evident in one school.
• With regards to peer coaching there was evidence of a focus on measuring outcomes, with perceived positive changes in teaching practice following coaching. When the SFCP was delivered by executive coaches there was no clear focus on outcome measures.

• In most schools staff also used elements of SFAs outside coaching sessions. Many requested additional coaching or supervision from the coaching team.

• Macro level pressures such as ‘trading services’ (selling service) and the culture of a school may have impacted on the specific delivery of SFCPs as well as on factors such as whether outcomes were explored.

9.2 Implications for EP practice

Both paper one and two have highlighted a range of roles for EPs in relation to the delivery of a SFCP for school staff. These include: involvement in delivering individual coaching sessions, training staff in delivering coaching themselves and the provision of on-going support and supervision.

With regards to these areas a number of factors were identified which appeared to facilitate or act as potential barriers to the coaching. It may be argued that EPs could play a role in addressing some of these issues.

9.2.1 Providing clarity about the aims and purpose of the coaching.

There was evidence that when school staff attended training with the coaching team they were clear about the aims and purpose of the SFCP. Staff were less clear when they had not attended the training. Given the potential implications
of a lack of clarity (as discussed within this thesis) it may be argued the coaching team (including EPs) have a role to play in ensuring all those involved in the SFCP are clear about the process, prior to participation. From an ethical perspective it may also be argued that EPs involved in coaching have a duty to ensure that coachees give their informed consent to engage, that is they are aware of what they are signing up for.

When delivering coaching training it may be argued that EPs are well placed to promote such practice amongst the commissioners of the training.

**9.2.2 Outcome measures**

Within paper one there was evidence that the coaching team were somewhat reluctant to assess the outcomes of the SFCP. By contrast school staff involved in peer coaching appeared to develop systems themselves to assess outcomes. It may be that one of the reasons for the coaching teams lack of focus on outcome measures related to the fact they had only been commissioned to carry out single coaching sessions. A further explanation may be that the lack of focus on outcome measures related to the coaches emphasis on building relationships with coachees, many of whom appeared initially unaware of, or sceptical about, their initial involvement in the SFCP.

Given EPs knowledge of psychology and research skills (Farrell et al, 2006), it may be argued they are well placed to support schools in developing evidence-based monitoring systems which do not impact on the potential processes which may generate change within SFAs.
9.2.3 Sharing of research around change processes and implementation of training

It may be argued that by sharing their knowledge of the psychological literature relating to engagement, motivation and change EPs could support schools in ensuring implementation of the SFCP is most effective. Furthermore given the focus on ‘evidence based practice’ (Dunsmuir, Brown, Iyadurai & Monsen, 2009) EPs arguably have a role to play in discouraging schools from commissioning training without any follow up. The current study supports the research literature which has consistently demonstrated issues in relation to the use of training in isolation (Fixsen et al, 2005). In particular there was evidence in school US1 of ‘drift’ from the programme principles, which it may be argued presents a ‘threat’ to the fidelity of the SFCP.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the commissioned nature of coaching presents challenges in terms of persuading schools to purchase follow up sessions, addressing this issue should be an important area of consideration for the EPs involved.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Further information regarding solution focused questions and activities

Problem free talk
BRIEF (2011) suggest that at the start of sessions by showing an interest in ‘non-problematic’ areas of the clients life, this sends a clear message that the therapist is interested in the person rather than just the ‘issue’ they bring to the session.

Best Hopes questions
Within the SF literature there is a clear emphasis placed on the client being asked to identify what they would like to get out of the session. Such aims are referred to as their ‘best hopes’.

Preferred future questions
Once the clients ‘best hopes’ have been identified then questions will be asked which centre on identifying what the they would prefer to be happening and what difference this would make to them (BRIEF,2011). The focus of these questions is to identify what will rather than what will not be happening. One example of a question aimed at identifying a preferred future has been referred to over the years as the ‘Miracle question’ and is as follows:

“Suppose that tonight, while you are asleep, a miracle happens. The miracle is that the problem which brought you here is solved. However, because you are sleeping you don’t know that the miracle has happened. So when you wake up tomorrow morning, what will be different that will tell you that this miracle has happened” (BRIEF, 2011 p.13).

In their most recent training manual BRIEF report that they now prefer to rephrase this question, removing the word miracle and shortening it. Instead they choose to ask:

“If you woke up tomorrow and your hopes from coming here had been realised what’s the first thing you might notice yourself doing?” (BRIEF, 2011 p. 13).

Scaling questions
Scaling questions are used as a means of plotting change and can also be used as to identify strengths and resources and for further clarifying clients ‘preferred future’.

Clients (coachees) will be asked to make a rating on a scale of 1 to 10 regarding an area being discussed within the session. For instance they may be asked to make a rating as to how close they are to achieving their ‘goal’ (focus area of development), or to talk about what ‘one point further on the scale would look like’. Clients may also be asked how they have coped or what resources they have discovered about themselves if, for instance they make a particularly low rating.

As the ratings are made by the client and not the therapist (coach) it has been claimed that this makes clear that it is the clients evaluation of progress which is of central importance rather than any evaluation made by the therapist (coach) (Trepper et al, 2010).

**Exceptions/times when the preferred future is already happening**

Within SF sessions clients will be asked questions which focus on identifying times when the preferred future is already happening, for instance questions regarding any times when their current situation is most like their preferred further.

**Leaving the session and returning**

Within SFAs a ‘break’ is often built in, towards the end of the session. During this break the therapist will leave the room and within a therapeutic context may meet with other therapists to reflect and discuss the session, before returning to offer compliments to the client. When a ‘team’ are not present the practitioner may use this time to reflect themselves on the session (Trepper et al, 2010).

**Reflective feedback**

Within much of the literature regarding SFAs there is evidence of a focus on the therapist providing some compliments to the client at the end of the session. This takes the form of the therapist reflecting back strengths and resources the client has themselves highlighted rather than the therapist making interpretations or adding their own opinion (BRIEF, 2011).

**Recapping progress (in subsequent sessions)**

In subsequent SF sessions questions will be asked at the start of the session which focus on identifying differences and small signs of change since the previous session. If there has been no change then questions will be asked
focused on identifying the resources used/steps taken by the client to stop the situation getting worse. If the situation has deteriorated then questions will focus on identifying how the individual coped with those challenges.

For further information regarding the specific application of these techniques to coaching please refer to Greene and Grant, (2003) and Rhodes & Ajmal, (2004).
Appendix 2: The SF Coaching Programme - An Overview

The SFCP considered within this thesis is based on the principles and approaches covered within the BRIEF model of coaching (BRIEF, 2011) and is delivered by Educational Psychologists and Advisory Teachers, who have received training in the use of the model.

Coaching sessions are ‘sold’ as packages to schools, who are able to be flexible in selecting the number and duration of sessions as well as the identity of who will receive the coaching. For instance within the 2012-2013 brochure advertising coaching to schools and academies examples are given of coaching being appropriate/having taken place for Head Teachers, special school staff and for teaching assistants (LDP 2012).

During the period in which I was gathering data all the schools who had commissioned coaching from the coaching team each initially purchased one coaching session for each coachee, followed by a whole staff or departmental feedback session. Within these feedback session overarching ‘themes’ arising from individual coaching sessions were discussed. Two of the schools also purchased a classroom observation of each of the coachees prior to the coaching.

Within coaching sessions the coaching team draw on specific SF questions and approaches which are tailored depending on the individual coachee and the area of focus they bring to the session(s).

The coaching team have made slight adaptations to the precise model of coaching advocated by BRIEF (2011) in that they do not include a specific ‘problem free talk’ section within their coaching sessions nor do they include a specific ‘compliment’ section. In addition some schools choose to commission a classroom observation of coachees, carried out by the coaching team prior to the coaching taking place, an element which is not part of BRIEFS coaching approach.

The following are example questions which are used to structure coaching sessions delivered by the coaching team (LDP, 2012):

**Best Hopes questions**- Aim to identify the areas the coachee would like to explore during the coaching and the outcomes they hope for.
**Examples**: What are your best hopes from our work together? How will you know that it was useful coming here today?, What will it take for you to say that this has been worthwhile  

**Preferred Future questions**: Aim to identify how the person will know their best hopes have been achieved.  

**Examples**: ‘Imagine your best hopes happening’, ‘That you are performing at your best’, ‘That tomorrow at work everything is going well’..how will you know? What will you show? (what will others notice?).  

**Building on success/identifying times when the preferred future is already happening**: Aim to identify what the person is already doing to move towards their preferred future and to identify times when the problem is not happening or is less severe).  

**Examples**: When are the times that it doesn’t happen? When are the times that it doesn’t last as long? When is it most like that (your preferred future) now?, What are you doing already that is working?  

**Scaling questions**: Aim:- To identify where the coachees is with their best hope at present, where they would like to be and to plan action points and how to identify future signs of progress  

**Examples**: On a scale of 0-10 with 10 standing for things going as well as you could possibly hope and 0 standing for the opposite, where do you see things at present? So what is it that you are doing that means that you are at…and not at 0?, How will you know that things have moved up just one point?
Appendix 3: Contextual information regarding why the initial research plan was adapted and re-written (paper 1 and paper 2).

My initial research plan had been to use a mixed methods design in which the perceptions of coaches and coachees would be explored alongside quantitative data focused on exploring the outcomes associated with the programme, including the coachees sense of self-efficacy, ‘My Class Inventory Ratings’ completed by pupils and goal attainment scaling measures. However despite agreeing to my initial research proposal, when I was due to begin data gathering the coaching team raised concerns that the use of outcome measures may change the nature of the coaching. I also experienced further challenges including:

- A federation of three schools who had initially expressed interest in participating withdrew from taking part.
- In another school who had received coaching training (S2) a young teacher (involved in the proposed coaching) died suddenly. The school were also placed under a high degree of pressure in relation to becoming an academy as a result of ‘performance issues’. In light of these challenges the coaching team advising me to cancel my planned data gathering within this school which I did.

Other challenges related to the fact that the actual coaching being delivered in schools appeared to vary as a result of contextual factors. For instance as the coaching was ‘sold’ some schools were commissioning one off coaching sessions and others commissioned observations (which I was told were not part of the model). In addition there were schools who commissioned peer coaching training yet did not go on to implement a programme (for instance as a result of contextual issues highlighted above). Other differences related to who the coaching was aimed at and whether ongoing support was provided by the coaching team. Such variations in practice led me to feel that it was important to try and adopt a research design focused on exploring how these factors may impact on the process, as well as outcomes of the coaching.

