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ABSTRACT

COACHING AND BEING COACHED: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE
EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATION LEADERS IN THE FLORIDA
CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

by

Arne P. Nielsen

Chair: Randy J. Siebold

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: COACHING AND BEING COACHED: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATION LEADERS IN THE FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Name of researcher: Arne P. Nielsen

Name and degree of faculty chair: Randy J. Siebold, PhD

Date completed: December 2020

Problem

The Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists administration was concerned about its effectiveness as an evangelistic organization due to changes in societal norms. They felt a need for a paradigm shift to keep ministry relevant to its membership and to find new methods to reach people for Christ. There was an intentional focus on developing a model for effective ministry by equipping pastors and educators with new and different skills for the purpose of effecting personal and organizational transformation. For change to occur, it was decided to put in place a support system for leaders utilizing co-active coaching as the delivery mechanism for equipping and reeducation its key leaders.

The Florida Conference has been intentional about developing leaders of transformation. To effect change, and to properly equip and re-educate its leaders, workshops and seminars introduce leaders to a process or system of support called “Leadership Training.” A framework for these trainings is the executive coaching model, known as Co-Active Coaching, and referred to as “Peer Coaching” in the Florida Conference due to its uniqueness of training and delivery. Through the Leadership Training process, leaders are taught skills to move them toward confidence in their leadership ability, to make them accountable to themselves for their dreams and vision, and to allow them the vulnerability to engage in the coaching process. Considerable investment of time and financial resources are provided to ensure the success of these leadership workshops and seminars, and exposure to the perceived benefits of coaching and being coached. To date, there has been no study to see if the coaching initiative in the Florida Conference is producing the desired outcome of restoration and transformation of its ministry and education leaders.

Method

The research design chosen for this study followed the outline and protocols written by Bloomberg, Volpe, and Creswell. This study was based on a phenomenological approach, utilizing narrative inquiry through semi-structured interviews, in a face-to-face setting at a location chosen by the participant. These methods were chosen because the participants have all shared similar leadership training and coaching experiences in the Florida Conference. The sample size was eleven education leaders. A constructivist approach was used to allow for flexible guidelines, interpretation, and inquiry that may be influenced by the researcher.

In addition, this study utilized a hermeneutic phenomenological approach because it provided a clear method to understand the participants lived experiences and an endeavor to describe meaning to that lived experience as it relates to the broader context of their personal and professional lives. Also, the multi-case-study research method was chosen because it simplifies and brings understanding to an issue, it is focused, it has a time frame and boundaries, it can extend the experience, and it can add strength to what is already known from previous research.

Results

The study revealed that participants recognized the importance of peer coaching, perceived coaching as a safe space for personal discovery combining theory and practice, identified some drawbacks of the coaching training process, experienced significant benefits to the coaching training experience, and unexpectedly found the visioning exercise and subsequent core values assignment having a major impact on their relationships during their tenure as leaders.

Conclusions

The study affirmed the intended outcomes of the peer coaching training. The model is easily replicated and transferable. Outcomes are optimized by a prior knowledge of coaching skills and theory. Some modalities of coaching should be continued for leaders wanting to affect personal and professional transformation. Coaching skills can be used in both professional and personal interactions. Tertiary institutions should consider offering courses that support coaching skills. Peer coaching can serve as a framework for leadership development and support.

Andrews University

School of Education

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EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATION LEADERS IN THE FLORIDA
CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Arne P. Nielsen

December 2020

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December 2020

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I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.”
Psalm 16:2 (NIV)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

In this study, I attempt to understand how leadership training through the medium of Co-Active Coaching has influenced education leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. As a participant, coachee, and subsequently a coach and trainer in the Florida Conference training, this experience became life changing and transformational for me. Upon reflection, it is very clear that this journey provided me with needed skills that I did not fully realize I was lacking, skills that I had not acquired in any of my previous studies and degrees. It was through active participation in the leadership training process, learning how to coach and being formally coached, that I gained insight into the application of certain methodologies and skills. It was through this process that I was able to better see myself; to better see others; to learn different ways to respond; to maximize my strengths; to improve all my relationships; and to achieve my goals and dreams. My casual conversations and interactions with others who had gone through this training lead me to believe that it was also life changing for my friends and colleagues.

A white paper published through the Coaches Training Institute by Ann Betz (2012) titled, *Co-Active Coaching and the Brain: Neuroscience Research Supports the Efficacy of the Co-Active Model*, concludes that there is scientific support for benefits to participating in Co-Active Coaching. Co-Active Coaching refers to the fundamental

nature of a coaching relationship in which the coach and client are active collaborators. In Co-Active Coaching, this relationship is an alliance between two equals for the purpose of meeting the client's needs (Whitworth, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 1998). Betz (2012) indicates that the skills taught and used in Co-Active Coaching "profoundly help clients develop positive new neural networks, respond more calmly to stress, make choices more easily, and access much more of their creativity. This inevitably leads to more effective, successful, and fulfilling lives" (p. 2). There is ample evidence that there is a good return on investment through various forms of Coaching. For example

A landmark study commissioned by Right Management Consultants based in Philadelphia found a return-on-investment of dollars spent on executive coaching of nearly 600%. Executives engaged in coaching reported increases in productivity, improvement in relationships with direct reports and colleagues, and greater job satisfaction. (a synopsis of Bolch, 2001, pp. 58–64, as cited in Shirk, 2005, p. 1)

Another study conducted by Metric Global on the coaching process in Fortune 500 companies discovered a 529% return from providing resources for coaching, in addition to other intangible benefits (Wilson, 2004). Other studies support significant improvements in manager and employee satisfaction, commitment, retention, and overall firm performance when coaching and 360-degree feedback processes are combined, rather than done alone (Luthans & Peterson, 2003; Thach, 2002). Finally, Wales notes that:

Coaching enables managers to translate personal learning and insight into improved effectiveness, improves retention, and increases the effectiveness of the links between self-development, management development and organizational effectiveness. (a synopsis of Wales, 2003, pp. 275–283, as cited in Shirk, 2005, p. 1)

These examples provide a solid rationale for organizations to provide the resources necessary to develop and implement coaching opportunities for its leaders.

Through experience and observation as vice president for education in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD), it is my belief that Adventist principals, head teachers, and other school leaders are overworked, stressed, experience greater challenges than ever before, are generally undercompensated, sometimes underappreciated, and live a life, out of balance. If our school leaders are out of balance our school system may also be affected. To effectively lead, education leaders need more skills today than ever before in order to have vibrant lives, vibrant schools, and the ability to lead change. Whitmore (2009) states that “change is the real job of every effective leader because change is about the present and future and not about the past” (p. 98).

Senge (2006) reminds us that for organizations to truly thrive and not just survive there must be radical rethinking of corporate philosophy. He emphasizes that the active force is the people within the organization. He implores institutional leaders to give up the old way of doing business and to understand “the almost sacredness of their responsibility for the lives of so many people . . . providing the enabling conditions for people to lead the most enriching lives they can” (p. 130). Coaching can provide school leaders with skills necessary to change direction if they want things to be different. Coaching can give school leaders the tools to live life from a creative rather than reactive point of view. Whitworth et al. (1998) stated, “In general they come to coaching because they want a better quality of life: more fulfillment, better balance, or a different process to accomplish their life desires” (p. 1). In their book *Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience*, Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy (2009) explain that:

Virtually every leader who makes it to the top of whatever pyramid he or she appears to be climbing does so by building on earlier experiences. The successful leaders are those who learn from earlier experiences, by reflecting on and analyzing them to help solve larger future challenges. (p. vi)

Coaching models allow the client the opportunity for personal growth and the freedom to build on earlier experiences, good or bad; time for reflection and renewal, all within a safe environment. This model provides the client with life skills that can be used both in and out of the workplace. It was Senge (2006) who describes the discipline of personal growth and learning as “personal mastery.” He goes on to state that “People with high levels of personal mastery are continually expanding their ability to create the results in life they truly seek” (p. 131). He believes that “the essence of personal mastery is learning how to generate and sustain creative tension in our lives” (p. 132). Anyone on the journey towards personal mastery needs to accept that they are in a constant learning mode and that they never arrive. Coaching is a vehicle that provides the opportunity for a coach to hold a client accountable on their journey towards personal mastery.

The goal of the Florida Conference leaders was to do ministry differently than how it had been conducted in the past. They needed leaders, at all levels of the organization, to effect the desired change and transformation, and to empower leaders with the skills to do so (Cauley, 2006). It was C. S. Lewis (1960) who wrote, “It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present, and you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad” (pp. 198–199). It has been my experience, that of my colleagues and school leaders, that we cannot afford to remain like that egg in the status quo. What we do is rather ordinary, honorable, and decent. But as leaders we aspire to something much greater for our schools, for learners, and for ourselves. The Florida Conference administration was determined to provide an opportunity for leaders to acquire desired skills so that they can become more than just

“an ordinary egg” with the desired outcome of “hatching and not going bad” and learning how to fly.

Statement of the Problem

The Florida Conference president, Michael Cauley, states,

The Florida Conference has long been considered a prosperous, evangelistic organization within the Adventist Church. However, it has ceased to be effective optimally because society has changed, and the ministry and leadership style of the organization is no longer relevant. There is a need for a paradigm shift among pastors, laity, and judicatory staff regarding how to perform effective ministry and church leadership. The New Testament model for church life and ministry is presented as the key to a revitalized church. Moving to this model involves a new way of thinking and doing on the part of both clergy and laity. Church leaders must be equipped to become agents of personal and organizational transformation. Equipping effective leaders of change requires a careful process with a system of support. This project contemplates developing leaders for transformation in order to lead the Adventist Church in Florida closer to the New Testament model of church life and mission. I will utilize personal coaching as the delivery system for this process of equipping and re-education. (Cauley, 2006, Abstract)

For several years, the Florida Conference has been intentional about developing leaders of transformation. To effect change, and to properly equip and re-educate its leaders, workshops and seminars introduce leaders to a process or system of support called “Leadership Training.” A framework for these trainings is the executive coaching model, known as Co-Active Coaching, and also referred to as peer coaching in the Florida Conference. Through the Leadership Training process, leaders are given skills to nurture and provide confidence in their leadership ability, to make them accountable to themselves for their dreams and vision, and to allow them the vulnerability to engage in the coaching process. Considerable investment of time and financial resources are provided to ensure the success of these leadership workshops and seminars, and exposure to the perceived benefits of coaching and being coached. To date, there has been no study

to see if the coaching initiative in the Florida Conference is producing the desired outcome of restoration and transformation of its ministry and education leaders. Thus, there is a need to know if Leadership Training and the peer coaching model has provided the requisite skills, methodologies, and knowledge for education leaders to benefit from engaging in the process, and in turn, effect personal, professional, and systemic change.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of education leaders of their experience of coaching or being coached during their participation in leadership training seminars provided by the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Research Question

This study was guided by the following research question:

How do Adventist education leaders describe the experience of coaching or being coached?

- a. What is the lived experience as a coach?
- b. What is the lived experience as a coachee?

Methodology

A qualitative research design based on a phenomenological approach, in a multi-case setting, and utilizing narrative inquiry was chosen for this study. A phenomenological study, as noted by Creswell (2007), “describes the meaning of several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (p. 57). In essence, the goal is to describe what all participants have in common in their shared experience (phenomenon). Creswell (2007) states that “the basic purpose of phenomenology is to

reduce the individual experience with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence” (p. 58). He then goes on to note that the objective of the researcher is to collect data from the participant who experienced the phenomena, and then “develops a composite description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals” (p. 58). Creswell, quoting Moustakas (1994), states that in phenomenology, “the description consist of “what” they experienced and “how” they experienced it.”

In addition, Caldwell states, as Pinnegar and Dynes (2006) suggest, “narrative can be both a method and the “phenomenon ” of study. As a method, it begins with the experiences expressed in lived and told stories of individuals” (p. 54). My expression of the findings of participants was a narrative as told to me by the participants and in turn, I use narrative to tell the story as noted by Caldwell (2007) “using paradigm thinking to create descriptions of themes that hold across stories (p. 54). In Narrative studies there are several approaches that can be used. I chose to use the personal experience approach, as it pertained to each participant’s journey into leadership development and peer coaching, getting a glimpse of their individual “private situation or communal folklore” as it pertained to leadership develop and more specifically “peer coaching” (p. 55).

The sample for this study includes Adventist education leaders who are employed or have been employed in the Florida Conference in a leadership position and have participated in Florida Conference leadership training workshops and seminars. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with eleven leaders, who were asked to describe what coaching and leadership skills were acquired that impacted personal change, professional change, systemic change, and how those skills impacted personal, professional, and systemic change. A hermeneutical approach to analysis was

implemented entwining codes and categories together. Thoughts and ideas generated through analytic memo writing were organized into recurring themes.

Conceptual Framework

Biologist Bernd Heinrich (1984) noted from his research on ants that “even carefully collected results can be misleading if the underlying context of assumptions is wrong” (p. 151). Miles and Huberman (1994) describe a conceptual framework as something that may be a visual or a written product, and can be defined as something that “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them” (p. 18).

The core idea for this study is peer coaching. For me, peer coaching became invaluable as someone who participated in leadership training programs for many years as a principal, superintendent, and vice-president for education, without coming away fully satisfied. Learning theories and contemporary strategies for leading organizations provided “quick” fixes. While I was fortunate to be mentored by some exceptional education leaders in the Adventist system my dream was to have a model of leadership in place that would-be life changing, not only for the organization, but also for me. When I participated in leadership training that involved peer coaching as the framework, it opened a whole new paradigm of accountability, responsibility, and confidence as an education leader. This training was designed to maximize experiential learning, one of the best way’s adults learn. Further, the aim of peer coaching training was to incorporate spiritual lessons derived from reading, stories, journaling, and research.

Aside from my own experience, this study is framed through research indicating that there is a benefit to coaching employees. Several researchers found that coaching in

organizations has helped to develop employee leadership skills, to provide skill sets for emerging leaders, and provides-a resource for leaders to work with employees (Shirk, 2005; Whitmore, 2009; Whitworth et al., 1998). This study was conducted from a Christian coaching perspective (Howard, 2012), looking at the coaching model through the lens of transforming the person, thereby providing an opportunity for education leaders to acquire skills needed to help change the person, an organization, and a system.

Significance of the Study

The Florida Conference attempted a paradigm shift in performing ministry and leadership by developing a system of support to develop leaders for transformation in their lives and their systems. The goal is for leaders to move the Adventist church in Florida closer to the New Testament model of church life and mission. Integral to church life and ministry, are Adventist education leaders, who must have adequate skills to effect systemic change in the Adventist education system. There must be a process for leaders to acquire the necessary skills. The leaders of the Florida Conference determined that through leadership training and the process of being coached and coaching, leaders will realize personal growth and can thus effect change. The significance of this study will explore what the benefits to coaching are, what aspects of peer coaching are most useful, what is the experience of those being coached, and if this model of coaching can be replicated to support other Adventist and Christian leadership training models.

Definition of Terms

Administrator: One who leads and manages a business, government agency, school, etc. For the purposes of this study, it is used synonymously with education leader, principal, superintendent, and vice-president for education.

Adventist Education System: The second-largest Christian school system in the world, and the largest protestant school system in the world.

Client: See coachee.

Coachee: One who receives coaching, may also be referred to as the client.

Coaching: “To tutor, train, give hints to, to prime with facts” (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 2011). It is also “unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them” (Whitmore, 2009, p. 10). “Professional Coaching is an ongoing professional relationship that helps people produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, businesses, and organizations. Through the process of coaching, clients deepen their learning, improve their performance, and enhance their quality of life” (International Coaching Federation, n.d.).

Coaching Skills: Skills taught to leaders to assist in driving change, managing complexity, building top performing teams, and maintaining a strong personal foundation to thrive under the most challenging conditions. Some skills include listening, questioning, paraphrasing, empathy, feedback, confronting, providing feedback, etc.

Co-Active Coaching: The term co-active refers to the fundamental nature of a coaching relationship in which the coach and client are active collaborators. In Co-Active Coaching, this relationship is an alliance between two equals for the purpose of meeting the client’s needs (Whitworth et al., 1998). The term “Peer Coaching” is being used in the Florida Conference and is synonymous with Co-Active Coaching.

Conference: A regional administrative structure in the Seventh-day Adventist (Adventist) church responsible for local churches and local school’s operation which

draws boundaries of administrative responsibility for the Adventist church (Ledesma, 2011).

Education Leader: See administrator.

Educator: One who provides instruction to a person or persons.

Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: The organizational body of the Adventist church for the state of Florida, United States.

Leadership: The process of influencing individuals and an organizational group toward accomplishing its goals (Hughes et al., 2009).

North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD): “A sub-entity of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which oversees the Church’s work in the United States, Canada, French possessions of St. Pierre and Miquelon, the British overseas territory of Bermuda, the US territories in the Pacific of Guam, Wake Island, Northern Mariana Islands, and three states in free association with the United States—Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia” (<https://www.nadadventist.org>).

Principal: The person who is considered the highest-ranking official of a school operation.

Seventh-day Adventist Church: A Protestant Christian denomination distinguished by its observance of Saturday, the seventh day of the week in Christian and Jewish calendars, as Sabbath, and by its emphasis on the imminent Second Coming (advent) of Jesus Christ.

Transformational Leader: A leadership style in which the enhancement of the individual and collective problem-solving capacities of the organizational members; such

capacities are exercised in the identification of goals to be achieved and practices to be used in their achievement (Burns, 1978).

Limitations of the Study

There are always occurrences in a study that are out of the researcher's control. It is important to identify limitations and delimitations in the design of a research study to ensure validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Miller, 1990). The important limitations that I perceive to have influenced my study are:

1. A built-in bias due to my experience with leadership training and the coaching experience, however, the disadvantage of this potential bias is outweighed by the advantage of my own experience of being coached, coaching, and leading leadership seminars, knowing that the objective and desire for the qualitative researcher is to decrease the "distance" between himself and the participants being studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1988, p. 94).
2. The research depends greatly on my interpretation of the data and on how it is presented.
3. The willingness of the participant to be vulnerable when questions are presented.
4. Participants may have had significant passage/lapse of time between leadership training and the interview.
5. The possibility that the participants may know me, and that I may know them, may influence the responses.
6. Some of the participants may have left the Florida Conference for other employment, limiting the number of interviewees.

Delimitations

To reduce variability the study was delimited to only Adventist education leaders from the Florida Conference. No attempt was made to interview ministers or other leaders in the Florida Conference who are currently or have served in a leadership capacity. This may hinder, to some degree, any generalizations that I may want to infer. The non-random sample of participants consist only of individuals who have participated in the Florida Conference leadership training program(s) and have been coached and participated in coaching. Finally, the location of each interview was determined by the participant. Most often, it was at their place of work and was susceptible to interruptions.

Summary

In this chapter I introduced the current study that explores the story and perceptions of eleven education leaders within the Florida Conference who attended leadership training and coaching seminars, participated in the Co-Active Coaching process as a coach for other leaders, and were themselves coached. Through narrative I will show how Adventist education leaders describe the experience of coaching or being coached.

Chapter 2 outlines literature related to history of Adventist education, education leadership, and the coaching process. Chapter 3 describes the methodology for this study. Chapter 4 describes the findings with actual excerpts from the interviews. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a summary and discussion of the findings, the conclusions, and recommendations for practice and for further study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONSTRUCT DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

This review of the literature addresses the issue of providing adequate leadership training to education leaders. This chapter is divided into six major sections: (1) a brief history of Adventist education, (2) leadership styles and theories, (3) leadership development, (4) mentoring, (5) executive coaching, and (6) Florida Conference peer coaching.

The review of the literature provided an opportunity to increase an understanding of the complexities associated with being an education leader, providing for the adequate training of education leaders, the importance of the leader's role in successful schools, the importance of leadership training to support school principals toward personal growth, and how coaching skills impact leadership—all within the context of Adventist education.

Brief History of Adventist Church

The focus of this study is to describe the perceptions of education leaders of their experience of coaching or being coached during their participation in leadership training seminars provided by the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Thus, a brief introduction to the history of the Adventist church and its education beginnings may be informative.

Adventism finds its roots in the Second Advent movement of the early nineteenth century. A Baptist layman by the name of William Miller (1782-1849) made the most of the return of many people to Christianity known as the Second Great Awakening. Miller and others began to study the Bible and were converted. By reading the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and comparing scripture with scripture, Miller discovered Bible truths and began to preach the second coming of Christ was imminent “the hour of his judgment is come” (Rev 14:7), circa 1843. Early converts like Joshua V. Himes supported Miller's teaching and preaching through media blitzes, publications, and speaking engagements in churches and camp meetings. Soon Millerism and Adventism became household names (Knight, 1999, 2006).

Miller, Himes, and other Millerite leaders through Bible study and prayer predicted a date of Christ's soon return, October 22, 1844. The Bible holds that God will intervene in human history a second time to save humanity from itself. When this did not happen on October 22—known as “The Great Disappointment,” it birthed what is today modern Seventh-day Adventism. The Adventist church is a worldwide movement and is part of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) located in Silver Spring, Maryland. There are 28 fundamental beliefs that are foundational to the church family of approximately 20 million people (GC, 2020).

In 1872, the first officially sponsored Adventist school was opened at Battle Creek, Michigan with 12 students, even though numerous unofficial Adventist schools were in operation between 1853-1872 across numerous states (White Estate, 1963). The Adventist educational system is the second largest Christian school-system and the largest Protestant school-system in the world (Wikipedia, 2018b). Today, the Adventist

church has a total of 8,515 educational institutions, kindergarten through tertiary, operating in over 100 countries with over 1.95 million students worldwide (GC, 2019). According to one former Vice-President of the Adventist Church in North America, one of the greatest challenges facing the Adventist church in the 21st century is a shortage of leadership in its many educational, health, and church institutions (L. Blackmer, personal communication, January 6, 2017).

Philosophy and Mission of Adventist Education

From its inception, the Adventist church has developed a unique philosophy and mission of education as described by White (1903) when she states, “In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (p. 30). Some general statements of educational philosophy come from a series of books Adventists believe to be inspired by God and penned by White called the Spirit of Prophecy. These series of books provide foundational thoughts such as, “God will bless those schools that are conducted according to His design” (2013, p. 533) and “Our institutions must be conducted on Christian principles if they would triumph over opposing obstacles” (White, 2001, p. 145). Adventist education has been developed over 150 years based on the writings of White covering philosophical concepts like: the origins of the physical world, the nature of man, knowledge and truth, educational excellence, religion in education, Biblical writings, etc. (Taylor, 1983).

The Adventist Education website, a place that connects Adventist educators to information and resources and provides an avenue for the general public to learn about the Adventist education mission, vision, and philosophy presents this statement:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes God as the ultimate source of existence, truth, and power. In the beginning God created in His image a perfect humanity, a perfection later marred by sin. Education in its broadest sense is a means of returning human beings to their original relationship with God. The distinctive characteristics of the Adventist worldview built around creation, the fall, redemption, and re-creation, are derived from the Bible and inspired writing of Ellen G. White. (Adventist Education, 2020, n.p.)

The goal of Adventist education is to develop learners in a setting that fosters a balance between the spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social-emotional. It is understood that the education process is a partnership between the home, school, and church in cooperation with “divine agencies to prepare learners to be good citizens in the world and for eternity” (Adventist Education, 2020, n.p.). It is the goal of Adventist education leaders to provide an educational setting that allows for students to “be thinkers and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts” (White, 1903, p. 17) recognizing that: “A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and all true service” (White, 1905, p. 409).

Adventist Education Leader Training and Development

After her interviews with Adventist principals, Ledesma (2011) asked them to share advice and recommendations to educational leaders in the Adventist system of education in North America. Below are several of the noted desires of principals for leadership development initiatives within the Adventist leadership system:

1. Develop training programs for principals that include legal training, evaluating, marketing schools, available resources, support services, conflict resolution, governance, and dealing with difficult parents and students.
2. Develop and implement a mentoring program for school administrators in order to nurture and train aspiring, current, and future school principals.
3. Support principals in a way that very clearly conveys the message they are valued, appreciated, and cared for—that the educational system is heavily invested in growing them as leaders. (Ledesma, 2011, p. 290)

According to Ledesma (2011), this study provides questions warranting more study. Some of the recommendations are noted below:

1. Educational leaders in the Adventist system in North America should facilitate the process of engaging Adventist universities in a dialog focused on developing and implementing collaboration for internship, preparation, and mentoring programs for school administrators built on the foundations and principles of supporting the educational leader.
2. Educational leaders should develop professional growth opportunities focused on growing principals on a personal basis (health clubs, massages, therapists, trips).
3. School principals are encouraged to develop attributes of spirituality and resilience through deliberate practice. (Ledesma, 2011, p. 292)

The model of peer coaching supported in the Florida Conference may provide additional support to the recommendation from Ledesma.

In May 2014, the NAD convened an Administrative Summit in Dulles, Virginia to address key issues affecting the mission of the Adventist church. A primary focus of the Summit “was to consider the future organization and governance of Adventist Education in the context of changing demographics, financial indicators, and emerging technologies to fulfill our mission through ministry that is effective, efficient and excellent in every way” (NADET, 2017, n.p.). The NAD administration proposed the creation of an education task force, called the NAD Education Task Force, to properly address all facets of the education ministry. In general, private education, and specifically, Adventist education involves a significant outlay of financial and human resources to accomplish the mission and “for the important task of bringing young people to faith in Jesus and excellence in learning” (n.p.).

Noted Adventist educator and author George Knight (2001) states,

To accomplish this mission, Adventist Education, first and foremost requires leadership that is passionate about Jesus Christ and committed to making Him the guiding power in their lives. Such leaders can successfully lead teachers in fulfilling the primary aim of Adventist education: Leading young people into a

saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Adventist education also requires leadership that is highly trained and competent to lead teachers in the secondary aim of in Adventist education: the development of character and the Christian mind, leading an academic program of excellence, the development of social responsibility, the development of physical, emotional, or social health, preparation for the world of work. (NADET, 2017, n.p.)

The NADET (2017) recognizes that developing, inspiring, and retaining Adventist leaders is a top priority of the Adventist church. To accomplish this vision, NADET notes that the NAD Educational system must:

1. Attract the most talented young leaders by communicating the tremendous rewards enjoyed by transformational leaders.
2. Equip emerging talent with excellent practical training focused on development of core competencies for successful educational leadership.
3. Establish a network of collegiality and mentorship to keep leaders inspired, vital, and growing.
4. Develop compensation strategies to acknowledge the significant investments made by leaders. (NADET, 2017, Recommendation #5)

The NADET (2017) developed 18 education recommendations to support the mission of the Adventist church, narrowed the list to 5 through a survey process involving NAD Executive Committee leaders, and established recommendation Number 5 to support Adventist education leaders, that reads as follows:

- 5a. Develop and implement strategies that expose aspiring leaders to future careers in school leadership.
 - i. Marketing
Publish promotional materials that cast the vision/promote careers in school leadership in the Adventist system (share principal success stories) using social media.
 - ii. Talent Scouting
Prepare a toolbox of resources (such as Strengths Finder, Teacher Perceiver, Gallop recruitment, etc.) that can help leaders and aspiring principals assess leadership potential.
 - iii. Provide scholarship funding, as well as mentoring, coaching, education, and professional development, to attract potential leaders.
- 5b. Develop a high-quality, practical, and intensive NAD system-wide leadership institute.
 - i. Participation in the Leadership Institute would provide aspiring leaders with a non-academic pathway to Administrative Certification through a robust, research-based, and problem-based approach to

leadership development. It would also integrate a formal mentorship component as well as opportunities to measure performance outcomes.

The Administrative Certification Institute would require each participant to demonstrate proficiency in the following leadership competencies:

Resilience

Personal Behavior

Communication

Student Performance

Situational Problem-Solving

Learning, Accountability and Professional Practice

Supervision of Instructional and Non-Instructional Staff

Development of Climate and Culture

Spiritual Leadership

Time/Task Management

Board Governance

5c. Provide ongoing leadership professional development.

i. Develop a leadership coaching and mentorship framework to reinforce leadership competencies, reduce isolation, provide accountability for performance expectations and school improvement targets, etc.

ii. Provide an ongoing professional development framework that ensures opportunities for regeneration and inspiration.

5d. Develop an improved compensation package for school administrators.

i. Develop a collaborative compensation package to include incentives such as certification bonus, annual technology funds, annual retention funds, principal retreats, financial support for school initiatives, goal-based incentives, etc.

A goal in this study is to explore how acquiring coaching skills may support the need for leadership training in the NAD as described in the NADET (2017) report.

Leadership Styles and Theories

Education leaders subscribe to a wide range of leadership theories and styles.

Prior to understanding theories of education leadership, it is beneficial to define educational leadership. Santamaria (2016) states that educational leadership is:

The professional practice of a leader (or leaders) in an administrative role(s) working with, guiding, and influencing educators in a particular context toward improving learning and other education processes in early childhood education centers, and in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions. (n.p.)

Effective leaders understand core leadership theories and how to implement various styles depending on their needs, the environment, or the situation. The importance of sound leadership and management when leading education systems is well recognized (Bush, 2003; Miller, 2013). Bass notes that over 3,000 empirical investigations have studied leadership theory and styles (Bass, 1997; Bass & Bass, 2008). Education leaders need to be innovative, creative, responsive to change, supportive of students and staff, visionary, and have the ability to lead organizations toward school improvement goals and strategies (Miller, 2013).

Many studies have been conducted on leadership styles and theory. For example, Howell and Avolio (1993), Judge and Piccolo (2004), Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (2009), and Shields (2010) examined transformational and transactional leadership. Bass (1998) studied transformational leadership and its industrial, military, and educational impact, while Walumbwa, Avolio, & Zhu (2008) examined transformational leadership and its relationship to job performance; Greenleaf and Spears (2002) write about servant leadership; Sosik and Dinger (2007) did scholarly work on leadership styles; Bono and Judge (2004) examined the behavior of leaders; and the widely read scholars Spillane, Halvorsen, and Diamond (2004) discuss leadership practice.

Northouse (2012), citing the views of Rost (1991), states that “in leadership literature, more than 100 different definitions of leadership have been identified” (p. 1). Northouse continues by stating that “despite these many definitions, a number of concepts are recognized by most people as accurately reflecting what it is to be a leader” (p. 1). Yukl (2002), notes that the definition of leadership tends to be arbitrary and subjective, while Lussier and Achua (2007) share that “there is no universal definition of

leadership because leadership is studied in different ways that require different definitions” (p. 5). Further, however, they defined leadership as the “influencing process of leaders and followers to achieve organizational objectives through change” (p. 6). Similar to this definition, Ezenne (2003) defines leadership as a “process of influencing the activities and behaviors of an individual or a group towards goal achievement” (p. 143). Cuban (1988) defined leadership as “people who bend the motivations and actions of others to achieving certain goals; it implies taking initiatives and risks” (Cuban, 1988, as cited in Bush, 2003, p. 5). The literature review on theoretical perspectives showed that there are six major categories of leadership that dominate contemporary writing about school leadership as described by Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) and Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008). These include: (1) contingency leadership, (2) instructional leadership, (3) managerial leadership, (4) moral leadership, (5) participative leadership, and (6) transformational leadership. Lunenburg and Ornstein maintain that all six categories of leadership contain three important concepts important to contemporary leaders as follows:

1. A definition of leadership cannot be agreed on
2. Each of the six categories are distinct, and
3. While distinct, some aspects of these leadership categories are similar

(Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008).

Each of the six leadership categories are discussed deeper as a belief, policy, or procedure to be conserved or followed, along with spiritual leadership theory. These theories flow from the lived experiences of Adventist education leaders. These theories were also researched to honor the conceptual framework underpinnings of this study.

Contingency Leadership Theory

Unique to contingency theory is the idea that there are multiple ways to lead an organization. It is understood that leaders institute their course of action based on their style of leadership, taking into account, or contingent upon, internal and external factors. Also, known as situational theory it first appeared as a reaction to trait theory. Carlyle (1841) suggests that situational theory was the result of more than “heroes” intervening. A social scientist, Herbert Spencer (1884) suggests that the times produce the person and not vice versa. In the contingency theory model, no single characteristic of a great leader exists. The research of Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) assigned leader traits to situational approaches. From their work, three distinct leadership styles were defined, for example:

1. The authoritarian leadership style that works best in crisis but is not found endearing in day-to-day management.
2. The democratic leadership style that functions best when building consensus.
3. The laissez-faire leadership style that allows for considerable freedom but does not handle crisis well.

Today, four contingency leadership theories are widely recognized. The first is Fiedler’s (1967) contingency model that recognizes two types of leaders, those who accomplish tasks by being relational, and those who are task oriented, each one effective depending on the situation.

The second is Vroom and Yetton’s (1973) decision model, where leadership styles were connected to situational variables. This approach relied on a group's decision-

making ability based on attributes of a situation, and later became known as the situational contingency theory.

Third is the path-goal theory developed by House (1971) and was based on Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory. Four leadership-styles and four levels of follower-development emerged. To be effective, the model suggests that it is a process in which leaders choose specific behaviors considered to be best suited to an employee's needs within the working environment, providing a path to best guide the employees through their daily activities. This model suggests that the leadership behavior is a function of the characteristics of the leader and followers. Depending on circumstances, the path-goal model can then be classified both as a contingency theory and as a transactional leadership theory, as the theory emphasizes the mutual behavior between a leader and followers (House, 1996; House & Mitchell, 1974; Northouse, 2013). Here the central issue is motivation of a follower. The leader needs to find an appropriate style that leads to follower satisfaction, motivation, and performance. House (1971) writes that:

The motivational function of the leader consists of increasing the number and kinds of personal payoffs to subordinates for work-goal attainment and making the path to these payoffs easier to travel by clarifying it, reducing roadblocks and pitfalls, and increasing the opportunities for personal satisfaction en route. (p. 324)

Last is the widely known and used situational theory that has mixed empirical validation but is cited in the academic literature as important (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Yukl, 1981, 2002). Hersey and Blanchard (1969) are credited with establishing situational leadership theory. Burke (1965) writes that leadership is “a function of the leader, the follower and the situation” (p. 60). Contingency leadership theorists assert that effective leaders should have a proper fit between behavior and situational conditions. They point out that historically, the “big man” emerges and wins out based on situational

demands and factors (Bass, 1990; Stogdill, 1975). Other scholars suggest that situational variables exist and will determine the effectiveness—or ineffectiveness—of leadership, based on contingencies, such as leadership style. Leadership style is viewed as a reflection of situational demands for task or relationship-behavior, with the motivation and maturity of the follower reflecting situational demands for the motivation and degree of maturity of the followers are featured.

Instructional Leadership Theory

The importance of leadership for improving learning outcomes in school's systems is well documented and widely promoted. Leadership style, traits, role, and practice influence learning outcomes for students. Other leadership dimensions that impact student learning include setting school direction, managing academic curriculum and teacher instruction, and developing the school learning climate (Hallinger et al., 2017; Quantz, Cambron-McCabe, Dantley, & Hachem, 2017). Instructional leader characteristics generally include being a people person, being an exceptional listener, a problem solver, and being fair and reasonable.