Within my adapted design I sought to select a methodology which would account for the following factors:
• The research design needed to ‘fit’ within the existing coaching model, addressing the concerns of the coaching team that the process of researching the model could ‘change it’.
• The research design needed to be flexible to account for schools implementing the SFCP in different ways.
• The research design needed to be flexible as potential participants only become apparent as schools commissioned coaching throughout the year.
Appendix 4: Information letter provided to prospective participants prior to them taking part in the research study.

Between March 2012 and April 2013 a research project will be taking place in a number of Devon schools aimed at exploring the experiences of teachers who took part in the coaching programme.

The research will be carried out by a Trainee Educational Psychologist, forming the basis of their Doctoral Thesis. The research will consist of two phases:

- **Phase one**: Teachers due to take part in the coaching programme will be asked to complete a short questionnaire about their work as a teacher. In a number of schools a sample of children will also be asked to complete a short questionnaire concerning their views about school. After one term the same participants will be asked to complete a second short questionnaire.

- **Phase two**: A small sample of teachers who took part in phase one of the research will be asked to take part in a short interview about their experiences of the coaching programme.

All the data gathered will be accessible only to the researcher and personal details will be destroyed once the data has been analysed. Participation is entirely voluntary and teachers can withdraw from the study at any time. The results of the research will be published in anonymised form.

For further information regarding the research please contact Natasha Ellis (Trainee Educational Psychologist) by emailing nlp204@exeter.ac.uk or phoning: 01803 863481
Appendix 5: Consent form for participation in research

Teacher Consent Form

(Please circle one response)

I ________________ give/ do not give my consent to take part in the research project exploring the outcomes of a teacher coaching intervention.

I understand that:

- there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation
- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications
- all information I give will be treated as confidential
- the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

.................................................................................................................................
(Signature of participant) ............................................................ (Date)

.................................................................................................................................
(Printed name of participant)
# Appendix 6: Further information regarding school based participants (paper one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural secondary school (S1)</td>
<td>Video data</td>
<td>Two videoed coaching sessions involving <strong>four</strong> participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban secondary school (S2)</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
<td><strong>One</strong> participant (teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential special school (S3)</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
<td><strong>Two</strong> participants (one teacher, one member of care staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural secondary school (S4)</td>
<td>Interview data, Questionnaire data</td>
<td><strong>One</strong> participant (teacher) <strong>Three</strong> participants (teachers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 7: Semi-structured interview Framework for interviews with executive coaches.

1. Can you describe to me how you came to be involved in delivering the solution focused coaching programme?
2. Can you describe to me what you feel the differences are between solution focused coaching and other forms of coaching? Mentoring? Other professional development programmes?
3. Can you describe to me the skills you feel are necessary to become a coach?
4. Can you describe to me the difference between coaching delivered by the coaching team and coaching delivered ‘in-house’ by teachers?
5. Can you describe to me the reasons behind schools commissioning Solution Focused Coaching Sessions?
   - How are these aims communicated to coaches?
   - How are coaches identified?
   - Are they able to opt out of coaching?
6. How convinced are you that the coaching is effective?
   - How convinced are you that solution focused coaching is more effective than other forms of coaching?
7. Can you describe to me the outcomes which you feel are associated with the coaching programme?
   - Can you describe to me how outcomes and monitored and recorded?
   - How often?
   - Who by?
8. Can you describe to me any barriers you have experienced in relation to your coaching practice?
9. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the coaching programme?
Appendix 8: Semi-structured interview framework for school staff who had received coaching from the coaching team.

1. Can you describe to me how you came to be involved in the coaching programme?
   • What did (the person who commissioned the coaching) say the aim of the coaching programme was?
   • What did you feel the aims of the coaching programme was?
   • How did you initially feel about taking part in the coaching?

2. Can you describe to me your experience of having taken part in the coaching programme?
   • Who was your coach?
   • What was your relationship with your coach like?
   • Do you feel there would be a difference if the coach had been a colleague?
   • What was your focus area of development?
   • Were there things you enjoyed about coaching sessions?
   • Were there aspects of coaching which you did not enjoy/did not find helpful?
   • How do you feel solution focused coaching differs to other professional development programmes?

3. In what way has the coaching programme impacted on your professional work? Tell me more...
3. In what was has the coaching programme impacted on your school as a whole? Tell me more..
Appendix 9: Exert from field notes and table 1 showing initial codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Coachee unclear about the aims of coaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Scepticism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Context/Process</td>
<td>Coaching as non-expert led</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Context/Process</td>
<td>Focus on success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Coaching as a one off</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Highlights that schools commissioning has impacted on preferred model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C7</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Promoting independence/increasing confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C8</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Difficulty measuring outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contextual information: Notes taken during an initial briefing with school staff prior to individual coaching sessions taking place. Seven coachees were present as well as an AT and an EP.

Coachee- “I’m not being funny but how exactly would it work given you know nothing about my job, how would it work in relation to a particular child” (C1/C2).

Coach-highlighted feeling there can be different approaches to professional development. Can be training, advice giving, coaching. Coach suggests that “everyone has the answers for themselves and what we need is time to reflect on what’s working well” (C3).

Coachee2-“well coaching to me sounds like it is not a one off. To me you’re just dipping your toes, not getting your feet wet. You’re wasting your time”. (C2/C5)

Coach2-“We hope it resonates with you. We hope even though its only one session (C5) you will go away knowing more about your strengths”. Highlighted that in some schools staff are trained in delivering coaching themselves.
Coach-In an ideal world we would be having a handful of session together (C6).

Coach-“I see it as a way of promoting autonomy, independence and increased responsibility”. Gave example of coaching being useful in shifting someone who is repeatedly asking for help...relying on manager even though they have the resources within themselves to solve the problem. (C7)

Coachee3-“Someone came to my mind immediately when you said that”. (few other Cs also nodded).

Coachee4-“I have experience of clinical supervision as a nurse and I am just thinking that lots of people will be thinking I really want an outcome. How do you measure that? Surely its immeasurable?” (C8)

Coach-“It may be there is a development point but there is no follow up planned” (C5/C7).
Appendix 10: Questionnaire distributed to participants within study one.

This questionnaire relates to the solution focused teacher coaching session(s) delivered to you by Educational Psychologists and Advisory Teachers working for the XXXXXX Learning Development Partnership.

Section A.
1. How did you come to be involved in the solution focused coaching programme?

2. What do you feel were the aims of the solution focused coaching programme?

3. Can you describe any similarities and differences you feel there are between the solution focused coaching and other professional development programmes (e.g. mentoring, other types of coaching, appraisals etc).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section B: The following questions relate to the content of the solution focused coaching session(s) you attended. (Please tick the relevant boxes and provide further detail where requested).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During the solution focused coaching....</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did your coaching help you to identify a target for you to address? If yes what was your target?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your coaching ask any ‘exception finding’ questions? (E.g. questions which required you to discuss times when a ‘problem’ did not occur or was less severe)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you coach ask questions which encouraged you to identify your strengths?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your coach ask you to think about your preferred future? (e.g. what would be different if a ‘problem’ no longer occurred)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your coach ask you to make ratings on a scale?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you identify your ‘next step’ towards achieving your target? If ‘yes’ what was your ‘next step’?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were plans made to monitor your progress towards your target? If ‘yes’ how would this monitoring take place?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section C

1. On the scale below please mark where you were with your target before the coaching session and where you feel you are now.

Low                                                                                              High

0           1             2             3             4              5             6              7

2. To what extent do you feel this outcome would have been achieved had you not taken part in the coaching session?

Low                                                                                              High

0           1             2             3             4              5             6              7

If you wish you wish to make any comments regarding your ratings please write them below:

........................................................................................................
........................................................................................................

3. To what degree do you feel your professional practice in general has changed following the coaching session(s)? Please circle one number on the scale to rate your response.

Low                                                                                              High

0           1             2             3             4              5             6              7

4. Please explain why you have chosen this particular rating.

........................................................................................................
........................................................................................................
........................................................................................................

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaires.
Your support is greatly appreciated.
Appendix 11: Ethical approval form

Certificate of ethical research approval
THESIS

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School’s Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guidelines/ and view the School’s statement on the GSE student access on-line documents.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND

Your name: Natasha Ellis
Your student no: 
Return address for this certificate: 14 Limetree Road, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 5UB
Degree/Programme of Study: Doctorate in Educational Psychology
Project Supervisor(s): Brahmin Norwich/Shirley Larkin
Your email address: nlp204@exeter.ac.uk
Tel: 07792 783044/01752 209939

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: .......................... date: 09.01.12

NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must not be included in your work. It can be kept for your records.
Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 590035339

Title of your project: An exploration of the outcomes associated with a solution focused teacher coaching intervention for teachers and the pupils they teach.

Brief description of your research project:

This research project relates specially to the Devon Solution Focused teacher coaching intervention. The research will comprise of two linked studies. These are as follows:

Study one
The study will involve looking at possible associations between a solution-focused teacher coaching intervention and the following variables:

- Teachers sense of self-efficacy
- Teachers ratings on a ‘Goal Monitoring Evaluation’ scale
- Pupils perceptions of their classroom environment

These variables will be measured using the following questionnaires:

- Teachers sense of efficacy questionnaire’ (short form) (See Appendix A)
- Goal Monitoring Evaluation (GME) scale (See Appendix B)
- My Class Inventory (MCI) (short form) (See Appendix C)

Participants will be asked to complete a copy of each questionnaire prior to and after a one term teacher coaching intervention. Support will be provided for any participants with additional needs. For instance support with reading the questions if necessary.

Study two

The aim of study two will be to explore the experiences of a sample of teachers who commissioned or took part in a one-term Devon teacher coaching intervention.

This will involve the researcher holding semi-structured interviews with a selection of teachers who took part in the coaching intervention. Interviews will also be held with a sample of Head Teachers who commissioned the coaching intervention. For an outline of the areas which will be covered within the interviews see Appendix D.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

In both study one and two the participants will be selected from three Devon primary schools, which have commissioned training in ‘Devon Solution Focused Teacher Coaching’. This training is due to take place between March 2012 and March 2013. Head teachers of the schools involved have already given their consent for data to be gathered within their schools.

Study one
Once the project receives ethical approval all teachers taking part in the coaching intervention within the three schools will be asked to give their written consent to participate in the research (See Appendix E for a copy of the consent form which will be used).

Once the teachers willing to participate in the study have been identified, consent request forms and information relating to the research will also be sent to the parents of a subsample of pupils aged between 8-12 who are taught by the teachers participating in the coaching training (See Appendix F).

Study two
Once the one term coaching intervention has finished a subsample of teachers who took part in study one will be contacted to enquire whether they still consent to being interviewed about their experience. It will be made clear to teachers that even though they took part in study one, they are not obliged to take part in study two.

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:
  a) informed consent: Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document.
    - The head teachers of the three schools where the research is proposed to take place have already given their consent for research to be carried out within their school.
    - Once I have received ethical approval for this research I will write to all members of the teaching staff who are due to take part in the coaching intervention to request their individual written consent to take part in the research study (See Appendix E).
    - Letters will be sent the parents of all the children in the sample schools asking for their consent for their son/daughter to take part in the study (See Appendix F).
    - Children will also be asked for their verbal consent on the day the questionnaires are due to be completed. It will be made clear to children that they can choose not to complete the questionnaire even if their parents have consented to them doing so.

All participants will be informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time up until the stage the data has been analysed. All participants will be given the email address of the researcher should they have any questions or concerns before, during or after the research project.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Study one
Data will be gathered using self-report questionnaires, which have been used in previous research studies and are short and simple to complete.
It will be made clear to all participants that once data collection is completed the responses they gave on the questionnaires will be made anonymous. However for the purpose of gathering pre and post intervention data it will be necessary for the researcher to code questionnaires in order that participants pre and post intervention data can be compared.

At no stage will participants individual questionnaire results be accessible to anyone besides the researcher.

The questionnaires which will be used within the study are as follows:

1. Teachers sense of efficacy questionnaire' (short form) (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) (See Appendix A)
• The ‘Teacher Sense of Efficacy’ questionnaire (short form) consists of 12 questions and teachers are required to answer by making a response on a scale of 1 (nothing) to 9 (a great deal) (See Appendix B for a copy of this questionnaire).
• Teachers will complete this questionnaire at the start and again at the end of the coaching intervention.

2. Goal Monitoring Evaluation (GME) scale (Norwich, 2011) (See Appendix B)

This rating scale will be complete by participants at the start of their first coaching session. It will then be completed again at the end of the one term intervention.

• The GME questionnaire will require teachers to set a clear goals for the programme of coaching sessions and to rate their current, expected and actual level of attainment with regards to these goals.

3. My Class Inventory (MCI) (short form) (Fraser and Fisher, 1986) (See Appendix C)

• The MCI questionnaire has been used frequently in educational research and has been reported to be simple for pupils to complete.
• Children will be asked to complete this questionnaire in small groups. The researcher will read the questions out loud and children will be asked to circle the response they feel most reflect their own perception of their classroom.

Study two
The method which will be used will be semi-structured interviews. Questions will be asked by the researcher and will be recorded using a Dictaphone in order that they can be transcribed following the interview.

A copy of the schedule which will be used to structure the interviews can be see in Appendix D.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recoded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical concern</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers may feel concerned that the responses they give to some of my questions could be used for managerial purposes. E.g. questions relating to their confidence in their teaching abilities and also the information gathered relating to pupils perceptions of their classroom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For the purpose of gathering pre and post intervention data I will need to record a code to identify participants by. However this data will only be accessible to the researcher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Following this I will ensure that all the data I gather is made anonymous. When I report on the data no school, teacher or children will be individually identifiable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I will make this clear to the Head Teachers and teachers prior to commencing data gathering.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers will be reassured that inclusion of pupils within the study is to look at their perceptions of their classroom and is not to look at ‘quality of teaching’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawing from the study</td>
<td>I will also make clear to all participants (and the parents of the children) that they can withdraw from participating in the study at any stage, including after the data has been collected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Some of the data I gather may potentially be of a sensitive nature. | • Questionnaires and interview transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.  
• Once data has been gathered the participants will not individually identifiable. The questionnaires and transcripts will be destroyed once data analysis has taken place. |

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

Not applicable

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: **Jun 12** until: **May 13**

By (above mentioned supervisor’s signature): **Bilal Tremoli** date: **11/1/12**

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

GSE unique approval reference: **D111222**

Signed: **Bilal Tremoli** date: **22/01/12**

Chair of the School’s Ethics Committee
Appendix 12: Braun and Clarke's model of thematic analysis and specific application to the analysis procedure reported within papers one and two.

- **Phase one**: Familiarisation with data, researcher carried out all interviews and transcribed all data.
- **Phase two**: Generation of initial codes, all data sources considered independently and initial codes were generated and recorded using NVIVO software. Codes were data rather than theory driven and were grouped into the broad areas of ‘context’ codes, ‘process’ codes and ‘outcome’ codes.
- **Phase three**: Identification of themes, individual codes were grouped into themes (within the areas of context, process and outcomes).
- **Phase four**: Reviewing themes, themes identified across all data sources were reviewed.
- **Phase five**: Defining and naming themes, themes across all data sources were re-reviewed, defined and named.
- **Phase six**: Producing the report, tables and narrative provide explanation of themes was produced.
Within the current study:

**Contextual** factors were taken to be anything which impacted on the actual delivery of the coaching. For instance the reasons why a Head Teacher had commissioned the coaching, how this was communicated with staff and the staff’s initial perceptions prior to the coaching taking place.

**Process** factors were taken to be the specific process of coaching. For instance the questions used within the session.

**Outcome** factors were taken to be any outcomes reported or described as being associated with the SFCP.
### Appendix 13: Exert from transcript of interview with coachee showing initial codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Context/Process</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Coaching sessions rolled out across the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Coachee unclear about the aims of the coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Initial concern from coachee about programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Coachee valued/enjoyed the experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Initial perception that coaching will be expert driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Process/Outcome</td>
<td>Shift in perception of coaching after taking part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C7</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Coaching as a one off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C8</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Coachee unclear on specific content of coaching session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C9</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C10</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Coachee drives session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C11</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Coachee identifies next steps themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C12</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Coachee solves 'problem' themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C13</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Coachee carries out next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C14</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Feeling more comfortable with an outsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C15</td>
<td>Context/Process</td>
<td>Need for an external coach?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q.1. Can you describe to me how you came to be involved in the coaching program?**

Yeah, I first came across the idea of coaching I think it was last year of the year before when I think it was...the team were in coaching the teaching staff in the school....so I was aware of it then and then um, with the head we discussed the care team (**C1**) and whether they would have some coaching as well as we agreed um and that was set up and then the sessions took place a couple of weeks ago. So it was a process like that really.

**Q.1a. What did the HT (who commissioned the coaching) say the aims of the programme were?**
She didn’t. Not really. She didn’t, not in any depth (C2). That why when we had the initial meeting it was a bit, there was a bit of cynicism actually without having a knowledge of what we were actually doing we weren’t quite clear (C2/C3). So no it wasn’t to be honest.

**Q.1.b. What did you feel were the aims of the coaching?**

Well I think the term coaching, if there is one criticism I would have about the whole thing its the term, coaching...because everything else I have found really positive and really valuable (C4) but I think when you don’t know anything about it what happens is.....its that word coaching...you automatically feel that you are going to have someone coming in and telling you how to do your job (C3/C5) and there’s nothing wrong with that to a certain extent but apart from...you know we all work in different departments with different kids and um, you know we all face different challenges so how someone could come and coach you in doing your job when you have been doing it for years and years and years um, its sort of feels...a defence mechanism kicks in and its what you’re going to come in and tell me how to do my job” (C3/C5), cos thats what it feels a little bit really, its like with the sport analogy...you know with the coach or manager coming into sort the football team out, or whatever it might be...thats what you sort of get, when you hear about coaching. Once you get through that its totally different (C6), but you know what I mean. But it wasn’t clear at first and you know I was a little bit cynical to be honest (C3).

**Q.2. Can you describe to me your experience of taking part in the coaching programme?**

Yeah, so I have had one session and it was really good (C7). It surprised me...but if you asked me what happened I would be able to tell you what happened. Honestly if you said...I couldn’t say I went into the room and M asked me this and he asked me that and then this...I can’t say that because I can’t remember (C8)....and I found it a really, I don’t know we just went in there, we got chatting and all of a sudden I just started to talk really and uh, obviously these guys know what they are doing and they have skills to make you do that, and uh... started talking about my job and what worries me from time to time (C9/C10) and how I could fix it and how I could make it better and all of a sudden I walked out and I thought I bloody did that (C11/C12), and it was really
good (C10)….and like I said because I said it in this one to one conversation I did walk out of there thinking I’m going to do that and I have to admit that I have (C13) not everything you know don’t get me wrong I’m happy with my job and that its good, but there were a few things that needed looking at and you know I started that (C12), so its made a big difference, so I came out of it feeling great (C4), I did actually, honestly from being quite cynical for that first meeting (C6)…that meeting was good and then I was quite looking forward to it honestly…so from that to the session walking out I felt really good, it was a good experience (C4).

Q.2.a. Do you feel there would have been a difference if the coaching session had been delivered by a colleague?

Oh yeah it would have been different it was a colleague, yeah, I think it was uh, um…thats a good question…making me think now. I was able to completely off load and say things that I probably wouldn’t say to people that I work with, that I could say to X (C14)...nothing big time or anything like that but I mean..things such as um you know I, in some areas of my working life I’m quite un-organised but I wouldn’t want to say that to people that are working for me (C14), yeah..you don’t want to start spelling out your weaknesses but I felt like I could do that with X…and its ironed out a few things, but if it was a colleague maybe not to be honest (C15).
Appendix 14: Exert from video data transcript and table 2 showing initial codes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>&quot;Coachee able to select any focus&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Focus area relates to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Focus-Clarity about roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Attempt to identify hoped for outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Focus on identifying preferred future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Coach paraphrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Coach checking has understood correctly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contextual information: Professional coaching session-EP coaching a member of secondary school staff who had agreed to be in order that the coaching team could film the session for their own professional development and for potential use within peer coaching training sessions. The coaching team informed me that the approach adopted was the same as would be used within their usual coaching sessions.