Smith and Andrews (1989) have identified four traits that encapsulate the essence of instructional leaders: (1) resource providers, (2) are themselves resources for instruction, (3) communicators, and (4) have a visible presence. Principal as resource provider and instructional leader is secured when the leader assures that instructors have the equipment, materials, budget, facilities needed to impact student learning, and recognizes teachers as the greatest resource (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2018; Kohm & Nance, 2007; Whitaker, 1997). As an instructional resource, the education leader identifies good teaching, provides timely feedback to promote professional

development, models desired traits, and supports day-to-day school operations (Glickman et al., 2018; Whitaker, 1997). As a communicator in chief, the principal establishes essential beliefs that (1) all children can learn and experience success; (2) success builds upon success; (3) schools can enhance student success; and (4) learner outcomes must be clearly defined to guide instructional programs and decisions (Whitaker, 1997). Principal as a visible presence is resolved by consistently modeling behaviors that positively impact student learning, is easily accessible to staff, students, parents, and makes frequent classroom visits (Glickman et al., 2018; Whitaker, 1997).

Instructional leaders cannot do it all by themselves and look for opportunity to bring out the best in their colleagues, often through empowerment or by creating exceptional teams. School transformation happens best when education leaders support the development of teacher leaders. These instructional teams help to build vibrant school communities and strong school systems (Broin, 2015). In a comparative study between transformational and instructional leadership and between the five leadership dimensions, it was noted that “the more leaders focus their relationships, their work, and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes” (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

Managerial Leadership Theory

Management is known to be an inexact phenomenon. There is a great deal of literature on traditional management styles and theories that exist, dealing with the planning, administration, supervision, organization, control, monitoring, and the interim nature of organizations (Mintzberg, 1973; Morgan, 1986; Taylor, 1911). Originally, management theories focused primarily on the leader role of organization, supervision,

and team performance. This theory uses the reward versus punishment system. When an individual or team experiences success, they are rewarded. Failure results in a reprimand or punishment. The goal is to get the job done through the use of authority. Rost (1991) defines management as “an authority relationship between at least one manager and one subordinate who coordinate their activities to produce and sell particular goods and/or services” (Rost, 1991, p. 145).

There is a plethora of literature that speaks to the “soft elements” of management that connect to inspiration, motivation, participation, value, and vision over the long-term, and is referred to as leadership (Bass, 1994; Conger, 2000; Kotter, 1999; Rost, 1991; Yukl, 1982, 1989). This leader relationship implies there are shared goals and relationships that have a foundation based on influence developed between leader and follower. Rost (1991) describes leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 102). The need for “softer” managerial elements will see an increase over time and is due to a rapidly changing world, global politics, advances in technology, climate change, science, and psychology, and will require a managerial leader (Kotter, 1999). Managerial leader scholars believe that it is important for organizations to have leader managers in place to fully monitor and control the specific and knowledge-intensive nature of organizations (Bass, 1994; Conger, 2000; Kotter, 1999; Rost, 1991).

Yukl (1982) writes extensively on managerial leadership and the education leader-principal. Essentially, he believes that an effective principal should spend the bulk of their time in planning, organizing, staff development, and building teams. Other key researchers identified the quality of leadership as a key factor driving the transformation

in organizations. It is almost impossible to find documented cases of troubled schools becoming quality schools without the intervention of a powerful education leader (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2011). Studies indicate that highly effective principal's raise student achievement by two to seven months during a school year; an ineffective principal lowers achievement by the same amount (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013). Krasnoff (2015) reports that:

Effective principals influence a variety of school outcomes, including student achievement, through their recruitment and motivation of quality teachers; ability to identify and articulate school vision and goals; effective allocation of resources; and development of organizational structures to support instruction and learning. (Horng, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2010, p. 206, as cited in Krasnoff, 2015, n.p.)

Moral Leadership Theory

Educational leaders have a responsibility to promote an ethical environment in their schools. Moral leadership as a theory has been studied extensively by numerous scholars and widely reported (Etzioni, 1988, 1993; Greenfield, 1986; Hodgkinson, 1991, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1991, 1992, 1996). Coppola (1998), as recounted by Ledesma (2011), describes individuals who believe in moral leadership theory as "leaders who share their spiritual and theistic world views, practice higher moral reasoning, inspire others to act with a vision, covenant to intentionally build community, and exercise a commitment to social justice" (Coppola, 1998, as cited in Ledesma (2011, p. 46).

Moral leadership theory has as its critical focus core values, beliefs, and ethics of leaders. Moreover, the authority and influence of any good leader stems from what is right or good (Leithwood, Jantzi et al., 1999). Sergiovanni (1984) writes that, "excellent schools have central zones composed of values and beliefs that take on sacred or

cultural characteristics” (p. 10). He notes that “‘administering’ is a ‘moral craft’” (Sergiovanni, 1991, p. 322).

West-Burnham (1997) examines two approaches to leadership, categorized as ‘moral.’ The first he recounts as ‘spiritual’ and connects to “the recognition that many leaders possess what might be called ‘higher order’ perspectives. These may well be represented by a particular religious affiliation” (West-Burnham, 1997, p. 239). This type of leader operates on principles, which is foundational to self-awareness. The second grouping is “‘moral confidence,’ meaning the leader has the ability to carry out responsibilities within an ethical system consistently over time” (p. 239).

Sergiovanni (1991) asserts when creating a learning community, both moral and managerial leadership are necessary. He maintains that in the principalship leaders have to come to terms with two vital imperatives, the managerial and the moral. Both imperatives cannot be avoided, and problems inevitably arise if neglected. Education leaders are tasked with running schools effectively by creating a learning community and transforming the school into an institution (Bush, 2007).

Participative Leadership Theory

Effective leadership is the hallmark of successful organizations. Participative leadership is a great style for managers interested in whole-team contributions and decision-making. In this article, we discuss what participative leadership is and its four types, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of participative leadership.

Participative leadership is a managerial style that is characterized by input from individuals on decision making. Leithman et al. (1999) write that “participative leadership . . . assumes that the decision-making processes of the group ought to be the

central focus of the group” (p. 6). Stakeholders are given pertinent information regarding issues at hand, and a majority vote determines the course of action the organization takes. Due to the democratic nature of participative leadership, it is often a slower form of decision-making; however, it has several advantages and is grounded by three assumptions:

1. Participation increases school effectiveness.
2. Participation is justified by democratic principles.
3. “In the context of site-based management, leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder” (Leithwood, Jantzi et al., 2009, as cited in Sergiovanni, 1984, p. 13).

Sergiovanni (1984) emphasizes the importance of a participative approach. He notes that this approach is successful in ‘bonding’ staff together and in easing pressures on education leaders. He posits that “The burdens of leadership will be less if leadership functions and roles are shared and if the concept of leadership density were to emerge as a viable replacement for principal leadership” (p. 13).

McLennan and Thurlow (2003) discuss an emerging paradigm, stating that there is “a growing emphasis on building relationships in education” (McLennan & Thurlow, 2003, p. 6). A key advantage to this theory is acceptance by stakeholders, great morale on a team, the potential for creativity, and retention of personnel. Several researchers point to the need for cooperation between education leaders and school governing bodies (Bush & Heystek, 2003; Harber & Trafford, 1999; Karlsson, 2002). Karlsson (2002) studied six schools and discovered that principals are dominant in all meetings because of “their power position within the school, level of education in contrast to other members, first

access to information taken from education authorities, and because it is the principal who executes the decisions taken” (p. 332).

Spiritual Leadership Theory

Fry (2003) writes that “the purpose of spiritual leadership is to create vision and value congruence across the strategic, empowered team, and individual levels and, ultimately, to foster higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity” (Fry, 2003, p. 693). Fry asserts that to motivate followers, “leaders must get in touch with their core values and communicate them to followers through vision and personal actions to create a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership” (p. 693). Fry defines spiritual leadership, and thus spiritual leadership theory, as “comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership” (p. 694). At its core is the goal for organizations to have committed and productive employees.

Moxley (2000) supports the idea that leadership theories need a holistic approach integrating those areas that define the essence of human existence—the body or physical, the mind or cognitive, the heart (emotions, feelings), and the spirit (adapted from Fry, 2003).

With the dawn of the 21st century and an increase in knowledge through technology, there is a significant impetus for societal change. The internet is the engine driving this phenomenon. A response to this significant increase in information access requires a major organizational transformation (Ancona, Kochan, Scully, Van Maanen, & Westney, 1999; Moxley, 2000). Fry (2003) believes that for learning organizations to be

successful in this paradigm, spiritual leadership is necessary for transformation and for continued success. Fry writes that “spiritual leadership taps into the fundamental needs of both leader and follower for spiritual survival, so they become more organizationally committed and productive” (p. 694).

Spiritual leadership as it relates to spiritual leadership theory may be seen as concepts that are in stages of development (Hunt, 1999; Reichers & Schneider, 1990). It is important that initial theories meet the four components that provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for the development of any theoretical model. They must specify: 1) the units or variables of interest to the researcher, 2) congruence as defined by the laws of relationship among units of the model that specify how they are associated, 3) boundaries within which the laws of relationship are expected to operate, and 4) contingency effects that specify system states within which the units of the theory take on characteristic values that are deterministic and have a persistence through time (Dubin, 1978; Fry & Smith, 1987). Spiritual leadership theory satisfies this requirement.

Transformational Leadership Theory

The work of Burns (1978) inspired Bernard M. Bass to put forward a “theory of transformational leadership.” Bass and Avolio (1994) posits that transformational leaders motivate people to do more than they originally intended, often even more than they thought possible. Transformational leaders, also known as charismatic leaders, are recognized for their ability to motivate and inspire members of a group to see the importance of accomplishing a task greater than themselves (Bass, 1999). They can articulate problems and create a vision of what could and should be. They are adept at linking their values with those who follow. While the transformational leader is

concerned about the overall group performance, they are also concerned that each group member maximizes their own potential. Characteristics of a transformational leader include high ethical and moral standards, great vision, good rhetorical skills, concern for image and trust building, have a sense of humor, and exhibit a personalized leadership approach (Hughes et al., 2009).

The main purpose of transformational leadership is to change the status quo. Hughes et al. (2009) indicate that current research, “provides overwhelming support for the notion that transformational leaderships are effective at large-scale societal or organizational change” (p. 637). They also believe that this can be accomplished “by appealing to the followers’ values and their sense of higher purpose” (p. 632). The transformational leader has the ability to articulate a problem and then translate that into a shared vision. This can be accomplished because the leader knows that this vision encompasses shared values.

Transformational leadership theory explains that for change to occur the leader must have certain qualities, abilities, and skills to adequately motivate a follower to accomplish change. The leader must be good at reframing issues (Hughes et al., 2009).

The follower plays a role in transformational leadership. The follower alone determines if they believe in the leader’s vision and are willing to become emotionally attached. The follower looks for charisma in a leader in order to be emotionally attached. This bond is generally a result of identification with the leader through affection or shared values and beliefs with a leader. When this happens, the follower will have a heightened emotional level, be a willing subordinate to the leader, and feel empowered by the leader (Hughes et al., 2009).

Hughes et al. (2009) believes that transformational leadership theory is successful due to the “high level of follower motivation” (p. 408). A transformational leader uses the follower’s high level of motivation along with their own charismatic personalities and emotion to trigger action towards change.

Some of the current research seems to support the idea that there are situational factors that determine if a leader is perceived as charismatic or transformational. It appears that a crisis empowers a leader. Followers tend to look for a leader who resolves a crisis. Followers also prefer to work on projects with a leader when there is task interdependence, which is where the individual is recognized for his contribution to the task (Hughes et al., 2009).

A transformational leader may also prove to be more successful if they have well-established social networks within their organizations. In addition, there are other variables that may determine the success of a transformational leader. For example, followers are much more interested in working with an innovative leader. Like someone who is willing to do things in a new way (out of the box) or even become independent and start up an organization on their own. Another variable is time. In the absence of a crisis, it should be recognized that the development of a transformational leader takes time.

A transformational leader practitioner is recognized as possessing several characteristics. This style of leadership is driven by:

1. Emotion leading to motivation
2. Understanding how to create or capitalize on crisis
3. Ability to align personal values with those of followers

4. Knowing how to articulate a vision
5. Knowing that leaders need follower participation; it cannot be done alone
6. The need to model or coach followers
7. A very thick skin (Hughes et al., 2009).

Problems with the transformational leadership model do exist. As noted by Johnson (2009), “No leader is perfect but a mix of virtues and vices” (p. 175). Some disadvantages to transformational leadership include leader-centric concerns, leader dependency tendencies, and the problem of practitioners often overlooking moral principles. Also, transformational leadership does not tolerate a dissenter. The upside is that with this model of leadership teamwork, the individual has value. The downside is that if someone dissents, they may be viewed as disloyal. A dissenting view is sometimes needed to rethink a task and make better decisions. Bad decisions can and will be made without opposing viewpoints.

A transformational leader is effective and has a safeguard providing for a two-way street. Both the leader and follower have to buy-in, and it is founded on clear ethical principles taking a pragmatic approach to problem solving. After all, according to Johnson (2009), “Who wouldn’t want to be a leader who is both good and effective?” (p. 173).

Section Summary

It should be noted that each of the leadership models discussed in this section is not exhaustive. The scope of the models provides the reader with distinct but not broad or deep perspectives on school leadership. Sergiovanni (1984) adds that much “leadership

theory and practice provide a limited view, dwelling excessively on some aspects of leadership to the virtual exclusion of others” (p. 6).

However, there is an interconnectedness between theories, research, and its application to my study. Understanding various theories allows us to think systematically about complex problems such as the nature of leadership, different leadership situations, or the organizational contexts of our work and lives.

Education Leadership Development

Below, we dive into what researchers are saying about education leadership development. Leaders continue to look for ways to overcome challenges and find ways to improve their organizations. They recognize that organizational building is becoming more complex, that expectations are greater than ever before, and that there is a new sense of accountability. Further, leaders are looking for ways to acquire and build skills in analytics, become effective communicators, and to explore how to work across a workforce that is more diverse than in the past. Successful educational organizations employ leaders who are lifelong learners and incorporate strategies to improve schools.

Leithwood (2005) noted that “achieving success as a leader, by virtually any definition, requires ‘doing right things right’” (p. 3). School leaders are required to make many decisions during a school day, and those decisions need to be “right.” Providing principals with the proper skills to achieve success increases the probability that principals will do things right. Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, and Cravens (2007) state that “finding practical ways to thoughtfully and appropriately assess and develop leaders can have an important impact on the quality of leadership, and through that, on

the quality of education in our schools” (Goldring et al., 2007, p. 1). Spillane et al. (2004) express that leadership is thought critical to innovation.

Principal and leadership training and support needs to be an ongoing process. Just as importantly, there need to be mechanisms in place to identify, equip, and retain principals. Christie, Thompson, and Whiteley (2009) observe that “getting the right people to become school leaders is very important, but so is providing these people with the right set of skills to be effective leaders” (p. 4). Mitgang and Gill (2012) noted that there may be a correlation between lower principal turnover and higher student achievement. Some school districts, such as Chicago and Denver, have collaborated with local universities to improve training for principals. New York, Boston, and other cities have developed their own leadership academies for aspiring principals and are collaborating with nonprofits to develop programs for aspiring principals.

Sun (2011) expresses that “given the impact school leadership can have on student outcomes, providing every school with an effective principal should clearly be among the top priorities” (p. 4). Devita (2010) points out, “The bottom line is that investments in good principals are a particularly cost-effective way to improve teaching and learning” (pp. 3–4). Having a supportive system and culture for professional development of principals should be embedded in school systems. Mitgang and Gill (2012) noted that “getting pre-service principal training is essential. But equally important is the training and support school leaders receive after they’re hired” (p. 24). Goldring et al. (2007) express that “finding practical ways to thoughtfully and appropriately assess and develop leaders can have an important impact on the quality of leadership, and through that, on the quality of education in our schools” (p. 1).

Due to the demand for accountability at all levels of the education process, there is a need for effective education leaders in school systems. Educational leaders are, therefore, expected to identify and address barriers that may impair such effectiveness (Onyefulu & Kelly, 2012). Some studies have been done on leadership traits that make leaders effective (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1999; Northouse, 2007). There continues to be scholarly research that examines the similar and contrasting leadership traits and characteristics an effective leader possesses. Also, some studies seek to understand the distinctiveness of institutions classified as being effective or having successful schools (Blase & Kirby, 2000; Johnson, Livingston, Schwartz, & Slate, 2000; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Lezotte, 1991). In addition to traits of effective leadership, this study seeks to understand what skills an Adventist education leader needs to be effective.

Principal as Leader

Effective principals set the tone for school systems, and without a strong and experienced school leader, troubled and marginal schools tend to fail. It is widely understood that great schools rarely exist apart from great leaders and those who set a clear sense of direction generally have the greatest impact (Leithwood, Louis et al., 2004). A principal's job description is hard to define, and is, at times, overwhelming. It is expected that the principal, as a leader, develops a framework of collaboration and shared decision making with other administrators, teachers, and staff members (DeVita, 2010, as cited in Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; NASSP/NAESP, 2013). A description of leadership is offered by Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010): "Leadership is all about organization improvement; more specifically, it is about

establishing agreed-upon and worthwhile directions for the organization in question; and doing whatever it takes to prod and support people to move in those directions”

(pp. 9–10).

A principal’s role is varied, and their responsibilities are far ranging. In a report, Harvey (2013) describes five key practices that school leaders do well:

1. “Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards.
2. Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit, and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail.
3. Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their parts in realizing the school vision.
4. Improving instruction to enable teaches to teach at their best and students to learn to their utmost.
5. Managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement” (Harvey, 2013, p. 6).

Harvey (2013) noted that these five tasks do not stand alone and must interact with the other four to achieve success. There is empirical evidence that shows a link between school leadership and a student’s academic success. In a research project conducted over a six-year span by Louis et al. (2010), they noted that:

In developing a starting point for this six-year study, we claimed, based on a preliminary review of research, that leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning. After six additional years of research, we were even more confident about this claim. To date we have found not a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership. Why is leadership crucial? One explanation is that leaders have the potential to unleash latent capacities in organizations. (p. 9)

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) also conducted research, through meta-analysis, and discovered a correlation between school leadership and student achievement. It is the view of these researchers that “effective leadership means more than knowing what to do—it’s knowing when, how, and why to do it” (p. 2).

Mentoring

Mentoring is sometimes confused with coaching. Mentoring is the idea of an apprenticeship that involves someone with experience handing down knowledge to someone who requires supervision. It requires a long-term investment of modeling and skill acquisition. It is actually the mentor’s job to set the agenda. Coaching on the other hand is more concerned with immediate improvement, requires more instruction and training, and the client is the one who sets the agenda (Whitworth et al., 1998). Collins (2009) who quotes Frederic Hudson (1999), author of *Handbook of Coaching*, notes, “A Coach is someone trained and devoted to guiding others into increased competence, commitment, and confidence” (Collins, 2009, p. 13). Either way, coaching or mentoring, it is imperative that there is a strong element of trust and safety in the relationship. It is easiest to create trust by speaking openly about expectations, speaking the truth to the mentor or client, and by becoming a good listener. It is also important to make it clear to the mentor or client that all information that is shared is held in complete confidence. Nothing should be passed on or repeated without the mentor’s or client’s permission (Collins, 2009; Whitmore, 2009; Whitworth et al., 1998).

Every school is a unique organization, part of a system that has its own history, environment, and cast of characters. Education leaders, especially those new to a school system, experience anxiety, stress, and a great deal of responsibility. Mentoring has for

many years been a useful strategy in the development of education leaders (NAESP, 2008). Education leaders are expected to be experts in technology, scheduling, staff development, instructional leaders, and adept at dealing with a variety of constituents. Most education leaders also deal with feelings of insecurity while working in a fast-paced environment, and this leaves them very little time for personal reflection and thoughtfulness (Parkay & Rhodes 1992). Education leaders must quickly learn the school culture, the unwritten rules, and be able to identify the community influencers (Aiken, 2002). It is not unusual for an educational leader to feel isolated and have a high need for professional feedback, growth, and mentoring.

Education leaders, especially newcomers, benefit from having an empathetic, experienced colleague who can provide coaching or mentoring in technical skills, serve as a guide through numerous minefields, and provide perspective. Crow and Matthews (1998) note there can be pitfalls. A mentor may become controlling, overprotective, aloof, or attempt to clone themselves. In spite of this, mentoring is generally welcomed, especially by new education leaders (Howley, Chadwick, & Howlee, 2002; Ricciardi, 2000). Laura Dukess (2001) interviewed mentors, proteges, and supervisors of mentoring programs and came to several conclusions. She noted that having good results was not just about pairing a mentor and protege. Some important steps in the process included careful matching of mentors and proteges, having expectations and guidelines clarified for participants, ensuring enough time for the mentor, and choosing those mentors with a track record of success.

Fain and Zachary (2020) explore the relationship between mentor and mentee. They write that “increasingly, organizations are defining mentorship to advance

diversity and inclusion” (p. 2). Furthermore, they express the importance of reciprocity in the relationship, so that both may benefit, noting that “mentoring is always a collaborative endeavor” (p. 7) between partners.

In a longevity study of Adventist principals, Ledesma (2011) noted that many principals interviewed identified relationships with mentors as a primary source of support. She writes:

Networking with other principals and colleagues is a strong source of support to the principals. They identified fellow principals and experienced administrative leaders as a safe and consistent source of support. The candid and open relationship with other principals gives them opportunity to troubleshoot and brainstorm without being perceived negatively. (p. 256)

Coaching

To help ensure content validity and to gain an understanding of the many facets related to coaching, an extensive review of the literature on various aspects of coaching was conducted. This section investigates what coaching is, the relevance of coaching leaders in the Florida Conference, the importance of values, visioning, and mission discovery in the coaching process, identify some basic coaching skills, and understanding how triads formed the training foundation for the coaching model in the Florida Conference.

Executive coaching is relatively new to professional growth and development of leaders and is widely becoming an accepted practice for education leaders (Berglas, 2002; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). It is estimated that between 1996-2002, in the world of business, there was a 500% increase in professionally assigned coaches (Berglas, 2002). This significant growth pattern continues in business and other fields resulting in an investment in human capital through coaching programs, trainings, and

coaching publications (Bolch, 2001; Douglas & Morely, 2000; Goldsmith & Lyons, 2005; Quick & Macik-Frey, 2004).

Literature describes numerous models of coaching involving case study (Kilburg, 2004), personal approaches to coaching (Diedrich, 1996), and surveys (Hall, Otazo, & Hollenbeck, 1999; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Kurt Lewin (1939) who is renowned for his “field theory,” as quoted by Tolman, Cherry, Van Hezewijk, and Lubek (1996), once said “if you want truly to understand something, try to change it” (p. 31). People, in this case, education leaders, come to coaching because they want something to be different in their leadership. They would like to be more confident, effective, and satisfied. Whitworth et al. (1998) write that clients “come to coaching because they want a better quality of life: more fulfillment, better balance, or a different process to accomplish their life desires. Whatever the individual reason, it all starts with the client” (p. 1).

Carter-Scott (2007) writes that “when the stretch between where you are presently and your desired future reality is more than you can image, a coach helps you bridge the gap between ‘here’ and ‘there’” (p. 7). Executive coaching, it is argued, provides the process of developing a flexible and adaptable development process (Frisch, 2001; Hollenbeck, 2002).

The verb to coach is defined as to “instruct, direct, prompt, or to train intensively” (Merriam-Webster, 2020). This differs from the new concept of Co-Active Coaching that is sometimes called professional, executive, or personal coaching. Co-Active Coaching according to Whitworth et al. (1998) “involves the active and collaborative participation of both the coach and the client” (p. xi); “Coaching focuses on future possibilities, not past mistakes” (p. 1); and “Unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own

performance” (Whitworth et al., 1998, p. 8). The authors go on to explain that there are 4 cornerstones that make up the foundation of Co-Active Coaching:

1. The client is naturally creative, resourceful, and whole.
2. Co-Active Coaching addresses the client’s whole life.
3. The agenda comes from the client.
4. The relationship is a designed alliance.

Fundamentally, it is believed that the client has within themselves the answers or the ability to find answers. The job of the coach is then to ask the questions and more importantly to resist the temptation to give the answers. By allowing the client the opportunity to answer their own questions they become generally more satisfied with the outcome and in turn are more likely to come up with an action plan that the coach holds them accountable for. By using this model of coaching the client realizes that they are in control of the conversation, the relationship, and any changes they choose to make in their lives. The synergy that is created between the client and coach, the forces of learning and action is what eventually leads to the ultimate goal of change (Collins, 2009; Whitmore, 2009; Whitworth et al., 1998).

A primary function of coaching is to provide assessment. This is accomplished through honest feedback about a client's performance, their perceived effectiveness, an accounting of strengths and weaknesses, providing clarity, and helping the client to become aware of their developmental needs (Kampa & White, 2002; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). Feedback is considered to be the trademark of coaching and sets it apart from other types of assessment (Kampa & White, 2000; McCauley & Douglas, 1998). Literature points out that coaching feedback can be conducted in many ways, including

immediate behavioral and affective feedback, 360-degree feedback, personality and leadership inventories, and qualitative interview assessment (Hollenbeck, 2002; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001).

The literature also reveals that because coaching becomes personal, and the client feels safe, the coach is in a good position to assist with motivation, even during the most trying and challenging times (Brutus, London, & Marineau, 1999; Day, 2000). A client goes through a process of development while engaged in the coaching process and is looking for support. The literature focuses primarily on two types of support: emotional and tactical.

Emotional support comes in the form of assistance with motivation. This is accomplished when the coach provides encouragement, sympathy and empathy, a listening ear, and a safe place to vent. The objective is for the coach to provide emotional support that helps to prevent the client from being overwhelmed, discouraged, and unable to see a way forward when wanting to change (Hollenbeck, 2002; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Kampa & White, 2002; McCauley & Douglas, 1998).

Tactical support comes in the form of the coach providing advice and becoming a sounding board for the clients' dreams and ideas to accomplish their tasks. Counseling literature (Prochaska & Norcross, 2001) notes that tactical support is important when moving a client through the change process. The work of Hall et al. (1999) indicates that both clients and coaches believe that one of the most important aspects to coaching is the advice and pointers given by coaches and the value of the coach serving as a sounding board when a client wants to vet an idea and develop a strategy for work or personal growth.

Florida Conference Peer Coaching

Collins (2009) states, “Coaching is a unique kind of relationship with its own set of skills and ways of relating to each other” (p. 113) and that “every person is different and so is every coaching situation” (p. 100). The Florida Conference Office of Education is committed to changing the culture for its leaders and educators. In addition, the Florida Conference administration has committed time, training, and resources to ensure that all education leaders have an opportunity for personal and professional growth through leadership training, emphasizing Co-Active Coaching. Each member of the education leadership team has had extensive training in Co-Active Coaching from Nick Howard, founder of Cypress River (the Finish Well Group) and other leaders from within the organization. The Florida Conference has developed its own Christian Co-Active Coaching training program, calls it “Peer Coaching,” and conducts one 7-month training per school year. Each participating school leader receives three two-day seminars over a 7-month period of intensive in-service training acquiring coaching skills through reading, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, small group discussions, film discussion, and live coaching sessions called “triads.” The idea is to promote a constructive learning environment that is both rich and robust as school leaders develop their skills. In addition, there are two additional 1½-hour trainings during the school year that occur between each seminar. By participating in the peer coaching program each school leader is required to coach someone and to also be coached (client) by someone trained as a coach throughout the school year. Coaching sessions are generally every other week, last for 45–60 minutes, and the agenda is determined by the client (M. Cauley, personal communication, September 18, 2008).

Howard (2012), leader and trainer for the Florida Conference leadership training program, stated that Peer Christian Coaching is:

An incarnational method of facilitating leadership development. It is a process of bringing grace and truth to a leader's biggest dreams and greatest challenges through a supportive, encouraging, and challenging relational approach. In a sense, it is a kind of vocational discipleship that works to strengthen a leader's capacity to realize God-honoring aspirations, grow in emotional and spiritual maturity, and lead in transformational ways.

Stoltzfus (2005) believes that the essence of coaching is "believing in people" (p. 7). Simply stated, he notes that "coaches are change experts who help leaders take responsibility for their lives and act to maximize their own protentional" (Stoltzfus, 2005, p. 6). The peer coaching relationship works best when there is vulnerability, honesty, and transparency. Therefore, the process encourages the coach to focus more on the client's potential rather than to focus simply on their performance as a leader (Howard, 2012).

Values, Visioning, and Mission

Robert Greenleaf (2002) believes it is very important for leaders to have a value orientation so that educators can "develop their ability to lead their people to secure a better life for many" (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 176). Williams and Menendez (2015) say that:

Values function like compass points. A compass needle points toward true north and acts as a constant guide for mariners and travelers. Travelers rarely get lost if they have a working compass. Our values serve us in a similar way, guiding us in determining the direction of our life. When we align with our values, they help us make critical decisions. They also function as key indicators that we are out of integrity, which is evidenced by our frustration, anger, or feeling off-center.

(p. 275)

Values are important in the coaching dynamic because the client's core values, determine their decision making, and expose why certain judgments are made, ideally prompting action leading to desired results.

Leading up to the peer coaching process, an important part of the work that is done for education leaders is inquiry to discover a person's core values. This is accomplished in two parts: First, time is spent with the client asking key questions in order to have them open up to what is really important in their lives. This process is referred to as values discovery. The second part of the values work with a client is something that they begin on their own. They are provided with a large sample of possible values words. They may add to the list, but the object is to have the client reflect on the values that truly capture their hearts and minds. During this process, the coach is very curious and ask them to hone the list down to maybe two or three groups of two or three words per group. This allows the client to identify their core values while the coach provides positive feedback and open-ended questions as they work through this process. The coach records the client's core values and brings it out in later coaching sessions, if needed, to affirm them or to remind them of what is core to them and of the changes that they want to make in their lives to honor those core values (N. Howard, Interview, October 12, 2012).

Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan, and Switzler (2008) write that:

Through a skillful use of open and non-directive questions, the counselor [or coach] helps others examine what is most important to them and what changes in their life might be required in order for them to live according to their values. When you listen and they talk, they discover on their own what they must do. Then they make the necessary changes. (p. 105)

This principle, allowing the coachee to “discover on their own what they must do,” is at the heart of Co-Active Coaching. The Co-Active Coaching process allows for change to occur without the threat of coercion or force and it must happen by choice of the client (Whitworth et al., 1998).

In general, education leaders are more capable of making courageous decisions and sacrifices when those decisions are rooted in core values. Capodagli and Jackson (2007) quote the German writer Goethe and state that “when values are clear, laws are unnecessary. When values are not clear, laws are unenforceable” (p. 53). This underscores the need for a leader to understand their core values and to ensure that these values become a part of their leadership model.

Next is the visioning process. Anyone who is a leader knows the importance of vision. Vision is what moves a team forward. The Bible states that “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (King James Version, 1982, Prov. 29:18). The purpose of doing visioning with education leaders is to provide them an opportunity to identify what is important to their lives so that they can focus their time and energy on that vision. Protocol for the peer coaching process is for the coach to check-in with the client to see if they are still aligned with the vision that was originally shared. Visioning from a Christian perspective also means asking the question, what is God’s purpose for my life? This step in the coaching process has a profound effect on the client. It often leads to life-changing opportunities (J. Epperson, personal communication, May 12, 2010).

In preparing the client for visioning, a script is often used to mentally prepare the client, with the focus on Heaven. To conclude the exercise the client reflects on what they had just done and write it down in the present tense. This is something that they keep reviewing periodically in the coaching process.

Last, prior to moving deep into the peer coaching process, the client prepares both a mission and vision statement. Questions like, “What does your life look like today?” and “How would you like it to look one year from now?” or “Five and ten years from

now?” are asked by the coach. With these questions in mind the client puts together a one or two sentence mission and vision statement reflecting their life goals, purpose, and aspirations. These two statements should reveal much of who the client is and who they want to be (M. Cauley, personal communication, September 18, 2008). Once value and visioning are identified and established, the client benefits from the extent to which the coach brings ownership to conversations. Williams and Menendez (2015) write that “our habits are really our values in action. When we look at our habits, we discover the attitudes and mind-sets that drive our life—our POS or personal operating system” (p. 288).

Coaching Skills

Kilburg (1997) identifies qualities that a coach must have to affect a positive coaching outcome, which include empathy, courteous, predictable, respectful, considerate, friendly, tactful, open, knowledgeable, and skillful. Part of the coach-client relationship involves the continual reflection of performance issues, underscoring the importance for the coach to be competent, appropriate, and effective in the application of coaching skills. Acquiring the skills to coach someone takes time, practice, energy, patience, and a willingness to give of one’s self. In a study of coaching outcomes, the top three coaching characteristics reported by Wasylyshyn (2003) were the ability to form a strong alliance, professionalism, and the use of a well-defined coaching method. Clinton (1992) noted “that those who experienced anointed ministry and finished well had a significant network of meaningful relationships that inspired, challenged, listened, pursued, developed, and held one another accountable” (p. 159).

Katz and Miller (1996) write that coaches must also be careful, gentle, and honest, while Diedrich (1996) adds that “practicality” is also an important quality. Whitworth et al. (1998) identify twenty-nine separate coaching skills that are readily identified. The Florida Conference trainings highlighted nine skills needed for a leader to effectively implement change, including listening, unpacking emotions, discernment, asking questions, naming, sharing perspective, affirmation, confrontation, and finding balance.

Listening

Listening is the one skill that when learned brings the most success both professionally and personally to an education leader, but it is often overlooked in its power. As noted by Whitworth et al. (1998), “listening is the entry point for all coaching . . . the gate through which all coaching passes” (Whitworth et al., 1998, p. 39). Carter-Scott (2007) notes that “listening is not the same as hearing” (p. 47). Williams and Menendez (2015) note that a coach listens with “a very different quality of attention that includes an intention to be of service, with no agenda aside from listening for ‘wants’ to emerge” (p. 3). Carl Rogers (1951) demonstrated in his studies that active listening alongside unconditional positive regard, reinforces significant positive changes in people.

The Bible has something to say about listening, too. Listening is so important that Solomon tells us that “a wise man listens” (New International Version, 2011, Prov. 12:15). From the book of James, we read that: “Everyone should be quick to listen, and slow to speak, and slow to become angry” (New International Version, 2011, James 1:19). A quote attributed to Anonymous says that “We were given two ears but only one mouth. This is because God knew that listening was twice as hard as talking.” Whitworth et al. (1998) feel so strongly about listening that they state, “everything in coaching

hinges on listening—especially listening, with the client's agenda in mind” (p. 39). Not only is listening being aware of what we hear but also aware of the other senses and intuition. Collins (2009) notes that “listening is central to every part of coaching, although it is never more important than at the beginning” (p. 100).

There are three levels of listening that are widely recognized and need to be identified. First is Level I or Informal Listening. At Level I the focus is on me. The spotlight is on me, my thoughts, my judgments, and my feelings, all for my benefit. At Level I there is only one question: What does this mean to me? When coaching a client, it is not useful to be at Level I Informal Listening. Attention should be on the client and the coach should consciously move to Level II Focused or Active Listening immediately (Collins, 2009; Whitworth et al., 1998; Williams & Menendez, 2015).

Level II, Active Listening, is all about the client and their needs. Not only does the coach listen to their words, but their expressions, their emotions, and what their words do not say. Coaching becomes spontaneous at this level (Collins, 2009; Whitworth et al., 1998; Williams & Menendez, 2015). Whitworth et al. (1998) state that a coach who is listening at Level II “hear the words and you hear much more: the tone, the pace, the feeling expressed. You notice all that is coming to you in the form of information” (p. 36). You also listen to the client’s response as you give feedback. All that you do is about the client.