Extract from transcript

Coach-Ok so what's your best hope for todays session? (C1)

Coachee-I would like to have explored what our role and responsibility is and to some extent whether it has changed over the last few years so that’s a bit of a priority, what it is and what it isn’t (C1/C2/C3).

Coach-So if you left this session feeling that you had much greater clarity about what it is and what it isn’t what would be different for you (C4)?

Coachee-.....I think at the moment I find myself arguing with people about where our role fits I think..what I would like is if I can be clear, if we can be clear about what we..what we both do, then I think that would help other people as well..referrals would be clearer and, more relevant (C4)
**Coach**-ok so if you weren’t arguing with people what would there be in place of that? (C4/C5)

**Coachee**-……….ah clarity and…a common view about…I mean even amongst ourselves, the four of us and then our managers, and the people who refer to us…

**Coach**-ok, so is a good best hope for this session then that you have greater clarity about your role and that other people have greater clarity about your role, and that its not just you personally but all the people working within the support? (C6/C7)

**Coachee**-Yeah and it might be that we do but I think its quite useful because we don’t have that conversation in any depth and theres one or two things that might have changed, things that have been thrown up for me and I have thought why are we doing that.
Appendix 15: Example of themes identified within a group of data.

After being identified the themes which are reported in the table below were analysed alongside the themes identified within the other data sources, for instance the video data and the interviews with the coachees. Higher order themes common to the entire data set were then identified and are reported within section three of this thesis.

Table 3-Themes identified across the interviews with the coaching team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>“occasionally we go into a school where the Head Teacher has said that ‘this is something that’s going to happen throughout the school’, and that hasn’t necessarily been something that the teachers have thought would be valuable and so sometimes you have to start with a certain amount of resistance”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher weaknesses</td>
<td>“there are a lot of schools now that are asking for on-going coaching with individual members of staff and that’s sometimes because they are perceived to be weaker members of staff”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>“where it works best is everybody is really clear about the aims and we have a discussion before the coaching as to why they school is having coaching”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-advice giving focus</td>
<td>“the main thing is that you are using the persons resources for themselves and it’s for them to think about how they might do things better. It’s very much not telling people how to do things”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship building/rapport</td>
<td>“I think in so much of this sort of work is the ability to be able to develop rapport and get on with people. Its fundamental. If you don’t do that you might as well give up, whatever you are doing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coachee has ownership over the session</td>
<td>“When I work at my very best I am not influencing anything other than encouraging the person to think about how they want things to be, or what they want to work on”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 shows themes identified within interviews with school staff involved in the coaching programme (Coachees).

After being identified these themes were analysed alongside the themes identified within the other data sources. Higher order themes common to the entire data set were then identified and are reported within (Section three).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding what the coaching will involve</td>
<td>“I think the message got lost somewhere…cos I thought I was being observed and was going to get my lesson judged so I didn’t realise what it was”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial resistance/scepticism</td>
<td>“It’s that word coaching..you automatically feel that you are going to have someone coming in and telling you how to do your job”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School systems impacting on coaching</td>
<td>“We could probably got more out of it as a department than we perhaps did…I think its just to down with timing here with OFSTED..being in special measures”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being more open with an outsider?</td>
<td>“I was able to completely off load and say things that I probably wouldn’t say to people that I work with…..you don’t want to start spelling out your weaknesses but I felt like I could to that with X”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Control/Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Identifying strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Applying SFA after the coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 16: Example of how initial codes were analysed and collated into initial themes and then overarching themes across the entire data set

Table 5: Examples of how initial codes relate to initial and higher order themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Order Theme identified across data set</th>
<th>Initial Themes</th>
<th>Example codes</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Communication and understanding the aims of coaching | Awareness of structure and theory of coaching. | Need to understand SF theory  
Staff unclear on what coaching ‘is’ | Interviews with coaches |
|  | Communication of the aims of coaching | Coachee unclear about the aims of coaching | Field notes  
Interviews with coaches  
Interviews with coachees |
|  | Lack of communication about involvement in coaching | Field notes  
Interviews with coaches  
Interviews with coachees |
|  | Coaching team not involved initial discussions with coachees. | Interviews with coaches |
|  | Differences in teachers awareness about aims | Interviews with coaches  
Interviews with coachees |
<p>|  | Need for awareness of aims. | Interview with coaches |
| Relationships/building rapport | Potential conflict between coaching and performance management | Conflict between best hopes of commissioner and coachees. | Interviews with coaches |
|  | Rejection of traditional managerial | Interviews with coaches |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships and Trust</th>
<th>Coachee has trust in coach</th>
<th>Field note data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need to trust that the session will remain confidential</td>
<td>Interviews with coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>Interviews with coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling more comfortable with an outsider</td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coach shows empathy and attempts to put coachees at ease</td>
<td>Field note data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty in assessing outcomes</th>
<th>Concern about monitoring outcomes</th>
<th>Belief that monitoring may impact on process</th>
<th>Interviews with coaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict between best hopes of commissioner and coachees.</td>
<td>Field note data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of follow up to sessions</th>
<th>Coaching as a one off</th>
<th>Interviews with coaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty measuring outcomes</td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcomes personalised and personal to coachee.</td>
<td>Field notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviews with coachees and field notes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief in the model</th>
<th>Informal feedback after coaching</th>
<th>Interviews with coaches</th>
<th>Interviews with coachees</th>
<th>Field notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 17: Handouts given to participants attending SF coaching training

Solution Focused Coaching

Introductions and Warm Up Activity

What is it about you that makes you good at your job?
What else?

30 things

The Solution Focused Approach

• Origins, Principles and Characteristics

• Brief today
  • Best hopes
  • Future-focused
  • Exceptions
  • Endings

• Coaching – where are you, where do we want to go
Best Hopes / Shaping a common project activity

- In 3’s - A B C
- Person A will begin a coaching session with person B, C
- Person A will support B
- Stop when the common project is clear and all 3 people understand what they are working towards
- Discuss and swap roles
- Group discussion

Preferred Future Activity

Bring to mind something that is heartwarming for you at work. Imagine that in dealing with it you find yourself at your best.

- Think about what that would be like.
- What would you be doing?
- What else?
- What difference would that make for you?
- Who would notice things were different?
- What would they notice about you?
- What else?

Building on Success Activity

Allanah’s best hope:
Every young person in the group is engaged with learning and passionate about the subject?

Question prompts:
- What did you do that made it particularly successful?
- What would others have noticed about you?
- What skills and strengths did you use to do that?
- What difference did that make?
- What did doing that tell you about yourself?
Multiple Scaling & Next Steps Activity

Promoting questions for next steps:

- What would be the smallest sign that things were moving forward?
- What would you notice that things were better? What would they notice?
- What would be happening that would tell you their things were improving?
- How would you know you had moved one step on?

Putting It all Together Activity

- One person from each group volunteers to be tracked.
- The rest of the group take it in turns to be lead coach. Each person asks 2/3 questions before swapping roles.
- The lead coach can discuss questions with other members of the team.
- When not acting as lead coach, members of the group observe, noticing good responses, helpful language, light heart moments etc.

Scaling Activity

On a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 represents your best hope fully realized, and 1 the furthest from that point, consider:

- Where are you now? And what’s keeping you up there?
- What else?
- What would 11 / 10 look like for you? What difference would that make for you? What else?
- If you were one point up the scale from where you are now, how would you know? What would you show? What else?
Coaching Framework

Best Hopes – What do you want?

What are your best hopes from our talking together?
How will you know that this has been of use to you?

Preferred Future – How will you know that you have got it?

Imagine,...... Your best hopes happening
  That you are performing at your best
  That in completing that task you found yourself working to your potential
  That you are doing yourself justice
  That tomorrow at work everything is going well

Building on Success - What are you already doing that is moving in your preferred direction?

When is it most like that now?
What are you already doing that is working?

Next Steps – Small signs

What would be the first small sign you would notice that would tell you that you had moved forward?

Scaling

On a scale of 0 to 10 with 10 standing for things going as well as you could possibly hope and 0 standing for the opposite, where do you see things at present?
What are the things that place you there and not lower on the scale?
Where on the scale would you like to be? How would you know that you were there?
How will know that things have moved up just one point?
What will other people notice about you when things have moved just one point up?
What will be the first small sign that you have moved up one point?
Questions

How do you know?
What tells you that it is successful?
What do you notice?
What do you see?
What are other people saying?
What signs are there that this is successful?
What difference does it make to you?
Who is affected by the change?
What difference does it make to them?
What is the best thing about it?

How will that show?
Who notices?
What do they notice?
What exactly are you doing?
What was the first thing you did?
What are other people saying about you?
What are others seeing you do?
What are the key things that made it successful?

Skills/Strengths/Resources
How did you do it?
What skills did you use?
What does that say about you?
What helped you?
Who helped you?
When else have you used these skills/strengths?
What makes you good at that?
How did you learn how to do that?

Identity/Strategy/Confidence
What are you most proud of?
What is the most important thing for you?
How did you have that happen?
How did you get yourself to do that?
How did you think to do that?
What did it take to do that?
What does doing that tell you about yourself?
What gave the confidence to do that?

Hints
And in place of............
What else............
Multiple perspectives............
Tiny signs.....
## Appendix 18: Overview of participants (Paper 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural secondary school (US1)</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
<td>Three participants (two coaches and one coachee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Primary school (P1)</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
<td>One participant (Coach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video data</td>
<td>One additional participant involved in video (coachee).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Primary school (P2)</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
<td>Three participants (all had acted as both a coach and a coachee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire data</td>
<td>Six participants (all had acted as both a coach and a coachee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Secondary school (S2)</td>
<td>Questionnaire data</td>
<td>Seven teachers (all had attended coaching training, none had acted as coach or coachee).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 19: Semi-structured interview framework for interviews with school staff who had commissioned the SFCP.

1. Can you describe to me how and why it was decided that the teacher coaching would take place within your school?
   - How come it was solution focused coaching and not another programme?
   - Can you describe to me any external pressure which influenced your decision? (e.g. OFSTED, performance management targets etc)
   - How come your chose to buy in professional coaches rather than train teachers in coaching skills?