Level III, Global or Intuitive Listening, is listening at 360 degrees. This is where the coach listens as if the client is at the center of the universe and the coach is absorbing information from everywhere. Intuition kicks in and the senses are heightened. At Level III Intuitive Listening, the coach takes in all the information received and explores with

the client to see what emerges from the interaction (Collins, 2009; Whitworth et al., 1998; Williams & Menendez, 2015). Successful coaching, and leading, depends on listening at Level II and Level III. Whitmore (2009) strongly believes that “the coach is not a problem solver, a teacher, an adviser, and instructor or even an expert; he or she is a sounding board, a facilitator, a counselor, an awareness raiser” (p. 41). It is only by listening that you become that awareness raiser and sounding board that a client needs.

Unpacking Emotions

In Peer Coach training, the second skill involves teaching education leaders how to unpack their emotions. Scazzero (2003) quotes Blaise Paschal when he writes: “All men’s miseries derive from not being able to sit in a quiet room alone” (p. 80). The peer coaching process recognizes the need for leaders to have time set apart to think, reflect, and find a process to sort out feelings and emotions. When strong emotions are present it seems that the left part of the brain that controls reasoning, logic, and the analytical brain process, seems to shut down or become less accessible. When this happens, an individual may have clouded judgment, may develop wrong perceptions of reality, and may allow feelings to build up inside. When an individual does not know how to process or “unpack” their emotions, the results are often damaging.

Unpacking emotions can be time consuming and relies heavily on Level II and Level III listening skills. This is an important time for the coachee to use self-reflection, and for the coach to actively explore the emotion of the client. When coaching a client, listen with both your head and your heart to what the client is saying and is not saying. Become empathetic by placing yourself in their situation and feeling their emotions. Then summarize what you believe the person is conveying to you by using feeling words or

phrases. If no emotion is coming through, then consider asking them how they feel about their topic or ask open ended exploring questions. Usually, the client expresses feelings of anger, sadness, happiness, jubilation, or even fear. If it is a healthy emotion, then affirm the client and explore how to possibly celebrate. If the emotion is unhealthy, then move the client towards acknowledging the emotion and then move towards resolution of how to resolve the issue. This is all part of helping the client to unpack their emotions and moving them towards a better place. It should be noted that there may come a time when the client needs something more than a coaching session. Then it becomes the responsibility of the coach to inform the client that their issue is beyond the scope of coaching and recommend to the client the need to see a professional counselor (Howard, 2012).

Discernment

The third skill is discernment. Most people might not consider discernment a skill but rather a gift from God. In the coaching context, discernment is considered a skill because it can be taught. It is also deemed vital to the success of an education leader. Tony Stoltzfus (2005) writes that “in a coaching conversation, the clients discernment leads, not the coach's” (p. 115). This is because the person with the most “information, authority, responsibility, and investment, the person who God speaks to first, is not the coach!” (p. 115). Coaching is always client centered.

Discernment, as discussed by Teresa Blythe (2020), “is a spiritual practice that calls your whole being—mind, body, heart and soul—into the process of making life choices” (<https://teresablythe.net/discernment>). Merriam-Webster (2020) describes discernment as “the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure.”

Merriam-Webster also uses the synonym “acumen” meaning “a power to see what is not evident to the average mind” to express discernment. Challies.com describes discernment as “the ability to feel or perceive something with the use of the mind and the senses” (n.p.). The Bible sees discernment as a close cousin of wisdom. From the Bible, we read “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people” (King James Version, 1982, 1 Kings 3:9).

Relating to discernment, Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2004) argue that the fundamental task of leaders, “is to prime good feelings in those they lead. That occurs when a leader creates “resonance”—a reservoir of positivity that frees the best in people. At its root, then, the primal job of leadership is emotional” (n.p.).

Having emotional intelligence, which is how leaders handle themselves and their relationships, is necessary for the success of education leaders, as described by Epperson (2010). Epperson presented a formula that he believes brings forth a plausible definition for discernment. He believes that if you take emotional intelligence and add cognitive intelligence with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, you can have the skill of discernment. Epperson expressed it this way:

Discernment is a skill that allows a person to make good decisions. It relates to making binary distinctions between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, and good and bad, by combining emotional and cognitive intelligence. Discernment is dependent on the competent utilization of listening and questioning skills while focusing on emotional markers and the prompting of the Holy Spirit. (Epperson, 2010, n.p.)

White (1917) writes that “he who gave Solomon the spirit of wise discernment is willing to impart the same blessing to his children today” (p. 28). According to Epperson

(2010), education leaders, can receive the gift of discernment and that leaders can become better at it through prayer, training, practice, and experience.

Asking Questions

The fourth skill, and one of the hardest skills to master and to teach is the art of asking questions, particularly open-ended questions. To ask the right questions of a client and inquire about what they are saying, the coach must be able to properly articulate or succinctly describe to them what they think is going on. Collins (2009) writes, “coaching is not about giving advice or telling people what to do. Coaching is about asking powerful, thought provoking questions that stimulate fresh thinking, lead to new insights, clarify issues, and challenge clients to explore innovative possibilities” (p. 107).

Whitworth et al. (1998) mention the role of articulating “as in pointing out the mess in the road—is part of the coach’s job. Cleaning up the mess is the client’s job” (Whitworth et al., 1998, p. 40). Articulating leads to clarifying what is being said and then directly opens the door for open ended questions and significant discoveries. Stoltzfus (2005) states that questions “are the main tools a coach uses to focus a conversation, foster exploration, push the client to dig deeper and reach higher, and ensure commitment” (p. 177). Jesus asked powerful questions throughout His ministry. For example, we read in Luke 2:46 “that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.”

The act of asking rather than telling the client is considered foundational to coaching. The question itself is considered the cornerstone. Questions should challenge the client to think. Whitmore (2002) suggests that one should “think of questions as caves and tunnels. Asking a powerful question is like sending the client into a vast and intricate

tunnel system that leads to other tunnels, discoveries, and mysteries” (p. 69). The idea of asking questions invites the client to ponder other solutions, allows for introspection, and may even trigger creativity and insight.

An open-ended powerful question is designed to encourage the client to open up using their own knowledge and feelings. They invite more than one word or short answers. It is alright to have moments of awkward silence when asking a question allowing the client to fully think and reflect. When asking an open-ended question, coaches generally begin with words such as “Why” or “How” and a phrase may begin with “Tell me about . . .” Therefore, the open-ended question may be more of a statement that is intended to elicit a response. It is important that the client become engaged and keep the conversation going. It is equally important that the coach does not try to sound highly intelligent, too eager to share their own story, or overly clever. This could stymie the conversation (Whitworth et al., 1998). In practice, listening and questioning are woven together (Collins, 2009). Also, when coaching, many skills are implemented during any one session.

Naming

In a PowerPoint presented by Jim Epperson (2010), Vice President for Integrated Youth Ministries in the Florida Conference, he articulated that “naming is the process of identifying the essence of a negative situation, action, or perspective that inhibits, distorts or blocks a client’s vision of reality.” He went on to say that “naming is the process of stating observations and facts around a vital blind spot without implications of judgment.” Sometimes in the coaching process the client is not able to state why they

think or feel a certain way. It then becomes the job of the coach to name it for them, which is the fifth skill.

When working with a client to establish trust and to be able to describe what a person may be feeling (naming), there are four basic guidelines to follow when involved in peer coaching (Patterson et al., 2005):

1. Establish Safety— “When there is enough safety, you can talk to almost anyone about almost anything” (p. 81).

2. Describe—Be clear and concise when repeating back to the client what is being heard. Describe in such a way that it does not bring finality to the statement with phrases such as, it seems, it appears, I get the feeling, or from my perspective. An example description might sound like this, “You know, it sounds as if you may have written your colleague off before even speaking with him? What do you think about that?”

3. Monitor Safety—It is important to monitor the emotions and body language of the client. Try to determine if the client is feeling threatened, disrespected, or undervalued. Monitor the emotional tension level. Show respect by giving the client the benefit of the doubt. Continue to clarify points of view that you perceive.

4. Contrast—Explaining what you do not and do mean. People sometimes misinterpret what they think you intend, not what you say. First, imagine what others might erroneously conclude about what you said. Next, explain that this is what you do not mean. Finally, as a contrast, explain what you do mean. This allows you to reestablish mutual purpose and to help explain why you are drawing the issue to your client’s attention (Patterson et al., 2005).

Sharing Perspectives

It is not unusual for leaders to consider their own perspective as reality. The sixth skill involves the idea of sharing perspective. Education leaders live in a world that goes fast and furious, where people do not always take the time to step back and reflect. When going fast, education leaders often confuse their perspectives with reality and have difficulty truly understanding the point of view of others. The coach has an opportunity to step in, have a client take a deep breath, and provide other perspectives when discussing a client's agenda. Perspectives are not right or wrong by default. A perspective is simply the point of view of a single person based on their life experiences and values, among other things. Everyone has one and sometimes we choose to share it and sometimes we do not. The coach recognizes that our perspectives shape how we act or react in a situation.

The role of the coach can be to help a client see a different perspective or perhaps have the client view a situation from another person's viewpoint. Walking in someone else's shoes is what we often call it. Learning and understanding this skill allows us to better explore a situation that happened in the past—or it can support you in making an upcoming decision. This learned skill can help the client reach out to others and better understand their point of view on a specific topic or situation. It is about being truly and authentically curious about hearing and learning more about their perspective.

The role of the coach is to help your client feel safe. This can be done by creating a shared perspective. Begin by focusing on what you do agree on and then have the client describe their version of events and indicate where you see eye-to-eye. It should not

matter that the client views things differently as long as the coach can move into problem solving together.

Affirmation

Affirmation, the seventh skill, when used effectively, enables a coach to really connect with a client. When coaching, it is your job to make sure that your client feels in control of their own life choices, as overwhelming as their life may become. Then, it all depends on the coach saying the right things, in the right ways, and at the right times. Collins (2009) states that “coaching is a conversation that involves more than a coach’s routinely asking one question after another and listening” (p. 111). Affirming a client is about giving feedback, both verbal and non-verbal in a manner that keeps the conversation going. By providing encouragement the client receives hope and validation. Collins notes that “feedback is most effective when it deals with specific issues, includes affirmation, and points to ways in which there might be further action or improvement” (p. 111).

There can be a fine line between feedback during a conversation and criticism. It is not always about what you say to a client but rather the way it is said. Avoid judgmental statements, pointing out faults, or attacking something that cannot be changed. Carter-Scott (2007) states that when affirming or providing feedback it should be “in a manner that is useful, empowering and easily deployable for future behavior change, choices, and further development” (p. 56).

Confrontation

The eighth skill, being able to confront, is another essential for education leaders. In fact, research seems to indicate that the leaders who are the most successful have

learned how to effectively confront. Patterson et al. (2005) in working with and researching opinion leaders state that “it wasn’t their technical skills, their title, or even something as intangible as, say, charisma. Opinion leaders wielded influence because they were the best at stepping up to colleagues, coworkers, or even their bosses, and holding them accountable” (p. 6).

Sometimes education leaders choose not to confront because they are afraid of the outcome, afraid of losing control, or are afraid of negative emotions. When an education leader handles confrontation well, it resolves the problem, and ideally even allows the relationship to grow and flourish (N. Howard, personal communication, October 13, 2012).

Peer coaching offers three parts to confrontation that benefit education leaders, with the ultimate goal of helping them grow and be more confident. The first step, before the confrontation, is to have the leader apply the “work on me first” thought process. This includes praying about the issue. Then asking three key questions: “What do I want to confront?” Then, “Why would a reasonable person do, say, or act this way?” And “If I confront, what will be the outcome?” Education leaders are encouraged to look inward to sort out their motive, to reflect on if they are being reasonable, and to find out if they are contributing to the problem (Howard, 2012). It is critical that when there is a confrontation the right issue is being addressed. Patterson et al. (2005) espouse, “first you have to take time to unbundle the problem. Second you must decide on what’s bothering you the most. Third you have to make it concise” (p. 31).

The second step during a confrontation is confronting with safety. Using the Level III listening skill is especially needed here. It is important to let the person know

what your expectations for them were and what you observed. This process is called “describing the gap.” Then state the facts as you see them. Simply describe it to them without judgment or accusation. Next diagnose the problem. This means looking for signs that the person is at ease, maybe contrasting the problem, and asking the person to explain what happened to get their viewpoint. Be listening to diagnose if the underlying cause for the confrontation is motivation, ability, or both. Use this opportunity to express natural consequences for the problem and find out if the person is willing and able to make appropriate changes (Howard, 2012).

The third and final step happens at the conclusion of the confrontation. Before the person leaves make sure that there is agreement to a plan of action. What is stated can be followed up in writing and involves who is responsible for making changes, what specific tasks or changes are expected, when these tasks or changes need to be completed by, and, finally, when the next meeting takes place to ensure that expectations are met (Howard, 2012). Scott (2004) believes that the lives we lead succeed or fail one conversation at a time. She writes, “when the conversation is real, the change occurs before the conversation is over. You will accomplish your goals by making every conversation you have as real as possible” (Scott, 2004, p. xv).

Finding Balance

One of the most fulfilling benefits to peer coaching is that it takes into consideration the whole of a person’s life. Unfortunately, for most leaders the idea of a balanced life seems unattainable and out of reach. The final skill discussed is that of balance and is beneficial for education leaders (Howard, 2012). A major goal of peer coaching is to broaden the client's options and to help give them perspective. This means

that the client must learn to set up boundaries and have the courage to say “yes” to some things and “no” to others (Cloud & Townsend, 2002). It should also be understood that finding balance is a dynamic process that is fluid and is always in motion. Leaders who believe that they have found balance are generally disappointed when they soon discover that they are out of balance (Whitworth et al., 1998). Whitworth et al. also remind us, “when choice is gone, balance is gone—and with it the possibility for fulfillment” (p. 129).

The peer coaching process allows for the coach to hold the client accountable for the choices they make. It also provides a means for support of the client who may be looking for a slower paced life. Williams and Menendez (2015) write that “clients are invited to bring their wholeness into coaching--the living, aware and embodied client is who we coach” (p. 183). Stuart Heller says that “how you move through space is how you move through life” (as cited in Williams & Menendez, 2015, p. 185). A goal of a coach is to help the client experience hope and wholeness, and to create a pace of life that honors renewal of energy.

Helping a client find balance is a seven-step process according to Whitworth et al. (1998):

1. Help the client see that they have tunnel vision and that there may be other ways of looking at things or alternate solutions.
2. Share with the client those other possibilities and/or have the client find those other solutions themselves. Try and find out why they think there is only one solution and then begin the process of discovering other choices.

3. Have the client vision on what their world might look like if they were given permission to make those other choices. How would their world be different and better?
4. Have the client commit to another choice as a pathway to action.
5. Ask the client to state or write down their action plan. This is an opportunity for the coach to show support, encouragement, and to assist with motivation.
6. The goal is for the client to commit to carrying out the agreed upon plan. This is the opportunity for the client to take control of their lives by realizing they have now chosen to try something different.
7. The client is now taking the action and putting into practice. This action plan is something that you inquire about in future coaching sessions (Whitworth et al., 1998).

Triads

The Florida Conference incorporates the use of triads in its training program. A triad is when three individuals practice one or more of the skills learned in theory during the Leadership Training process. One person takes on the role of the client, another the coach, and the third person is the observer. The observer's' role is to monitor the coaching session and take notes of how well the coach is applying the skill(s) learned. At the end of a 15-minute coaching session, the observer critiques what was observed. A discussion ensues on what worked and what did not for skill refinement. Then each of the persons in the triad rotates their role (J. Epperson, personal communication, September 18, 2010).

One of the strengths of the triad practice sessions is that it provides real life opportunities for education leaders to hone their coaching skills in a safe environment.

Another strength of triad practice is that real life problems are sometimes resolved right there.

Conclusion

Scazzero (2003) states that “the overall health of any church or ministry depends primarily on the emotional and spiritual health of its leadership” (p. 7). The overall health of the Florida Conference school system is directly related to the emotional, physical, and spiritual health of the education leaders in the Conference at all levels.

Peer coaching is a way for both the client and coach to take an honest look below the surface of their lives and find something better. Cloud and Townsend (2002) note that “we change our behavior when the pain of staying the same becomes greater than the pain of changing” (p. 72). The Florida Conference developed a safe environment for school leaders to explore their dreams, visions, express their core values, and intentionally work on developing their worldview.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions of education leaders of their experience of coaching or being coached during their participation in leadership training seminars provided by the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. There is a belief that Adventist education leaders must have confidence and skills to effect change in the Adventist education system, and that there needs to be a process for acquiring those skills. Many Adventist education leaders are performing their duties with very little administrative or leadership education, training, or support and the rate of retention is of concern (Blackmer, 2017; Cauley, 2006; Ledesma, 2011).

This study was guided by the following research question:

1. How do Adventist education leaders describe the experience of coaching or being coached?
 - a. What is the lived experience as a coach?
 - b. What is the lived experience as a coachee?

The research method was to interview education leaders in the Florida Conference who have participated in leadership training to know and understand what acquired skills may have impacted their ability to lead change. I collected data that show what skills were learned by leaders, if those skills were beneficial to education leaders, and how those skills impacted their ability to lead change. This inquiry-based approach explores a

social or human problem. In preparation for the interviews, Senge (2006) notes that in dialogue:

1. Participants must suspend their assumptions and preconceived ideas.
2. Participants must regard one another as colleagues (equals).
3. The facilitator (leader) holds the context of the dialog.