2. It would be helpful you could describe to me your experiences of the practicalities of implementing the coaching intervention within your school....
   - When you booked the coaching training did you have a plan for running the sessions?
   - How did you come up with this plan?
   - How did you identify which staff would take part? Was this negotiated with them? How?
   - Were teachers given the option to opt out?

3. What do you feel have been the outcomes of the coaching programme?
   - Can you describe to me any changes which you feel were associated with the coaching programme?
   - For instance changes which may have taken place in individual teachers’ practice? Across the whole school?
   - How do you know these changes have taken place?
   - Have the outcomes met your initial expectations?
   - To what extent do you feel these outcomes relate to the fact the coaching was ‘solution focused’?

4. Can you describe to me any challenges you have encountered in implementing the coaching sessions within your school?
• How did you overcome these challenges?
• Do you feel there would have been any difference if you had used peer rather than professional coaches?

5. Are you planning on commissioning further coaching sessions delivered by the coaching team? Do you plan to use peer teacher coaches within your school in the future?
   • How often? How long for?
   • Who will act as a coach and who will be the coachee?
   • What will be the aim of the coaching?
Appendix 20: Questionnaire distributed to school staff

Solution Focused Teacher Coaching Training Questionnaire

The coaching training was delivered to you by Educational Psychologists and Advisory Teachers working for the Devon Learning Development Partnership. The training involved exploring and practicing the use of solution focused coaching skills. Section B of this questionnaire relates to the training you attended, whilst the questions in section C are about whether you have had the opportunity to put into practice what you learnt.

Section A: Background information

1. Name (optional)..........................
2. Gender (please circle): Male/Female
3. Job title/role in school:......................

Section B: The solution focused teacher coaching training

1. Date you attended the Solution Focused Teacher coaching training session..........................
2. Number of training sessions you attended..........................................

1. To what degree do you feel your professional practice has changed following the coaching training? Please circle one number on the scale to rate your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Large Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Please explain why you have chosen this particular rating.
   ........................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................

Section C: Coaching sessions (after the training took place)

1. Since attending the solution focused coaching training have you taken part in a coaching session? (please circle)
   Yes/No

If YES, please complete questions 2-4. If no please continue to section D
2. How many coaching sessions have you taken part in?

3. How frequently have the coaching sessions taken place and how long do they usually last?

4. When taking part in coaching sessions have you acted as a coach or as the coachee (the person being coached)? Coach/Coachee (please circle)

Section D

1. Is there anything you feel helped make changes to practice possible following the coaching training? (e.g. support from senior staff, time, resources).

2. Is there anything you feel has acted as a barrier to changing practice following the coaching training? (e.g. time, resources, relevance of the approach)

Thank you for your time and support in completing this questionnaire.
Appendix 21: Extract from field notes (Paper 2).

Day one (Extract)

**Context:** Whole day SF training delivered by EP and AT in secondary school. Eleven middle leaders and a parent governor attended.

Lots of discussion about how it can be hard for teachers to identify their own individual strengths rather than to focus on external factors e.g. “there’s a good class it’s not me”.

**Reflection** - Will people actually engage in specific structured coaching sessions following this training?

Teacher who had been off with stress approached the coaching team in the staff room following the training and explained it was his first week back at work and he really enjoyed the training and thought the coaching approach felt really supportive.

Day two (Extract)

**Context:** 10 teachers (including the Head Teacher) and two parent teacher governors.

In the staff room a teacher from yesterday’s training approached the coaching team and said that one of his colleagues who was sceptical about coaching had typed up another teacher’s strengths and put them on his desk saying ‘at first I thought this was weird but it’s actually really nice’.

**Reflection** - The dynamics feel different already to yesterday. The room is quieter and people are selecting their seats in the room very carefully—trying to avoid being partnered with the HT.

The group are quicker and quieter to get started with tasks which are set.
Appendix 22: Exert from interview with coachee and table showing initial codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Need for teaching expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Identify of coaches decided by Senior Leadership team (SLT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Personal qualities required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Top down approach to engaging coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Identity of coachees decided by SLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Coaching for ‘weaker’ teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C7</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Coache/coachees working in different departments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q.3. It would be helpful if you could describe to me your experiences of implementing the coaching intervention within your school….For instance..when you booked the coaching training did you have an initial plan for how it would get up and running?

I did..my first plan was I had identified the members of staff who had had consistently good and outstanding features (C1), um but that wasn’t the only criteria. The criteria also had to be that I felt they would have the interpersonal skills, they would be able to listen (C2/C3)...so some members of staff who are outstanding teachers weren’t selected because I felt that they wouldn’t make the best coaches and in place there might be some members of staff who had good quality teaching but were excellent listeners so it was based upon them having a good teaching track record (C1) but also the qualities that I felt would be valuable for a coach (C2). After I had identified those members of staff I wanted to ensure that they would support the coaching so they were spoken to by the Head Teacher to see if they wished to be a coach which they all did (C4). Then following that I then identified those members of staff who I felt would require the coaching having observed them over about two terms now really... (C6) and then I went through the process of pairing them up with people who
were outside of their faculty area because I felt that the refresher would come best with people who would not... work best with people who would normally see them..being..um in the classroom (C7).
Appendix 23: Theme identified within interviews with school staff involved in the peer SFCP.

Initial codes were grouped into themes within data sets which were analysed alongside the themes identified within the other data sources. Higher order themes common to the entire data set were then identified and are reported within (chapter seven).

Table 6 showing themes identified across the interviews with the school staff involved in the peer coaching programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding the purpose and aims of the coaching</strong></td>
<td>“I approached him about the coaching before he knew that I was his coach because I was told to go and get on with it so I did, then I found out he had no idea what I was talking about” (coach).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“we spent half the day talking about the theory of coaching so staff could understand that, the second half of the day was kind of practising coaching” (coach/coachee).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior staff support the approach.</strong></td>
<td>“I was completely sold on it. I was a complete advocate of it, I thought it was incredible” (HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coaching as a result of performance issues</strong></td>
<td>“We are currently being monitored after..a poor OFSTED inspection……it quickly became apparent that too many of our teachers were teaching at satisfactory levels and we sought to move them to teaching as good. We decided that coaching was the vehicle in which to do that” (coach).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On-going support from the coaching team</strong></td>
<td>So X coaches me (peer coach) and on top of that XX (Coaching team) is timetabled to come in each term to work with X and I to do some coaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expertise/advice giving</strong></td>
<td>“so really being, sort of making them do the work and talking and not giving them the solutions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“X (coach) is really knowledgeable really, I mean X started by saying that it was more..it was supposed to all come from me but actually she does provide a bit of help”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coaches taking ownership of their development</strong></td>
<td>“what we have done is we have taken away the stick…in fact we have given them the stick and they are beating themselves..thats a much more comfortable place for people to be because people will push themselves as hard as they can without breaking” (coach/Deputy Head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Building rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Increased reflection on practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Coaching approaches impacting on school systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Coaching attributed to positive improvement in teaching/OFSTE D ratings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>School staff developing systems to monitor outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 24: Table 7 showing examples of how higher order themes were generated from initial themes which were themselves generated from initial codes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Order Theme identified across data set</th>
<th>Initial Themes</th>
<th>Example codes</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coaching and performance management</td>
<td>Rejection of top down managerial approaches</td>
<td>Conflict between coaching and performance management</td>
<td>Interviews with coaches, Interviews with coachees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissatisfaction with top down management approaches</td>
<td>Advice giving was ineffective, Imposing targets was ineffective, Disempowerment</td>
<td>Interviews with coachees, Interviews with coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching to address teaching weaknesses</td>
<td>Coaching for ‘weak’ teachers, Coaching due to ‘satisfactory observations’, Outstanding teachers don’t need coaching</td>
<td>Interviews with coaches, Interviews with coachees, Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships/ building rapport</td>
<td>Conflict between coaching and performance management</td>
<td>Coachee opts out of coaching, Rejection of traditional managerial approaches</td>
<td>Interviews with coaches, Interviews with coaches, Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td><strong>Need for good interpersonal skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Field note data</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Need for trust</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Openness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coach shows empathy and attempts to put coachees at ease</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Field note data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coaching attributed to positive improvements in teaching/OFSTED ratings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Teachers ‘ratings’ improve following coaching</strong></th>
<th><strong>Measures focused on OFSTED criteria</strong></th>
<th><strong>Interviews with coaches</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whole school OFSTED rating improvements- coaching attributed as playing a role</strong></td>
<td><strong>OFSTED praise coaching</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interviews with coaches</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coachees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School moved out of special measures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 25: Additional information regarding ethical concerns relevant to paper 2.

Of upmost relevance with regards to this particular study was the importance of maintaining the participants confidentiality. Within school US1, the commissioner of the coaching informed me that they would want to see the outcomes of any individual questionnaires or feedback which were provided by staff involved in the SFCP. I had to make very clear that this would not be possible and for this reason decided not to distribute questionnaires within this school as I was concerned about ensuring responses remained confidential given the commissioner wanted to act as ‘gate-keeper’ in distributing and retrieving questionnaires.

As I had already identified staff to be interviewed within this school I also asked a member of the coaching team to contact the commissioner to further reiterate the ethical principles I would be adhering to in relation to protecting the confidentiality of participants, before I went ahead with conducting the interviews.

A further ethical concern relevant to this study related to the fact that in school S2, during the data gathering period a young member of staff involved in the coaching training died suddenly the week I was due to visit the school to carry out interviews with staff. For reasons of sensitivity I contacted the staff I was due to meet with and asked if they would like to postpone/cancel our appointments, which they did. Later in the term I was due to revisit this school with the plan of meeting with the commissioner of the coaching. However a member of the coaching team informed me, confidentially, of some significant pressures which this member of staff was being placed under and suggested I once again cancel my appointment.

Given the pressures this school had faced during the data gathering period and their potential impact on staff I made a decision, based on ethical grounds, not to contact this school again to attempt to gather further data.