Research Design

A qualitative research design based on a phenomenological approach, in a multi-case setting, and utilizing narrative inquiry was chosen in that the participants have all experienced the same leadership training and coaching experience in the Florida Conference, helping to explore the research question: How do Adventist education leaders describe the experience of coaching or being coached?

I interviewed eleven education leaders, including superintendents, principals, and athletic directors. This provided a broad sampling of those education leaders involved in leadership training and coaching. A constructivist approach was used for analysis to allow for flexible guidelines, interpretation, and inquiry that may be influenced by the researcher (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Rudestam & Newton, 2007).

Qualitative Research

Marshall and Rossman (2011) state, “in qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument. Her presence in the lives of the participants invited to be part of the study is fundamental to the methodology” (p. 112). Creswell (2007) notes that research is important to a host of people for several reasons including adding to our knowledge. This includes research contributing to existing information and gaining a deeper understanding of problems. Also, research improves practice. This includes gaining new ideas, insights,

and new approaches to problem solving. Finally, that research informs policy debates and states that “research also creates conversations about important issues when policy makers debate educational topics” (Creswell, 2007, p. 6).

Research is done either through quantitative or qualitative means, depending on the type of problem being researched. Creswell (2007) describes quantitative research as:

a type of educational research in which the researcher decides what to study; asks specific, narrow questions; collects quantifiable data from participants; analyzes these numbers using statistics; and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased manner and defines qualitative research as a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner. (p. 46)

I have chosen to conduct a qualitative study because this study is exploratory in nature and my purpose is to understand “the inner experiences of participants” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). There are various traditions or strategies that are used when conducting qualitative research. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) state that “qualitative research is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena and is based essentially on a constructivist and/or critical perspective” (p. 10). Some of the strategies used include case study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, narrative inquiry/biography, and/or hermeneutics. In a qualitative study, the research is centered on a perceived problem or research question that the researcher wants to confront, recognizing that there is not much information about the problem, wants to understand, and also has a focus on the perception of its participants. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) state, “what is important is that a topic be so narrowly defined and discrete that it is specific enough to be carried out to its conclusion” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 34). Marshall and Rossman (2006) state, “qualitative research, then, is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena.

Its various genres are naturalistic, interpretive, and increasingly critical, and they typically draw on multiple methods of inquiry” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 2).

The hallmarks of qualitative research as noted by Rossman and Rallis (2003) and described by Marshall and Rossman (2006) as typically “enacted in naturalistic settings; draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of participants in the study; has the focus on context; is emerging and evolving; and is fundamentally interpretive” (p. 2). In addition, Rossman and Rallis (2003, as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 2) state that qualitative researchers typically:

tend to view social worlds as holistic and complex, engage in systematic reflection on the conduct of the research, remain sensitive to their own biographies/social identities and how these shape the study (i.e. they are reflexive), and rely on complex reasoning that moves dialectically between deduction and induction. (p. 2)

A qualitative research design was chosen because it allows me to enter the world of the Adventist education leader in the Florida Conference who has experienced leadership training coupled with the coaching process. This allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experiences and the skills acquired to affect change (Cauley, 2006; Ledesma, 2011). Further, I was able to describe the perceptions of education leaders of their experience of coaching or being coached during their participation in leadership training seminars provided by the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenology, according to Trochim (2006) can be considered a philosophical movement and encompasses multiple approaches to qualitative methodology. It is recognized by researchers as having a beginning in the social disciplines, i.e.,

psychology, sociology, social work (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; Trochim, 2006; Yin, 2003). This phenomenological movement is credited to Husserl (1970) as a radically new way of doing philosophy. Further, theorists, such as Heidegger (1962), have redefined phenomenology, not emphasizing a philosophical discipline that had a focus on consciousness and essences of phenomena, with a movement towards study of existential and hermeneutic (interpretive) dimensions (Finlay, 2009).

In addition, Trochim and Donnelly (2006) express phenomenology as “a school of thought that emphasizes a focus on people’s subjective experiences and interpretations of the world. That is, the phenomenologist wants to understand how the world appears to others” (n.p.). Langdrige (2007) defines phenomenology as a discipline that “aims to focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live in and what it means to them; a focus on people's lived experience” (p .4). She expresses that phenomenology focuses on the human experience as a topic and it concerns itself with meaning and the way in which meaning arises in experience.

Merriam (2002) writes that “although all qualitative research is phenomenological in the sense that there is a focus on people’s experience, a phenomenological study seeks to understand the essence or structure of a phenomenon” (p. 93). Also, there is an effort made in phenomenological research to “enter that dialogue, and eavesdrop, as it were; to listen in” (Van der Mescht, 1999, p. 3, as cited in Merriam, 2002, p. 93). The term phenomenology, according to Berrios (1989),

refers to a set of philosophical doctrines loosely sharing; (a) assumptions as to what the world is like (ontological) and how it can be known (epistemological) and (b) strategies for the descriptive management of the mental entities relating to such a world. (as cited in Nafte, 2011, p. 182)

Grbich (2007) describes phenomenology as an approach used to understand

hidden meanings and essences of an experience together with the participant. All of these scholars share that phenomenology is required to go deep into the human experience, trace the essence of the phenomenon, and analyze the experience of the participants in its original form.

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) write about lived experiences and how meaning is derived from this experience as noted when looking at phenomenology, “we have come to see that the complex understanding of ‘experience’ invokes a lived process, an unfurling of perspectives and meanings, which are unique to the person’s embodied and situated relationship to the world” (p. 21). Smith et. al. continues by noting that “we commit ourselves to exploring, describing, interpreting and situating the means by which our participants make sense of their experiences” (p. 40). An objective of this study was to access ample and thorough personal accounts of the participants. This involved face-to-face interviews and requests for documents from participants.

In an article on phenomenology, Wojnar and Swanson (2007) elaborate on the founder of phenomenology, Husserl’s (1859–1938) belief that through bracketing the objective is to strip away any previous bias by suspending personal thoughts and notions while listening to and reflecting on the participant’s experiences. It is by identifying common features, known as universal essences or eidetic structures, which represent the true nature of the phenomenon under study, that makes it possible to extend the research findings and conclusions, allowing for statistical possibilities, and providing a foundation for broad generalization (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Luft, 2003; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). In Husserl’s (1970) “descriptive approach” to phenomenology lies the belief that humans are free agents who can influence their environment and culture. During the twentieth

century, Husserl's ideas on phenomenological study and research evolved and were further developed by contemporary scholars, including Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty (Moran, 2000).

Heidegger, a student of Husserl, is credited with the concept of hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology (Cohen, 1987; Draucker, 1999). These two scholars differ in their approach to phenomenology. Heidegger (1962) espouses "lifeworld" or the human way of "being-in-the-world" (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Hermeneutic phenomenology goes further than just understanding the essence of lived experiences. It is concerned with the broader experience of the participant life (Campbell, 2001; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Also, Heidegger (1962) expresses that it is difficult to strip away personal biases, and that it is desirable to have prior knowledge and experience that may contribute to an understanding of the phenomenon under study (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Wojnar and Swanson (2007) express that hermeneutic phenomenology is best understood when there is a mixture of the researcher's knowledge of the phenomenon and the participants' narrative of their lived experience.

To summarize, the descriptive phenomenology method is primarily descriptive with some interpretive influence, however, I work to address each method separately, empathizing through immersion in a lived experience with participants, and then describing the experience (Giorgi, 2009). Descriptive phenomenology tends to be best adapted to research that is concerned with descriptive phenomena in situations that have little to no previous study (Beck, 1992; Giorgi, 2009; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Swanson-Kauffman & Schonwald, 1988). In contrast, hermeneutic phenomenology tends to be primarily concerned with interpretation rather than description. Some scholars believe

that all description is already interpretive. The researcher interprets lived experiences through language, storytelling, narrative, and understanding that takes place within the interaction between researcher and participant (Benner, 1994; Draucker, 1999; Koch, 1995; Parse, 2001).

This study utilizes a hermeneutic phenomenological approach because I believe it provides a clear method to understand the participants lived experiences and an endeavor to describe meaning to that lived experience as it relates to the broader context of their personal and professional lives. Van Manen (1990) notes that in phenomenology we attempt to “grasp the very nature” (p. 177) of the phenomenon. Historically, the process of phenomenological research is characterized by in-depth interviews, narrative accounts of participants lived experiences, and analysis of data to prompt findings.

Case-Study Research

Case study is one of the most frequently used qualitative research methodologies. Much of what we know today about the empirical world is due to case study research, and most disciplines have been impacted by case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Trochim (2006) describes the case-study as an intensive study that involves a specific individual or context and concludes that there are many ways to conduct a case-study, and various combinations of methods can be used. A case-study happens in a location or demographic area as noted by Connelly and Clandinin (2006) in their description of “a specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where the inquiry and events take place” (p. 480) and recognizing that “all events take place some place” (p. 481). This case study took place in the territory of the Florida Conference

involving specific individuals who are education leaders, have participated in leadership training, and have acquired coaching skills.

Case study as a social science research strategy does have its detractors for several reasons. Yin (2003) notes that one concern is a lack of well-defined and well-structured protocols, creating dissonance with emerging case study researchers. Merriam (1998) states that there is confusion “as to what a case study is and how it can be differentiated from other types of qualitative research” (p. xi). Merriam writes that “part of the confusion surrounding case studies is that the process of conducting case study research is conflated with both the unit of study (the case) and the product of their type of investigation” (p. 27).

Other critics of case-study research are concerned that there is subjective case selection or bias. The major concern is that the researcher may have too much prior knowledge of a case leading to favoritism of a hypothesis. An argument can be made that prior knowledge may lead to better research, a stronger theoretical base, leading to more rigor in theory testing. Case studies are generally strong precisely where quantitative studies are weaker (George & Bennett, 2005). George and Bennett identify four advantages of case studies and compare them to quantitative methods, as cited in Starman (2013), and include “their potential to achieve high conceptual validity, strong procedures for fostering new hypotheses, usefulness for closely examining the hypothesized role of causal mechanisms in the context of individual cases, and their capacity for addressing causal complexity” (p. 36).

Research methodologists do not agree on the design and implementation of case study, which makes it a work in progress, contested, and detracts from its full

development. Flyvbjerg (2006) notes that concerns about case-study research focus on the scientific method as they relate to theory, reliability, and validity. He lists five common misunderstandings in case-study research:

Misunderstanding no. 1. General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge.

Misunderstanding no. 2. One cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development.

Misunderstanding no. 3. The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses; that is, in the first stage of a total research process, while other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building.

Misunderstanding no. 4. The case study contains a bias toward verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions.

Misunderstanding no. 5. It is often difficult to summarize and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies.

(Flyvbjerg, 2006, pp. 3-4)

Flyvbjerg (2006) believes that the conventional wisdom about case-study research, the misunderstandings described, is wrong and may be misleading. He states,

For the reasons given above, the case study is a necessary and sufficient method for certain important research tasks in the social sciences, and it is a method that holds up well when compared to other methods in the gamut of social science research methodology. (p. 26)

Case-studies are often selective, focusing on one or two issues that are relevant to understanding the system being studied. Case-studies tend to have more than one perspective. In this study, I consider not just the voice and perspective of a participant, but also of the full body of participants, and the interaction between them within a system. This aspect is an important characteristic that case-studies possess. They give a voice to those who may not have power or a ready voice (Stake, 1995).

The case-study research method was chosen because it simplifies and brings understanding to an issue, it is focused, it has a time frame and boundaries, it can extend the experience, and it can add strength to what is already known from previous research. I

believe the advantage of a case-study method lies in its applicability to real contemporary life and its accessibility to participants. The reader can relate directly to findings and experiences that may lead to better understanding of complex real-life issues. Researcher Robert Yin defines the case-study research method as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (1984, p. 23; 2003, p. 12). When it comes to including case-study as a research method it is noted that “sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases—not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 224, as cited in Starman, 2013, pp. 41–42).

Narrative Inquiry

Storytelling has been a part of the human fabric and experience since the beginning of time. Telling stories in word, writing, and pictures has been a way of communication for humans to pass on culture, traditions, and to form understanding. It is through the process of storytelling that we enrich our lives, bring meaning to our lives, and help to strengthen our communities. The emergence of narrative inquiry and methodology is relatively new in the world of research (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, Reissman & Speedy, 2007). Even so, there tends to be agreement on a working definition:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the

phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study. (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 375)

Narrative inquiry is a way of comprehension and inquiring into an experience through “collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20).

Clandinin and Huber (2010) state that:

Thinking narratively about a phenomenon challenges the dominant story of phenomenon as fixed and unchanging throughout an inquiry. Thinking narratively also influences the living of a narrative inquiry. Many narrative inquirers draw on ideas such as self-facing, liminality, relational knowing, world-travelling, truth as communal, and un-knowing and not-knowing to describe their own and their participants’ living throughout an inquiry. (p. 9)

Kim Etherington (2016) states, “narrative inquiry is a means by which we systematically gather, analyze, and represent people’s stories as told by them, which challenges traditional and modernist views of truth, reality, knowledge and personhood” (p. 2). Marmon Silko (1996) believes that our identities are linked to our experiences in an identifiable location and we use storytelling/narratives to share these experiences.

Education leaders in the Florida Conference have stories to tell about their experiences that have defined them as leaders, managers, and administrators. They hope to share how leadership training seminars, coaching and being coached helped to transform their lives, professionally and personally. Ledesma (2011) noted from Clandinin and Connelly (2000):

As researchers, we come to each new inquiry field living our stories. Our participants also enter the inquiry in the midst of living their stories. Their lives do not begin the day we arrive, nor do they end as we leave. Their lives continue. Furthermore, the places in which they live and work, their classrooms, their schools, and their communities, are also in the midst when we researchers arrive. Their institutions and their communities, their landscapes in the broadest sense, are also in the midst of stories. (pp. 63-64)

Self as the Research Instrument

Craig and Huber (2007) and Clandinin and Huber (in press) note that narrative inquirers begin the process with personal justification, that is to justify the inquiry in the context of one's own life experiences and personal journey.

Upon reflection, my life experiences and personal journey have taken me to places that I would never have imagined. Success along the way can be attributed to many factors, including teachers who believed in me, family members who challenged me, colleagues who valued me, bosses who trusted me, and divine providence. I am in Adventist education today because I have worked with visionary leaders, and, in turn, was given the skills/tools needed to become a leader, and when used appropriately, I became a change agent in the system. My journey allows me to tell of my own experiences in leadership, how to persevere in tough times, how to celebrate in good times, and to give God the praise for all that is good.

Leadership began in a boarding high school classroom as a physical education instructor, intramurals director, and sports coach. This environment provided me with a microcosm of what it meant to lead people and organizations. I was a teacher, innovator, motivator, team builder, organizer, developer, and confidant. I was soon asked to become a dean of boys and operate a dormitory of adolescent young men. This challenge added depth, breadth, and maturity to my experience in education. I soon added the skills of counselor, public speaker, and was a boss to students under my supervision. These two-invaluable job embedded experiences provided me the opportunity to both mentor and coach young people.

I was encouraged by my principal and my dad to go back to pursue higher education and study school administration. They both felt that my talents and skill set

were in management and administration. I was enjoying life and work but understood that this was an opportunity to enhance my career and provide job security for my family. My boss and school board gave me an opportunity to both study and work at the same time. I graduated with a Masters in School Administration and was immediately offered a vice-principalship at the boarding high school I was working in. The next year I found myself in a principalship at the same boarding school and was able to put all the theory I had learned into practice. It was during these early years of teaching, coaching, operating a dormitory, and educational leadership that mentors and role models proved to be instrumental in my life.

My wife and I decided to add adventure into our lives and careers. We packed up our family and moved to Kenya, East Africa. I worked at an Adventist boarding mission school for seven years as principal, business manager, and teacher. This may have been the most rewarding time for me personally and professionally. Every day that I worked in Kenya was the best day of my life. Many more layers of leadership development and learning transpired. All my previous education experiences routinely came into play. It was also during this time that I learned a great deal about other cultures, nations, traditions, and it provided for an ever-expanding worldview. The campus was being built from scratch so newly acquired skills included facility building and development were honed. I was also the only supervisor of instruction for our system in Kenya. I received no mentoring or coaching during this time frame, so my goal was to provide this service to my staff.

The next assignment on my life's journey took me to Idaho and eastern Oregon where I began a new career as a lone superintendent of schools in the Adventist education

system for that district. There was no formal training, mentoring, or coaching for this career move and I found myself lost when working with the fourteen elementary schools under my supervision. Fortunately, a neighboring education director took me under her wing and coached me along the way. I was also responsible for one boarding high school and my life experiences provided me the necessary skill set to nurture, supervise, and provide guidance. A new skill was developed, and I routinely began the process of school evaluation for accreditation purposes. With several years of seasoning under my belt in Idaho I was asked to join a team of superintendents in the Florida Conference.

The Florida Conference provided me a new opportunity for professional growth and development. While in Florida I was fortunate to be surrounded by wise, visionary, strong, experienced, courageous, and spiritual leaders. The Florida Conference decided that to be relevant and effective as a 21st century evangelistic district of the Adventist church it needed a paradigm shift. They began developing leaders in ministry and education who could effect change and transformation within the organization. Equipping leaders was transacted through the process of leadership development with executive/co-active/peer coaching as the “delivery system for this process of equipping re-education” (Cauley, 2006, Abstract). Ministers and education leaders began the process and were trained by Nick Howard through peer coaching opportunities and leadership seminars. By becoming involved in this training, I discovered a re-education in acquiring new and different leadership skills and was soon involved in the training process myself. For me it became life changing. Upon reflection, I only wish someone had introduced me to the power of coaching many years ago. I feel I would have been a more insightful, empathic, courageous, and trusted leader had I only known.