A final ethical concern of particular relevance to this current study relates to the safe storage of the video footage of the peer coaching session. At all times the footage was stored securely, accessible only to the researcher and was used only for research purposes.
# Appendix 26: Table 8 providing an overview of the peer SFCPs delivered within the focus schools (Paper 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Training received</th>
<th>Frequency of coaching programme</th>
<th>Identity of coaches/coachees</th>
<th>Other relevant information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary 1 (P1)</td>
<td>All staff attended one day of coaching training.</td>
<td>Timetabled formal session half termly for each member of staff.</td>
<td>All staff (teachers and teaching assistants), paired into dyads and all acted as coach and coachee.</td>
<td>Observations were used at times to structure coaching ‘observations’ (focus area for observation selected by coachee).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On-going support/supervision from the coaching team, including attendance at staff meetings.</td>
<td>SFAs also used within staff meetings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 2 (P2)</td>
<td>SENCo has attended training at BRIEF in the coaching model. Has then received on-going support/supervision from the coaching team.</td>
<td>Timetabled 1:1 sessions bi-weekly. SF approaches also used outside of coaching session e.g. in department meetings</td>
<td>All teaching staff receive coaching. Coach is currently the schools SENCo, due to roll out with other staff also delivering coaching.</td>
<td>Coachees briefed by coaching team on the SFCP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary 1 (US1)</td>
<td>Coaches received two days coaching training. Coachees did not attend the training.</td>
<td>Timetabled weekly.</td>
<td>Staff identified as having weak OFSTED ratings acted as coachees. Coaches were teachers with at least a good or outstanding rating.</td>
<td>SLT used half termly classroom observations based on OFSTED criteria to assess the progress of coachees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary 2 (S2)</td>
<td>Middle leaders attended two days coaching training. Members of the SLT also received individual professional coaching from the coaching team.</td>
<td>A peer SFCP was not implemented within the data gathering period as a result of contextual factors including the death of a young teacher involved in the coaching programme and pressures around the school being ‘encouraged’ to become an academy.</td>
<td>The plan had been for the middle leaders to draw on their coaching skills within their line management and also to use the approach within department and leadership meetings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 27: Extract from transcript of video coaching session

Coachee-I think a very next step might need to be the adults..
Coach-Right ok
Coachee-Because, those groups that are causing the bigger part of the problem. The other group, the independent groups although they are a bit slow at getting there do start to make their way there and do start moving their way to the carpet but it is those groups that tend to hold us up. So I think maybe the adults and I would tend to, I’m just thinking now that maybe I need to change the way I give my timings, rather than saying we are going to be moving to the carpet or we need to be ready to finish at. In five minutes time...or two minutes time...but not to use the word ‘finish’ because maybe that’s giving the message to the adults and the children that
Coach-Oh yeah right..
Coachee-Maybe I need to say ‘we need to continue our learning on the carpet’ and say ‘continue learning’ rather than finish.
Coach-Oooh yeah that’s interesting isn’t it
Coachee-I hadn’t thought of that but maybe its actually giving the message that our learning’s finished, if you say finish your learning..
Coach-Yeah right I can see what you’re saying..
Coachee-And maybe the learning partners are thinking oh they haven’t finished so I’m going to keep them and I’m not going to send them to the carpet.
Coach-Right well that interesting isn’t it because what in your...actually the first thing I have written down in your list of what you want adults and children to recognise is that it’s a continuation of learning and what you’re saying there is that even that subtle use of language..might be......a stumbling block for them seeing that it’s a continuation of learning.
Coachee-Yeah, it’s not until now that I have thought about it, is I’m pretty sure is, most of the time I say things like ‘you need to finish the thing that you are doing’, ‘ you need to finish your sentence’, ‘you need to finish the learning you are doing at your table, and start moving to the carpet’....and perhaps it’s that word finish that maybe I just need to say ‘we need to move our learning and continue it on the carpet’.
Appendix 28: Literature Review.

Note: This literature review has already been marked separately from the examination of this thesis. It is included here for completeness.

Literature review

The aim of this literature review is to provide a critical account of the literature surrounding teacher coaching interventions, with particular consideration being given to solution focused and other psychological models of coaching. In addition considering will be given to research the literature and debates surrounding coaching interventions in all domains.

The articles which are highlighted within this review were located using academic search engines such as Psych Articles, EBSCO and JSTOR. As coaching interventions cross disciplinary boundaries care was taken to vary search terms. For instance in order to identify models of coaching which target senior leaders such as Head Teachers, the term ‘executive coaching’ was used when searching the business literature. Other key words and phrases I searched for include ‘coaching psychology’ ‘teacher coaching’ ‘educational coaching’, ‘solution focused coaching’ and ‘goal attainment coaching’. Other materials highlighted within this review were located by searching the internet using these same key words and phrases. I also requested policy and programme documents relating to teacher coaching from the Local Authority where my thesis research is due to take place.

When discussing the outcome literature surrounding coaching interventions, only those models which are underpinned by a clear psychological theoretical basis have been included. ‘Coaching’ interventions without a theoretical basis have been excluded. The debate surrounding such issues regarding the theory base of coaching interventions will be considered in a later section of this review.

Coaching: A Definition?

At present there is no universally agreed definition of ‘coaching’, which perhaps reflects the fact that there are large differences in models of coaching both between and within fields (Cavanagh & Palmer, 2011;Grant, 2011). For instance there are differences in terms of the aims of the coaching, the way the coaching is negotiated, the identity of the person being coached (the coachee),...
the theoretical basis and even the duration of the coaching sessions (Stewart et al. 2008).

Attempts at defining coaching are varied but have included a focus on what coaching involves, for instance it has been claimed that coaching is a means of improving performance through ‘facilitation’ (Downey, 2003) ‘assisting’ (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002) and ‘instruction’ (Parsloe, 1992). Others definitions focus on highlighting who coaching is aimed at, for instance Bluckert (2005) claims coaching is for non clinical populations, that is people without serious mental health issues. According to Stern (2004) making sense of what coaching ‘is’ requires the separation of different forms of coaching, for instance distinguishing between ‘executive coaching’, ‘life coaching’, ‘career coaching’ ‘performance coaching’ and ‘legacy coaching’, to name but a few.

Within the field of education the term ‘coaching’ is currently used to refer to a range of practices (Grant et al., 2010). Most frequently cited within the research literature are models of peer coaching which often involve the sharing of best practice and curriculum knowledge (Ackland, 1991; Gray & Meyer, 1997; Shidler, 2009; Veenman, De Laat & Staring, 2006; Veenman & Denessen, 2001; Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen & Bolhuis, 2007).

Also highlighted within the literature, although less frequently, are articles which report on the use of external executive coaches (not necessarily teachers) being bought in to support the development of executive leaders, such as Head Teachers (Allan, 2007; Contreras, 2008).

However in line with coaching in other domains many of the models marketed as ‘coaching’, within the field of education do not appear to be underpinned by a clear theoretical basis (Grant et al., 2010).

Psychologists have argued that in light of this there is a need to distinguish between coaching and those models of coaching which are underpinned by psychological theory and techniques (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007; Palmer & Whybrow, 2006). Indeed within the British Psychological Society (BPS) a ‘special group’ for coaching psychology has been formed, which promotes coaches adhering to a set of ethical standards and advocates the use of models of coaching underpinned by psychological theory (coaching psychology). This group have proposed the following definition of coaching psychology:

“Coaching Psychology is for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in adult
learning and psychological approaches” (O’Riordan & O’Broin, 2002, paragraph 1).

This definition differs from others in that it accounts for the aim of coaching interventions and also highlights the importance of a coaching interventions being underpinned by a psychological theoretical basis. It is these ‘psychological’ models of coaching which are the focus of this literature review.

Coaching Psychology

The BPS coaching group are not alone in their view that psychology has an important role to play in the development of the field of coaching. Indeed some of the most eminent coaching researchers have argued that coaching is a form of applied positive psychology and that psychology and psychologists have much to contribute to the development of an evidence based coaching profession (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007; Palmer & Cavanagh, 2006).

In particular it has been claimed that knowledge of change processes, awareness of mental health issues and of ethical boundaries make are important skills which coaching psychologists are able to drawn on as a result of their psychology backgrounds (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). Nevertheless at present there is no requirement for coaches to have any formal training, psychological or otherwise.

These concerns surrounding the training and skill level of coaches are particularly worrying when considered in combination with claims that for some the boundaries between coaching and therapeutic interventions are unclear (Bachkirova, 2008; Hart, Blattner & Leipsie, 2001: Maxwell, 2009).

This is of particular relevance given that, contrary to claims that coaching is for those without mental health issues (Bluckert, 2005), research has in fact shown that many of the people being coached experience clinically significant mental health problems (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007; Spence & Grant, 2007). This highlights that there may be ethical issues relating to how coaches, particularly those with no training in psychology, are able to distinguish between their role as a ‘coach’ without moving into the remit of ‘therapist’ (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007; Griffiths & Campbell, 2008; Maxwell, 2009).

In light of this it has been argued that in addition to the development of a clear definition of ‘coaching’ there is also a need to develop clearer frameworks for coaching practice (Bennett & Monsen, 2011). It has been proposed that such
frameworks should draw on and even add to the existing psychological literature around generating change (Grant, 2011).
Fortunately such criticisms are beginning to be addressed and within the research literature there have emerged models of coaching which build on the principles of: Positive Psychology (Biswas Diener & Dean, 2007; Grant & Cavanagh, 2007), Cognitive Behavioural approaches (Ducharme, 2004; Edgerton & Palmer, 2005; Palmer & Gyllensten, 2008), Psychodynamic approaches (Kilburg, 2000), Goal theory, Systemic theory, Change theory (Cavanagh & Grant, 2007; Grant, 2011) and Critical/Accessible Dialogue (Cameron & Monsen, 1998; Monsen & Cameron, 2002)
In addition there have emerged a number of coaching frameworks which have adopted a Solution Focused approach (SFA) (Greene & Grant, 2003; Grant et al, 2010; O’Connell, 2004; O’Connell & Palmer, 2008; Palmer, 2007; Spence, Cavanagh & Grant, 2008; Williams, Palmer & O’Connell, 2011). Such models and their application to the field of education are of particular concern to this literature review and will therefore be considered in further detail within the following section of this review.