Today, I work as a leader, resource developer, and influencer of curriculum and education policy within the NAD Adventist education system. We have a crisis of leadership in our system as evidenced by a struggle to maintain leaders and, as a system, are struggling to find educators who want and desire careers as education leaders (Blackmer, 2017; Ledesma, 2011). I believe that any leadership development program and initiative should consider the model of peer coaching as a way to develop, train, and provide professional development for its educators.

Purposeful Sampling

Sampling, in qualitative research, plays an important role and consideration should be made when making sample size and sampling considerations. According to Creswell (2007) purposeful sampling is synonymous with qualitative research. He states that “the researcher can select participants and research sites that are associated with the phenomenon and research problem being studied. The researcher needs to decide who or what is representative of the phenomenon being studied and how many sites or participants need to be included in the study to explore the research problem (p. 125), According to Patton (2002) and Suri (2011) purposeful sampling requires access to key informants in the field who can help in identifying information-rich cases.

The participants I chose were selected because of their specific characteristics that can inform the research question most appropriately. It has been noted by Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005), that there are different methods for selecting samples in qualitative research that may be used at different and appropriate times. They identified 22 sampling designs that they believe qualitative researchers may select that fall into two categories: random sampling schemes and non-random sampling schemes. My participants fall into

the non-random “schemes” category because they were chosen purposively.

Onwuegbuzie, Jiao, and Bostick (2004) discuss the select non-random group of education leaders that I have chosen in a category of “homogeneous sampling.” This involves sampling individuals, groups, or settings because they all possess similar characteristics or attributes. Also, studies in purposeful sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Onwuegbuzie et. al., 2004) discuss “criterion sampling,” of individuals, groups, or settings that meet a selected criterion. This is generally done for quality assurance purposes.

The purposeful sampling criterion used for this study helped to identify the appropriate participants needed for a rich case study. Criteria used were:

1. The education leaders have been in a supervisory role as either a sports coach, vice-principal, principal, associate superintendent, superintendent, director, vice-president, or any combination of these job titles.
2. The Florida Conference vice-president for education selected participants based on their voluntary participation in the Florida Conference leadership training program.
3. Their willingness to be interviewed.
4. Within the total sample, I maintained a balance within categories of sex, ethnicity, race, and leadership categories. This allowed for a more inclusive study.

To begin the process, I requested permission from the NAD Vice-President for Education, Larry Blackmer (see Appendix A), to begin a dialogue with Michael Cauley and Frank Runnels on developing a pool of qualified participants. Permission was granted (see Appendix B). Michael Cauley (see Appendix C) received a letter detailing

the purpose of the study, the criterion desired, and the interview questions for the study (see Appendix D). Frank Runnels issued the permission from the Florida Conference (see Appendix E). Once the pool of qualified participants (see Appendix F) was returned with contact information, I identified and selected a purposeful sample. These participants received an email notice from me in the form of a questionnaire to gain some initial information and to find out if there was an interest in participating (see Appendix G). The education leaders were selected based on the criteria listed above. Table 1 indicates the demographic breakdown of participants in the study.

Table 1

Participants' Characteristics/Demographics

Participant Pseudonym	Role	Leadership Experience Years	Leadership Training Years	Times Formally Coached	People Formally Coached	People Informally Coached	Gender
Emma	Principal	30	2	2	24	countless	F
Jerry	Superintendent	19	12	5	9	routinely	M
Olivia	Principal	6	4	4	7	many	F
Mia	Principal	13	4	2	5	often	F
Sophia	Superintendent	11	1	2	4	many	F
John	Principal	15	3	1	9	countless	M
Isabella	Superintendent	38	3	1	5	all the time	F
Earl	Superintendent	27	4	1	many	all the time	M
Josh	Athletic Director	13	1	4	5	all the time	M
Heidi	Superintendent	6	4	5	5	all the time	F
Pedro	Athletic Director	13	4	1	3	routinely	M

Data Collection

In this study, three data collection “strategies” were used to address the research question. First, I interviewed eleven participants, asking open-ended questions, to better

understand and explore the participants opinions and experiences. Second, during the interview, the participants were observed allowing me to look and listen in a systematic and meaningful way, not only to what was being said but also to record smiles, chuckles, laughter, winks, folded arms, etc. Lastly, documents such as written, visual, digital, and physical material that are relevant to the study and found in the research setting were collected prior to the study. Sometimes, artifacts (things or objects), often three-dimensional that can assist the participant with communicating something meaningful is often beneficial to qualitative research and is collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). However, there were no artifacts collected in this study.

The format for this study was a semi-structured interview (see Appendix D) with me asking several key questions to define those areas needing exploration but allowing for both participant and me to pursue an idea or response in greater detail. The semi-structured approach allows for flexibility, discovery, and elaboration, providing better context for the study. My goal for this approach was to provide an environment for education leaders to engage in open dialogue concerning their views on leadership training and the coaching process leading to an alignment with the purpose of my study and a deeper understanding of a social phenomenon (Ledesma, 2011; Seidman, 2006).

Patton (2002) states,

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The goal of interviewing them, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.

(p. 196)

All documents were collected prior to the commencement of the interviews. These items included journals from participant's, leadership skill documents, syllabi, visual methods, PowerPoints, drawings, certificates, etc. Places for documents to be found were in the physical environment, in files, and computers of participants (Grady, 2008; Lee, 2000; Pink, 2013; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, & Sechrest, 2000).

The Interview Protocol

The interview protocol (see Appendix H, Section 3. C) assumed that education leaders who participate in leadership training acquire skills that are useful in leadership. I attempted to discover through narrative inquiry, a multi-case-study, and phenomenological approach, what skills acquired by participants do they believe to be most beneficial to Adventist education leaders for personal and professional growth, and which skills were most beneficial for impacting organizational change within the Adventist education system. Further, I was also open to identifying any impediments in leadership training perceived by participants.

Interview Procedure

The research participants chosen for this study engaged in some form of peer coaching, as a coach and/or coachee. Permission to interview participants was given by the Florida Conference administration and Office of Education and was limited to purposive sampling participants who were willing to be engaged in an interview process and have their experiences recorded. The interviews were conducted face-to-face at a place of their choosing, subsequently, it was their place of employment for each participant. This provided a better environment for participants in terms of establishing rapport, comfort, and reducing stress. This environment also provided me an opportunity

to read body language, allow for spontaneity, and to build or strengthen relationships with the participants. All interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy. The interview questions (see Appendix D) were sent ahead of time to allow the participants time for thought and reflection. The interviews were transcribed. Participants were given the option of reviewing their comments prior to the completion of the dissertation, a process called member checking.

Data Analysis

According to Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014), “people are meaning finders and meaning makers; they can usually make sense of the most chaotic events. Our equilibrium depends on such skills: We keep the world consistent and predictable by organizing and interpreting it” (p. 277).

Data analysis, according to Marshall and Rossman (2011) is “the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to a mass of collected data—is messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating” (p. 207). Qualitative data analysis does not always follow a set pattern and has room to be flexible. Strauss and Corbin (1997) note that qualitative analysis explores and builds on grounded theory and seeks to find understanding about relationships, themes, and general statements. One of my objectives was to find themes centered around statements made by participants. The following tactics from Miles et al. (2014) were employed to minimize bias, confirm meanings, and to ensure quality outcomes.

1. Noting patterns and themes that the human mind finds intuitively, ‘we construct them from our observations of recurring phenomena’ (pp. 277–278).
2. Seeing plausibility, that is ‘intuitive understandings’ and ‘initial impressions,’ needing more checking, once confirmed, can be proven true. ‘Most of the conclusions drawn during analysis are

substantive, based on the content. But the analyst is constantly drawing procedural conclusions along the way as well' (pp. 278–279).

3. Clustering is when we inductively put things into categories, clusters, storage areas, folders, etc. Our goal is to better understand a phenomenon 'by grouping and then conceptualizing objects that have similar patterns or characteristics' (Miles et al., 2014, p. 279).
4. Counting takes place behind the scenes when the researcher makes judgments about quantities. By identifying a theme or a pattern, we begin the process of 'isolating' something that (a) happens a number of times and (b) consistently happens in a specific way.
5. Making contrasts and comparisons is something we do intuitively. Generally, we compare or contrast two sets of things that have some differences.
6. Partitioning variables is useful when looking for differences when something may be blurred and may be more important than integrating.
7. When factoring, the data is condensed by 'making a smaller number of patterns from a larger number of patterns, or a smaller number of categories from a larger number of categories' (p. 286).
8. Looking for relations between variables, if there are any, is an analytic tactic. (p. 288).
9. When building a logical chain of evidence with data, some conditions must be met: '*Several* participants with *different* roles have to emphasize the factors independently and *indicate the causal links*, directly or indirectly.' Also 'you have to *verify* the logical predictions and the claims, finally, *countervailing evidence* has to be accounted for.' (Italics from text, pp. 291-292).
10. The findings of the study are being compared to overarching and other similar studies to balance the findings and to understand the 'how' and 'why' of the phenomena that is being studied. (p. 292).

Because I did not want the findings of the study to emerge from my own thoughts, perspectives, and beliefs, I needed to be aware of, and avoid, the recognized common sources of analytic bias that include: "overstating events as 'more patterned or congruent than they really are,' 'overweighting' data from elites, 'underrepresenting' the less articulate, pursuing my personal agenda, and losing perspective" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 294). In addition, I implemented "tactics" for testing or confirming my findings.

Marshall and Rossman (2011) outlined typical analytical procedures of qualitative research into seven phases:

1. The researcher spends time organizing data, gathering data, editing data, cleaning up the data, developing a log or table to record pertinent information and loading data into software programs.
2. The researcher spends time immersing themselves in the data, reading and rereading, the data, reporting on the data, and finding ways to record the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002; Yin; 2003).
3. The researcher is interested in finding themes and categories.
4. The researcher thinks analytically through coding of the data and applies a coding scheme for organization.
5. The researcher writes analytic memos on how the data are coming together and patterns that may be emerging. These memos can be reflection pieces and according to Wolcott (1994), this is the transformational process that is unfolding. This is the process where the researcher begins to interpret the data.
6. The researcher is comparing emerging themes with what has been written in the literature review and looking for anything new, surprising, or alternative understandings. When the researcher becomes aware that patterns are repeating and that there is saturation of data, new data collection may occur or simply just lead to the refinement of the current data and analysis (Saumure & Given, 2008).
7. The researcher is now drawing the final conclusions and writing the report. (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, pp. 205-224)

Marshall and Rossman (2011) state that “in choosing words to summarize and reflect the complexity of the data, the researcher is engaging in the interpretive act, lending shape and form-meaning to mountains of raw data” (p. 222).

Ensuring High-quality Results

This study explores the stories of eleven Adventist school leaders within the Florida Conference who attended Florida Conference Leadership Training seminars and participated in the Co-Active Coaching process as a coach for other leaders, and who were themselves coached. Through narrative of the lived experiences of each school leader, I hope to show that the coaching experience provides confidence and skills that enhances their personal and professional lives.

Conducting Ethical Research

When conducting research, good ethical practices should be followed. These include honesty in reporting data, respecting the research site, and respecting people's rights and privacy. Johnson (2007) states, "transformation places ethics at the center of the workplace, significantly altering attitudes, thinking, communication, behavior, culture, and systems" (Johnson, 2007, p. xv). Johnson emphasizes the centrality of communication in the transformation process. Key is the understanding that listening is more important than speaking. He admonishes us to be aware of those around us, acknowledging them and giving them value.

The researcher should be cognizant of those in their sphere of influence and Johnson (2007) reminds us, "the exercise of influence is not an option in the workplace. We must influence others if we are to fulfill our roles" (p. 115). He reminds the researcher that there can be danger in having a position of influence or power leading to unethical behavior. We should use power judiciously and as Johnson states, "seek to serve others, use positional power with caution, be open to influence, and empower others" (p. 136). Johnson (2009) states that "ethics is at the heart of leadership" (p. xvi).

Trustworthiness/Internal Validity

In qualitative research, Merriam (1998) notes that humans are the instruments of data collection and analysis. Through interviews, observation, collection of documents and artifacts, it is the researcher who becomes responsible for accurate interpretation of the narrative and data collection. It is important to remember that "qualitative analysis can be evocative, illuminating, masterful—and wrong" (Miles et. al., 2014, p. 293). It is my objective to listen, analyze, interpret, record, understand, and report on what

education leaders believe was their experience in the coaching process in the Florida Conference.

While conducting my study I followed the standards of the American Anthropological Association, as discussed by Glesne and Peshkin (1992). This includes protecting the anonymity of the participants by assigning a pseudonym to each participant. The case studies are discussed and reviewed as a composite and not by individuals. Also, I provided full disclosure about the nature of the study to participants. Data storage included the filing of handwritten notes, the data collection on a personal computer, and secure storage of digital recordings on an external hard drive (Creswell, 2007; Davidson, 1996; Plummer, 1983).

Wanting to ensure that the account of the study is valid, reliable, objective, trustworthy, and reflective of qualitative work, I used recognized quantitative terminology in the study, such as “credibility,” “authenticity,” “transferability,” “dependability,” and “confirmability,” as noted by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

The idea of transferability invites the reader to draw connections between parts of a study and their own experience. Readers will understand a research situation and then compare them to a situation or environment that they can identify with. If the reader finds enough similarities between two situations, they may conclude that the results of the research would be similar or the same to their situation (Barnes et al., 1994-2012). In this study, the results are used to inform the reader of the impact of coaching education leaders, identify the skills taught, document the skills perceived to be needed for success, and inform the reader about the practice methods set aside for leaders to hone their skills in a safe environment.

Institutional Review Board

The completed proposal was presented to my dissertation advisor and committee for approval. Once approved, the Institutional Review Board protocols required by Andrews University were implemented allowing me to begin the process of doing study in the field. This process required submission of the Application for Approval of Research Involving Human Subjects Form prior to study. Also submitted was the Research Protocol document (see Appendix H). The Certificate of Completion was received after all the appropriate documents were completed and submitted.

An Informed Consent to be Interviewed document was developed and then signed by each participant. Prior to the face-to-face meeting with the participants, they were informed via email about the purpose of the study (see Appendix G); were provided interview questions prior to the first meeting (see Appendix D); were notified about confidentiality matters; and were provided an opportunity to recall any parts of the narrative post-interview. It was of paramount concern that each participant understood my great respect and appreciation for participating in this study. I was concerned about ethics and trustworthiness pre, during, and post study. Of concern to me was developing and maintaining positive relationships with the participants, with stakeholders, with peers, and with the community at large. Ethics were always my most important consideration during each phase of the study (Creswell, 2008; Davies & Dodd, 2002; Hesse-Bieber & Leavy, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

As mentioned previously, due to a shortage of education leaders, there is a strong desire to find, train, nurture/support, and maintain leadership. There is a profound interest in new models of professional development for education leaders within the NAD. This

study was supported by NAD administration (see Appendices A and B), the Florida Conference (see Appendices C, E, and F), and the Southern Union Conference Office of Education (see Appendices I and J), recognizing the value attributed to coaching leaders as a means to professional growth and leader development.

Summary

The research design chosen for this study followed the outline and protocols written by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) and Creswell (2008). This qualitative study was based on the interplay between a phenomenological approach, a case study, utilizing narrative inquiry through semi-structured interviews in a face-to-face setting. As noted by Marshall and Rossman (2006), “the researcher is the instrument.” My presence in the lives of the participants before and during their leadership training experience gave me a unique window to explore and to understand the inner experiences of the participants. To accomplish this, I took to heart what Marshall and Rossman state, “qualitative research, then, is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena. Its various genres are naturalistic, interpretive, and increasingly critical, and they typically draw on multiple methods of inquiry” (p. 2). In addition, the hallmarks of qualitative research—as noted by Rossman and Rallis (2003) and described by Marshall and Rossman (2006)—were pursued and were “enacted in naturalistic settings; draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of participants in the study; has the focus on context; is emerging and evolving; and is fundamentally interpretive” (p. 2). The sample size was eleven education leaders. A constructivist approach to analyze data was used to allow for flexible guidelines, interpretation, and inquiry that may be influenced by the researcher.

My expression of the findings of participants was a narrative as told to me by the participants and in turn, I use narrative to tell the story as noted by Creswell (2007) “using paradigm thinking to create descriptions of themes that hold across stories” (p. 54). In narrative studies there are several approaches that can be used. I chose to use the personal experience approach, as it pertained to each participant journey into leadership development and peer coaching, offering me a glimpse of their individual “private situation or communal folklore” as it pertained to leadership development and more specifically “peer coaching” (p. 55). I was able to collect information on each participant to better understand the history of each participant.

Creswell (2007) explains that “case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). This approach resonated with me and fit my goal for the research. Creswell continues by stating that “case study research is a qualitative approach to which the investigator explores a bounded system [Florida Conference Leadership Training] . . . over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information [interview, observation, syllabus, miscellaneous documents], and reports a case description and case-based themes” (p. 73).

While there are several types of case study designs, I chose to do an intrinsic case study “in which the focus in on the case itself [example, Florida Conference Leadership Training and Peer Coaching]” (p. 74). Interestingly, Creswell notes that this approach or methodology “resembles the focus of a narrative research” (p. 74). In addition, this study utilized a hermeneutic phenomenological approach because I believe it provided a clear method to understand the participants lived experiences and an endeavor to ascribe

meaning to that lived experience as it relates to the broader context of their personal and professional lives. Also, the case-study research method was chosen because it simplifies and brings understanding to an issue, it is focused, it has a time frame and boundaries, it can extend the experience, and it can add strength to what is already known from previous research.

The interview protocol allowed me to inquire about more personal information at the beginning of the interview for the purpose of gaining demographic information and to gain better knowledge of each participant.

Last, the following validation strategies were implemented as supported by Creswell (2007), prolonged engagement in the field, peer review, researcher bias, member checking, and generalizability and transferability:

1. Prolonged Engagement in the Field: The researcher spends time in the field, building trust with participants, learning the “local” education culture in the Florida Conference, and checking for any type of misinformation that the researcher may have introduced (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1991; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998).