**Solution Focused Approaches to Coaching**

SFAs originated within the field of family therapy (Rhodes & Ajmal, 2004). Within this context de Shazer and his colleagues attempted to identify the difference, which ‘made the difference’ (de Shazer & Berg, 1997).
These therapists found that key turning points seemed to be not when the client and therapist were discussing the problem but when they were discussing solutions. In light of this SFAs arose based on the overarching principle that focusing on the dimensions of the problem is not necessary for the development of solutions (de Shazer, 1985).
It is this principle of focusing on solutions and not problems which has been strongly advocated by eminent coaching psychologists (Grant & O’Connor, 2010). Other key principles of SFAs are that it is presumed that people want change to happen, that they have the resources within them to make these changes and that at least part of the solution is already happening (Kelly & Bluestone-Miller, 2009; Rhodes & Ajmal, 2004).
These principles have shaped the development of particular solution focused questions and scaling exercises, which have now been utilised and adapted for use in a variety of contexts, including schools (Kim & Franklin, 2009; Rhodes &
Ajmal, 2004). Such questions and scales focus on ‘preferred futures’, ‘best hopes’ and ‘exception finding’ (see Greene & Grant, 2003, and Rhodes & Ajmal, 2004, for a detailed introduction to SFA’s and their application to coaching in particular).

With regards to teacher coaching there exist a number of solution focused coaching frameworks which have practical and structural differences but all build on the aforementioned solution focused principles and assumptions.

One such solution focused coaching framework, which is often cited with the research literature is the ‘Working on What Works’ (WOWW) model (Kelly, Kim & Franklin, 2008). This model has been developed and used widely within the United States and aims to promote positive change for teachers and pupils by using solution focused questioning and structured solution focused observations within classrooms (Kelly & Bluestone Miller, 2009).

Another example of a SFA to teacher coaching has been reported by Grant et al (2010) and Spence, Cavanagh & Grant (2008). These researchers have applied solution focused and cognitive behavioural principles to the ‘GROW’ framework for coaching (Goal, Reality, Options, Ways Forward). The GROW model arose within the field of business (Whitmore, 2002) and is claimed to be one of the most commonly used frameworks for structuring coaching conversations (Edgerton & Palmer, 2005). It may be argued that as GROW is already popular within the industry it may provide a structured framework to which coaches can begin applying coaching models underpinned by a clear theoretical basis.

Whilst SFA are increasingly popular, particularly within the field of coaching concerns have arisen regarding the fact that the research evidence supporting their use is in its infancy (Gingerich & Eisengart, 2000). Indeed questions were previously raised as to whether formal research ‘fitted’ with the aims and individuality of SFA (de Shazer & Berg, 1997). These authors argued that in the search for effectiveness, the focus on clients and their subjective experience of the SFA could be overshadowed.

Nevertheless as pressure to deliver evidence-based practice has increased, research into the effectiveness of SFA has emerged. For instance a recent study by Gingerich and Eisengart (2000) reviewed empirically based studies into the effectiveness of SFA. These authors concluded that there is early tentative evidence that SFA may be effective. However these authors and others have conceded that methodological limitations such as small sample
sizes and the use of largely within subjects research designs mean that the picture is far from clear (Gingerich, Kim, Stams and Macdonald, 2011). With regards to the application of SFA to coaching interventions a small number of studies have recently emerged within the research literature. Of particular relevance is a study by Coaching Psychologists Grant and O’Connor (2010). These researchers compared a problem focused and a SFA to coaching. Whilst both models were associated with some positive outcomes the SFA was particularly associated with increased levels of goal attainment and self-efficacy amongst coachees. Furthermore the coachees in the solution focused coaching group also showed increased levels of understanding of the problem situation. These authors concluded that in order to be effective coaches should incorporate solution focused questioning within their coaching sessions.

With regards to teacher coaching, a recent study by Grant et al. (2010) reported on further positive outcomes following a Solution focused cognitive behavioural approach. These outcomes will be discussed in further detail within the next section of this review.

However it is important to highlight that as this study involved a combined solution focused and cognitive behavioural approach, the possibility of drawing firm conclusions as to whether the solution focused elements were independently associated with particular outcomes is limited. Overall the research base surrounding SFA’s, particularly SFA’s to coaching and teacher coaching is in its infancy. This highlights that further research is needed before firm conclusions as to their effectiveness of these approaches can be drawn.

Unfortunately the concerns regarding the research base of coaching interventions are not isolated to models underpinned by SFA’s. Instead concerns have been raised regarding the fact there is presently limited methodologically sound research into the outcomes associated with coaching intervention in general (Bennett & Monsen, 2011). Indeed it has been argued that coaching practice is currently running ahead of the research base (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006; Grant et al., 2010).
Coaching-the research evidence

Does coaching work?

It has been argued that the lack of agreed definition of ‘coaching’ and differences between the aims and structure of coaching interventions may have acted as barriers to effectively researching outcomes (Stewart et al., 2008). Another possible explanation for the limited research into coaching outcomes may be that the lack of training and regulation within the industry perhaps has resulted in a profession lacking the necessary skills required in order to carry out rigorous outcome evaluations (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). Indeed it has been argued that the ‘research’ literature surrounding coaching has previously been dominated by accounts from practitioners advocated coaching interventions, whilst failing to provide detail of any rigorously measurable outcomes associated with their use (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

Where research into the outcomes of coaching interventions has taken place critics have raised concerns regarding the use of small sample sizes of participants and unvalidated unreliable sampling methods (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007).

Further criticisms centre around the fact that ‘key’ outcome measures such ‘Goal Monitoring’ are largely absent from the coaching outcome research literature as are studies which have looked at the long term outcomes of coaching (exceptions are Libri & Kemp, 2006, and Spence, 2007).

With regards to psychological models of teacher coaching the research base is even more limited than that surrounding coaching interventions in other fields (Bennett & Monsen, 2011; Suggett, 2006). This is not to say that evaluations are not taking place but if they are then they are certainly not being published within the research literature.

For instance within the field of education there are examples of Educational Psychologists having developed (LDP, 2011) and even tentatively evaluated (e.g Bennett, 2011) psychological models of teacher coaching. However at present these models and the findings of evaluations have not published more widely than within the local authority in which the interventions are used (e.g Bennett, 2011), if at all.

Interestingly a survey of EPNET users (an electronic forum for EPs which has over 1000 members), carried out by the author of this review in September 2011, identified there are at least five unpublished models of teacher coaching
which are currently used by EPs, within schools in England. At present the majority of these models are absent from the research literature (one exception is Monsen and Cameron's (2002) problem solving framework). In addition these coaching models (including that of Monsen and Cameron) have yet to be formally evaluated, or at least if they have been evaluated the results of these evaluations have not been published.

Despite this teacher coaching interventions are currently being marketed as tools to improve standards of ‘teaching and learning’ (LDP, 2011). Whilst the lack of published research, backing up such claims, perhaps results from time and resource restrictions relevant to the work of the EP’s in question it adds further weight to the claim that with regards to coaching practice is currently running ahead of the research base (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006).

In light of these issues a number of eminent coaching psychologists, have sought to begin carrying out and publishing rigorous coaching outcome studies, which aim to broaden the research base around coaching interventions whilst addressing some of the limitations of previous research (Carey, Philippon & Cummings, 2011).

The outcomes which have emerged from these studies will be considered in detail within the following section of this review. Many of the outcomes link to psychological theory, perhaps reflecting the claims that psychological theory has an important role to play in the development of an evidence based field of coaching psychology (Grant, 2006).

Given the limited research into the outcomes of solution focused teacher coaching models, the research relating to such models will be considered alongside research relating to other psychological models of coaching and teacher coaching.

**What does the research show?**

As previously highlighted within this review coaching interventions have been proposed to ‘improve’ performance (Rhodes, & Beneicke., 2002; Whitmore, 2002). It is therefore of little surprise that ‘improved performance’ is one of the outcomes which coaching researchers have begun attempting to measure.

However such research presents challenges when considered in light of the fact that the objectives of coaching can differ greatly between and within fields (Stewart et al., 2008). Even once the objectives and hoped for ‘performance’ indicator has been identified there are further issues relating to deciding how to
measure this, for instance whether to use self-report questionnaires, ratings made by independent observers or colleagues or whether concrete measurements are possible e.g. increased output, raised student attainment etc (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006).

One particular means of measuring performance which it has been argued may provide a somewhat objective measure of performance outcomes following a coaching intervention is ‘Goal Attainment Scaling’ (Spence, 2007).

**Goal attainment**

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) originally emerged within the mental health sector (Kiresuk & Sherman, 1968) but has now been adapted and used to evaluate the outcomes of interventions within a range of contexts (Dunsmuir, Brown, Lyadurai, & Monsen, 2009). For instance it has been used to evaluate the use of self-regulation strategies (Wehmeyer et al., 2003), and the outcomes of health interventions (Jones, Leech, Paterson, Common & Metcalf, 2006) and psychotherapy (Shefler, Canetti & Wiseman, 2001). GAS has also been advocated as a means of measuring the effectiveness of Educational Psychology Services (Frederickson, 2002).

With regards to coaching it has been proposed that GAS provides a framework for measuring coachees progress towards a predetermined goal, in a way which may allow comparison between studies (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). In addition it has been suggested that the use of GAS within coaching sessions may itself facilitate goal attainment through prompting coachees to engage in focused behavioural monitoring and action planning (Schlosser, 2004; Spence, 2007). Despite such claims and the fact the coaching has been proposed to be a goal focused process (Grant, 2006) to date only a few studies have used GAS as a coaching outcome measure following coaching interventions.

A search of the literature in Psych Info in March 2011 using the terms ‘goal attainment coaching’ and ‘goal attainment scaling coaching’ produced only 11 results, seven of these articles were published by one research team based at the ‘Coaching Psychology Unit’ in Sydney (Australia).

For instance Grant (2010) has published a number of studies which involved the use of a specific model of GAS, based on the work of Sheldon and Elliot (1998) and Emmons(1986). This model requires coachees to set three goals and to rate these in terms of their pre-coaching success in attaining the goals and the
perceived difficulty of the goals. Coachees are then required to make a final rating of the level of goal attainment, following the coaching intervention. A particular strength of this approach is that it takes account of the impact of difficulty on progress and provides quantitative data relating to goal attainment scores.

Using this approach to GAS it has been found that solution focused, cognitive behavioural coaching interventions were associated with increased goal attainment following executive business coaching (Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009) and ‘life coaching’ (Grant, 2003). One criticism of these studies is that the use of within subjects designs means that it is difficult to determine whether or not the changes in GAS ratings may have resulted from factors besides the coaching.

A number of further criticisms have also been made regarding the models of GAS used within these studies. In particular Spence (2007) has highlighted that by relying on self-report ratings the researchers did not gain an objective measure of whether the reported levels of goal attainment, reflected the reality of the outcomes. Instead the self-report data may have been impacted by factors such as the coachee feeling pressured to report a positive outcome or perhaps showing a poor level of insight regarding their own performance in relation to the goals.

Within the field of education a study which attempted to increase the level of objectivity by measuring goal attainment using a combination of GAS and ratings made by colleagues was carried out by Grant et al. (2010). In this study, which adopted a randomised control approach, it was found that teachers who had been involved in a solution focused, cognitive behavioural coaching intervention rated their leadership abilities as having significantly improved. The rates of goal attainment in the coaching group were found to be significantly higher than in the control group. Although interestingly the increased ratings of leadership skills amongst coachees were not backed up by ratings made by their colleagues or managers. Such a finding highlights that the coachees ratings may not have reflected observable changes to their leadership skills, as perceived by their colleagues.

These results add weight to the concerns raised by Spence (2007) that it is important to develop measures of coaching outcomes which do not rely solely on self reported goal attainment ratings completed by coachees. Nevertheless
to my knowledge the study by Grant et al. (2010) is the first study, which has used GAS as an outcome measure following teacher coaching interventions. Given that this study took place in an independent girls school in Australia it is clear that further research is required before firm conclusions and generalisations should be drawn as to the implications of the findings.

Interestingly with regards to teacher coaching at present there has been no consideration of pupils perceptions of their teachers levels of goal attainment. This is of particular relevance when considered in light of the fact that coaching interventions have been marketed as tools to improve standards of teaching and learning (LDP, 2011). There exist a number of measures, which may be used in combination with GAS which could provide an indication of whether pupils perceptions of the outcomes of the coaching intervention are in line with those reported by the coachee.

For instance the ‘My Class Inventory’ (MCI) is a simple self-report questionnaire, used frequently in previous research studies (Sink & Spencer, 2005). Furthermore there is published research relating to its validity and reliability (Diamantes, 2002; Fraser, 1982). It has been claimed that the MCI is an important tool for gathering information on subtle aspects of classroom life which can have a sizeable effect on learning (Wright, Gallagher, Seamus & Lombardi, 1991).

This could provide a useful tool in addressing the fact that at present there is a lack of research which has triangulated GAS ratings with other measures, including the perceptions of colleagues and, of particular relevance to teacher coaching, the perceptions of pupils.

One further issues relating to the use of GAS as an outcome measure is that it is important to highlight that its use as an outcome measure may prove unpopular amongst some coaches. For instance Spence (2007) has himself acknowledged that the directive nature of GAS may not sit comfortably with coaches whose practice is underpinned by a Solution Focused or Rogerian approach. Indeed it may be argued that introducing formal goal setting to coaching sessions for the purpose of research may significantly alter the process, which the researchers are aiming to assess.

Despite such challenges it remains the case that GAS may provide a framework for developing a clearer assessment of at least one hoped for outcome of coaching interventions (goal attainment). However the use of GAS within the
field of coaching, is in its infancy and further research, exploration and indeed adaptation of GAS will be important next steps for coaching psychologists and researchers (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007; Spence, 2007).

In addition to focusing on GAS ratings a further outcome variable which is beginning to receive attention within the coaching literature and which is based on psychological theory, is ‘self-efficacy’.

**Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy has been defined as the strength of a person’s belief in their ability to succeed (Bandura, 1997) and has been the subject to decades of empirical research. Such research has repeatedly found that self-efficacy ratings are associated with performance in a wide range of domains (Bandura & Locke, 2003), including within educational (Zajacova, Lynch & Espenshade, 2005) and organisational contexts (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

In light of such research it has been argued that if coaching interventions are an effective means of improving performance then they too must be having an impact on important psychological variables, such as the coachees sense of self-efficacy (Moen & Allgood, 2009).

Within the field of business there is emerging evidence of increased self-efficacy in individuals who took part in coaching interventions in the field of business (Baron & Morin, 2010; Leonard-Cross, 2010; Moen & Allgood, 2009). Such evidence includes coaching approaches, which were underpinned by a SFA. Indeed Grant and O’Connor (2010) found that both solution focused and, to a lesser degree, problem focused coaching interventions were associated with increased self-efficacy in coachees.

With regards to the field of education it has been claimed that when teachers have a high sense of instructional efficacy they not only believe more in their students ability to succeed but they also devote more time and effort to their teaching (Shidler, 2009). As is the case with self-efficacy research in other domains, there is a significant amount of research to support such claims of enhanced ‘performance’ in those with higher levels of self-efficacy (Pajares, 1997).

However at present only a small number of studies have been published which have specifically considered self-efficacy ratings as an outcome variable following psychological teacher coaching interventions.
One such study was carried out by Ross (1992). This researcher attempted to assess pupils’ academic performance following a teacher coaching intervention. He found that student achievement (performance) was higher in the classes of teachers who reported engaging in more frequently interactions with a coach and who had a high sense of self-efficacy (Ross, 1992). Although interestingly these researchers also found that coaching and self-efficacy ratings were not associated, thus suggesting that the relationship between the two is not clear cut.

Another study by Goker (2006) found a teacher coaching intervention to be associated with increased self-efficacy ratings in foreign language teachers (Goker, 2006). Although given that the participants in this study were all foreign language teachers in Cyprus, it may be argued the possibility of drawing generalisations from the findings is somewhat limited.

A further study which attempted to assess the relationship between a solution focused teacher coaching (SFTC) intervention and teachers sense of self-efficacy was carried out by Bennett in 2011. This researcher found that the coaching intervention was significantly associated with teacher self-efficacy ratings. However it is important to highlight the results of this study have not been reported or published formally, have not been subject to peer review and must therefore be treated with caution.

Given the calls for an increased use of empirically validated research tools by coaching psychologists (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007) it is somewhat surprising that so few outcome studies have used self-efficacy ratings as an outcome variable. Whilst this may reflect the fact there has been debate surrounding the validity of efficacy measures (Pajares, 1997), recent advances in the field has seen the development of more robust, reliable measures such as the ‘Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale’ (Tschannen-Moran & Wolfolk Hoy, 2001). Such measures should be utilised by those attempting to develop the research base surrounding coaching interventions.

Alongside a lack of focus on outcome variables such as self-efficacy a further outcome measures which is yet to receive serious consideration within the coaching literature are the experiences of those being coached.

**Qualitative measures-views of those being coached**

At present there is a significant lack of qualitative research which has taken into account the perceptions of the people being coached or those delivering
coaching interventions (Bennett & Monsen, 2011). This perhaps reflects the fact that Grant and others have frequently called for an increased focus on objectivity and rigour in building the evidence base surrounding coaching. Whilst this is certainly an important consideration, it may be argued that well conducted qualitative research studies have much to add to the coaching literature, particularly when considered in combination with quantitative measures.

An example of such a study was carried out by Simkins, Coldwell, Caillau, Finlayson & Morgan (2006). These researchers used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate a coaching programme aimed at middle leader teachers. The use of qualitative measures within this study allowed the researchers to gain an insight into the coaching process, which may have been missed if purely quantitative measures were used.

For instance through the interviews it emerged that there were large differences in the perceived quality of coaching sessions and the commitment of the coaches and the coachees to the process. Coaches also described in detail the reasons for having become involved in the process in the first place and discussed barriers they had faced within the coaching process and the impact these had on their decisions regarding their future as a coach. Such data provides a valuable insight into the coaching process and the experiences of coaches and coachees, which is important for shaping the future of the coaching profession.

A further gap in the research literature which is particularly important in terms of teacher coaching interventions is that there has been no consideration of the impact of the coaching interventions on the children whom the coachees teach. Given that coaching interventions aim to ‘improve performance’, it may be argued that gathering pupils perceptions of their educational experience could provide further insight into the outcomes of teacher coaching interventions. It may be argued that potentially important information could be missed if focus is placed purely on quantitative measures, for instance achievement data.

Overall it may be argued that studies which make use of qualitative data gathering measures have an important contribution to make in the development of the research base surrounding coaching interventions in general and teacher coaching interventions in particular.
Such research has the potential to shed light on the perceptions and experiences of those taking part in coaching interventions, those involved in their delivery and those who may be impacted by any changes to practice (e.g pupils).

**Conclusion**

The use of coaching interventions within fields such as education is on the increase (Simkins et al, 2006). However with regards to teacher coaching and coaching in other domains there remains a lack of clarity as to what coaching ‘is’, and which skills and training are necessary to become a coach. Furthermore there are issues relating to the lack of regulation of the industry and the use of models of coaching which do not have theoretical underpinnings. Even when models of coaching do have a theoretical basis there currently remains limited methodologically sound research assessing the outcomes associated with their use. For instance coaching models underpinned by SFAs are widely used but the research base surrounding them is in its infancy. Psychologists, including those from the BPS special group for Coaching Psychology are beginning to attempt to address these issues and to develop a research base surrounding coaching. The majority of this research has concerned models of coaching used within the field of business only a handful of studies have considered the outcomes associated with psychological teacher coaching interventions (e.g Grant et al., 2010).

It is therefore of little surprise that there have been calls from Educational Psychologists (EP’s) for an increased focus on investigating the outcomes associated with psychological models of teacher coaching (Bennett & Monsen, 2011). It is important that such research takes account of models of coaching which have been developed by EP’s and are currently being marketed to schools but which have not been formally published. Through using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data gathering measures researchers will be able to maintain a sense of rigour and objectivity whilst also gaining insight into the experiences of coaches and coachee’s (Bennett & Monsen, 2011). Such research will help to build the research base surrounding coaching and teacher coaching interventions. Furthermore it will help to address the limitation that at present there is a significant lack of well conducted qualitative research into the outcomes associated with psychological coaching interventions in any domain.
In conclusion the research base surrounding coaching interventions is in its infancy. Increased research is needed if coaching psychology is to gain credibility as an area of evidence based practice (Stewart et al., 2008). In particular research is needed which considers the outcomes of psychological coaching and teacher interventions, including SFA’s in a range of contexts. It is important that future research makes use of outcome measures using tools such as GAS and self-efficacy questionnaires, whilst also considering the experiences of the coachees and the coaches. With regards to teacher coaching interventions it is also important that the views of pupils are taken into account in future research studies. It may be argued that such research has the potential to contribute to raising standards of coaching practice and developing a degree of professionalism within the field.

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