2. Peer Review: The researcher provides an external check of the process with my leadership cohort regional group (former doctoral students) and dialogue of that feedback is retained. (Ely, Anzul et al., 1991; Erlandson et al., 1993; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998).

3. Researcher Bias: The researcher provides a notice of bias from the beginning of the study so that the reader understands any bias or assumption that may affect the inquiry (Merriam, 1998).

4. Generalizability and Transferability: In generalizability, the researcher provides a rich description of the participants and setting under study (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). Generalizability is the process of making predictions based on a recurring experience. If something occurs often, it would be expected to occur again in the future. It is sometimes viewed as “the extension of research findings and conclusions from a study conducted on a sample population to the population at large. While the dependability of this extension is not absolute, it is statistically probable” (Barnes et al., 1994-2012, p. 2).

In the next chapter, Results, I will report on the findings and analysis, emerging themes and subthemes uncovered and provide a narrative from the participants describing their experiences from participation in the Florida Conference Leadership Training program.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of education leaders who have participated in Florida Conference leadership training seminars (peer coaching training) and have been coached and have also coached other education leaders in the Florida Conference as a requirement of the seminar(s). The population for this study included eleven education leaders (five superintendents, four principals, and two athletic directors), all who attended the same leadership training seminar(s) and were employed by the Florida Conference during the training(s). Participants were asked to participate in a 45-minute face-to-face semi-structured interview at a location of their choosing.

Research Question

This study was guided by the following research question:

How do Adventist education leaders describe the experience of coaching or being coached?

- a. What is the lived experience as a coach?
- b. What is the lived experience as a coachee?

The Study Group Participants

This chapter focuses on interviews with the eleven participants of the study, observations made while conducting the interviews, and informed by documents

collected prior to the interview process with education leaders in the Florida Conference who participated in Florida Conference-sponsored leadership training that introduced Peer Coaching to both pastors and education leaders. The participants in this study were selected through a purposeful selection process in collaboration with their employing organization, and narrowly focused on education leaders. Fifteen education leaders were asked to participate, of which twelve responded, and eleven agreed to be interviewed.

Through the narrative of their lived experiences in the peer coaching training process, each education leader provided insights, perceptions, and their understanding of how leadership training, and subsequently acquiring coaching skills through the training, impacted their experience as a peer coach, a coachee, and subsequently their life experience. Each interview began with an introduction of the leader, their job title or role as a leader, their years of service in education and in education leadership, each leader's training experience, how many times they have been coached and have coached someone, and their gender. No mention of ethnicity was noted due to the small sample size and desire for anonymity. Table 1 provides, in more detail, characteristics of the participants that were gathered at the time of the interview.

The interview narrative then proceeded with inquiry asking what each leader liked about leadership training, how it benefited their work experience, was there anything they didn't like about the training, and what they would change if provided an opportunity?

A qualitative research design based on a phenomenological approach, in a multi-case setting, and utilizing narrative inquiry was chosen in that the participants have all experienced the same leadership training and coaching experience in the Florida Conference, helping to explore the main question: How do Adventist education leaders

describe the experience of coaching or being coached? I interviewed eleven education leaders, including superintendents, principals, and athletic directors. This provided a broad sampling of those education leaders involved in leadership training and Peer Coaching. A constructivist approach was selected to allow for flexible guidelines, interpretation, and inquiry that may be influenced by the researcher. My goal was to identify emerging themes, subthemes, and to apply analysis and interpretation to the data.

The purpose of the study, and the phenomenon under investigation in the research was to discover how participation in leadership training, with a focus on coaching skills, may have impacted the shared experiences and perceptions of education leaders in the Florida Conference.

Findings and Analysis

The following data represents the face-to-face semi-structured interview findings of education leaders, all who participated in leadership and peer coaching training in the Florida Conference, regarding their perceptions of the training processes and their shared experience as education leaders. In collaboration with the participant, I determined the date, time, and venue for the interview, creating a safe space to engage in open dialogue as it related to their coaching training experience. While the interview questions (see Appendix D) were generally followed during the interview process, allowance to deviate from the script was made based on responses from participants. This provided an opportunity for participants to include perspectives they felt were relevant, allowing me to capture additional information.

Emergent Themes

The recorded interviews were transcribed, pseudonyms assigned to ensure

anonymity, and the original recordings placed in a safe area. The transcripts were read and reread numerous times. NVivo, a software program used for qualitative and mixed-methods research, was employed to assist with the coding process. Clusters were formed providing broad categories as I was making sense of the data. From these broad categories recurring ideas were noted, subject matter was sorted, and topics were discovered from data. As a result of this process, themes began to emerge. The themes changed over time as data was collected and analyzed; however, four major themes became evident revealing insights into the perceptions and experiences of leadership training participants who participated in the Florida Conference peer coaching process. In addition to these four themes, I also discovered some unexpected findings.

The themes were:

1. Importance of peer coaching
2. Personal discovery
3. Concerns and challenges found in peer coaching
4. Benefits to peer coaching

Part of telling the story of each participant was ordering the themes in a way that best reflected the data and how each theme fit into the overarching story. All data were used to answer the research questions, including the participants' words and tacit knowledge observed that manifested itself as nods, winks, moments of silence, smiles, and chuckles. Through this process, and secondary to the themes, patterns emerged creating sub-themes. Recording the themes and subthemes provided a framework to complete the story telling of the participants. Table 2 denotes the themes and subthemes for quick reference. In this chapter, each theme and subtheme will be presented with

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes That Emerged From Data Sorting and Coding

Theme	Sub-theme
Importance of Peer Coaching	Learned Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Communication • Affirmation • Confrontation • Naming • Unpacking Emotions • Asking Open Ended Questions • Empathy
Personal Discovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding Balance • Prepares for Life and Work: Application of Theory and Practice in Peer Coaching • Spiritual Worldview • Vulnerability in the Process—Trust and Safety
Concerns and Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate Preparation • Training Structure • Time Constraints • Participating for Wrong Reasons • Selection Process
Benefits of Coaching Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation • Validation • Attrition • Reflective Practice

supporting quotes from participants; the unexpected findings will be enumerated upon; and finally, a brief overview of findings will be provided.

Importance of Peer Coaching

All study group participants remarked how important it was for them as an education leader to have engaged in the peer coaching process. This became the first emerging theme and the one mentioned most often by all participants. By actively participating in leadership and coaching training, learning, and practicing newly taught skills, coaching, or being coached, the participants noted they were provided an

opportunity to hone new methods for engagement. Participants referred to having a new “set of tools” for their toolbox. These newly acquired tools or skills provided study group participants competencies to address current challenges, improve relationships, and inspire confidence at work and home.

The value of an education leader’s involvement in the peer coaching process was expressed by all eleven study group participants. Heidi, an education superintendent described her experience this way:

The essence of what I learned is that growth is important for any leader, any person, and if I want to be true to the growth that will take me to my full potential, I cannot do it on my own. I love that quote that the eye cannot see itself, it needs a mirror; it needs a reflection. So, identifying people who are grounded, who have nothing to gain from a conversation, if you are not in a setting where someone is assigned to you, by being a friend or a professional, or someone who would hold me accountable to where I want to go, and how my decisions are aligning to that place where I want to be, that has been something that I learned in the process, in that training.

Pleased to have been invited to join the leadership training program, Isabella, an education superintendent discovered she could use newly acquired skills in numerous interactions. She mentioned that:

Coaching was very open ended, but at the same time you learned very specific skills that you, after you learn them, and you learn them well, can be used in a variety of different settings. . . . I appreciated the skills, the opportunity to practice them. And be able to transfer that to everyday life working with people.

Additionally, Pedro, an athletic director, remarked that he was already strong in some skills but used new skills to enhance his practice:

There are some other skills that were learned, but some [skills] I felt like were already like innately who I was, like empathy [WINK]. . . . So, for me it was about learning to [listen], and not feeling on the defensive, which helped me out personally the most.

Moreover, Sophia, an education superintendent, expressed that learning coaching skills:

[Allowed me to be] true to the person that God made me to be. There is a lot of freedom and clarity in that. Both in being known and knowing yourself. So, it feels good to be known. It feels good to be known by others and to be understood, but knowing yourself, and then honoring that about yourself. Knowing where you are, and then the freedom of accepting that about yourself, and working with that [SILENCE].

Furthermore, John, a principal, mentions he was unsure of what to make of coaching but then realized quickly that it changed him as a leader. He stated that:

To be honest with you, when I first got invited to do it, I thought it was going to be a waste of time [SMILE]. I had never been to seminars that I found were going to make me a better person. But when I got there, I met Dr. Nick Howard, and I started to see what all the coaching was about, and I said, ‘Wait a second, this can really change the way I do things.’ So, I really started paying attention, and started reading the books he told us to buy. I think without that, I would not be a principal today.

These five participants provide context for how peer coaching provided a conduit for transformation while building on skills already being used and expanding one’s own skillset toward everyday life interactions.

Continuing along the theme of importance, the eleven participants mentioned that skills learned in peer coaching training crossed over into their personal lives and relationships, adding importance to their skill acquisition. Some of the crossover was with their children, some with a spouse or other family members, and yet others with the community at large. Pedro notes that listening was an important skill that had real value to him, suggesting that:

The biggest confrontations I ended up having was with family, friends, parents [CHUCKLE]. The fact was I would take defense. I would defend what I already had set up. And the idea. I want to hear your idea, but I still want to do things my way. So, it just made me realize that a lot of times people just want to talk; they just want to be heard. And even if you don’t agree with them. As long as they felt that they were heard, or valued, they are going to feel okay about it.

Olivia, a principal, recalled that training in the listening skill helped her communicate better with her children, and remarked:

One of the tools that we learned [in peer coaching training] was how to listen [SMILE] and I'm not good at that yet, not as good as I'd like to be. But I've learned to use that with my special need's daughter. Communication and listening to her is key for me to be able to work with her and understand her better. My boys and I, we communicate differently, because of the way that I listen more, I listen more carefully.

Additionally, Emma, a principal expressed that sharing what she had learned about confrontation and communication with her older children had its rewards. She recalled that:

[My daughter] will sit down with her CEO and manager, and be able to speak kindly, but honestly and frankly about any situation. So, she has benefited . . . it is shareable. It is something that you can easily share. So, I have been able to use it.

Because Emma would share what she learned in peer coaching training with her spouse and use him as a sounding board, she noted that he quickly picked up on skills, too. She stated that:

I had the opportunity to have him read to me. He read, and I would share my learning with him after each training. He read the books, *Fierce Conversations* and *Crucial Confrontations*, and it has helped me to help him as my spouse. [For him] to grow like that as well. It also helped us in dealing with situations in a more forthright manner, lovingly, but honestly. Honestly. Definitely.

As a result of learning new skills, Sophia shares a story that is not uncommon for those who have some basic coaching skills and provides a powerful example of how it has impacted her personal life. She confessed that her husband has difficulty expressing his feelings and that she is the opposite, probably expressing them too much. However, through acquiring a set of coaching skills she was able to ask her husband open-ended questions that allowed for improved conversations. This led to a meaningful discovery underscoring the importance of peer coaching training as she described in this narrative:

We have been married for 31 years. We have this habit of doing something together. He assumes that if he doesn't do it, that I'm going to think he doesn't care. The truth is, I really don't care [CHUCKLE]. If he comes [along], it's not that meaningful to me. I mean, it's great. I don't mind if he comes. But sometimes

it's like, 'I need a break from you. Please, go do what you need to do.' Then also he says, 'I like to spend time with you.' We joke now that maybe the best of both worlds in his mind would be if I were to get a chair, and actually sit out there while he works on his car, which would bore me to tears, but he would be in heaven, because he would be with me. Even though he is not talking to me, he likes presence; he values the presence of me. [NODDING] So, that was really a big shift in our marriage, and it just came down to not assuming, asking good questions. Clarifying, and some of those tools that I learned in coaching.

Interestingly, Emma reflects on the importance of coaching skills, not only as an education leader, but also as a pastor's wife. While speaking of her interactions with church members she shared that, "I have been able to honestly [and] frankly deal with some crucial confrontations, very crucial conversations with people, which, as it turned out, . . . they appreciated in the long run."

Discovering that there is transfer of learning between sports coaching and peer coaching, John remarked that, "I learned what coaching was in the sense of education in those trainings because I was a professional volleyball coach, and it is very similar to what you do in peer coaching in an education setting."

Moreover, Isabella wants to make a difference when she interacts with family members. The importance of learning skills through peer coaching was emphasized when she reflected that:

My adopted family are guinea pigs [SMILE]. All the time with family members going through a hard time, I am sitting and listening. I ask them open-ended questions. I ask them questions, 'What do you think about this?' Or 'Have you thought about that?' . . . So yeah. I use [coaching skills] all the time informally with family members. They don't know they are being coached while I am talking to them [CHUCKLE] but part of my core values was I want to leave a legacy of helping people and making everybody that I touch better for the fact that they have associated with me or the path that I travel. . . . My motto is, if you see an open door, walk through it. [CHUCKLE] So, I do.

Josh, an athletic director, noted that coaching caused him to do some things differently. He stated that:

The coaching process made me understand the privilege of being a leader. The [positive] consequences of applying good strategies, of analyzing the things that are working, continue to do those, the things that needed change, and some things that we must stop doing and change direction completely. The reality is that the whole purpose of coaching is to make people better, in this case, leadership. So that was the beginning. I learned a lot.

The theme of importance of peer coaching continues as study group participants shared that learned skills were utilized almost without thinking while engaging others.

Mia, a principal, refers to it as a reflex and stated that:

I coach formally definitely, yes. And then informally just without being in the coaching class, a person still considers me their coach. [CHUCKLE] So, I use the skills I learned as a reflex when interacting with teachers and parents and family members.

Supporting Mia's observation, Earl, a superintendent, reflected that, "Informally, almost every phone call, and sometimes with family and friends, I find myself in coaching mode" [CHUCKLE].

The first theme provided an almost universal view of the importance of peer coaching training. Each individual story provided context to ascribe meaning to the whole enabling me to gain insight into what participants felt was needed for their growth as leaders. The participants were best able to express the value of peer coaching by providing examples of how the coaching experience and learning new skills led to positive outcomes in their professional lives, and by extension also in their personal lives, with immediate and extended family, and in some instances how these new skills became automatic while engaging with others.

The idea that coaching can make someone better, transforming relationships, and acquiring needed "tools" for engagement provided insight into how being a coach or being coached improved both personal and professional capacity.

Learned Skills

Study group participants while discussing the importance of peer coaching training would often single out a learned skill or group of skills. The identification of a new or learned skill became a subtheme to the importance of peer coaching. A list of coaching skills taught and utilized by participants to enhance competency are noted in Table 3.

Listening Skill

Listening was the learned skill mentioned as important most often by participants. It was expressed that people want to be listened to, to be heard, to be understood, and that the acquisition of this skill makes a difference in both professional and personal relationships. Through the interview process I noticed that participants were very self-aware that this skill provided value added to their coaching experience.

I found it interesting when Emma stated that:

I really learned the value of two ears and one mouth because I know that sometimes I am quick to speak. It is kind of my nature. Listening is one of the things I gleaned from coaching. And it made a difference. Because a lot of people—many employees, many colleagues, people on your team—just want an ear, they don't even want both if they get even one. They want you to hear them.

Additionally, part of Sophia's current responsibilities as a superintendent includes nurturing educators at schools. She noted that:

This year in particular, I've been given a couple of schools to nurture, and one that I am not nurturing. But I have just found myself getting really involved with, [finding]there are dysfunctional systems. There are dysfunctional schools where you have a principal and a board and pastor, and they are all dysfunctional. It's like a systemic issue. I've been out there multiple times to facilitate meetings between a teacher and principal, or a principal and a board chair, or a pastor and a principal, been out there several times, and I have the most important skill.

Table 3

Skills Identified and Learned in Florida Conference Leadership and Peer Coaching Training Seminar(s)

Learned Skill	Simply Defined
• Active Listening	Intentionally concentrating and listening at a deeper level to what is being said rather than just passively 'hearing' the message of the speaker. Listening for what is not being said, for what is being said, looking for non-verbal clues, holding the client accountable.
• Communication	Combines other skills like listening, speaking, observing, and empathizing.
• Affirmation	Stating that something is true. Affirmations are sentences aimed to affect the conscious and the subconscious minds, so that in turn, they affect our behavior, thinking patterns, habits, and environment.
• Confrontation	Generally, a three-step process to resolve disagreement when both parties feel safe and there is accountability.
• Naming	The process of identifying the essence of a negative situation, action, or perspective that inhibits, distorts, or blocks a client's vision of reality; the process of stating observations and facts around a vital blind spot without implications of judgment.
• Unpacking Emotions	To have time set apart to think, reflect, and find a process to sort out feelings.
• Asking Open Ended Questions	The main tools a coach uses to focus a conversation, foster higher exploration, push the client to dig deeper and reach, and ensure commitment. A statement that is intended to elicit a response greater than yes or no.
• Empathy	Having the ability to sense other people's emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling.

Maybe it's not as technical a level, but just your basic rephrasing, framing. So, reflecting and really listening, and helping them, teaching them how to do that with one another to listen. Just teaching them basic skills to communicate without hostility. So just your very basic listening skills I have found really, really helpful.

John believes that the skill of listening is the most valuable. It was a skill that did not come natural to him, but he was grateful that he was able to learn it. He emphasized that:

All the skills are valuable. But as a principal, there are some [skills] that really, really changed my life. The first one was listening. When you are in this position, if you don't learn to listen, you are going to get into a lot of trouble. You are going to make mistakes. You are going to make decisions that later come back to haunt you, because you didn't pay attention to what the problem really was. I thought the listening part helpful, especially for me as a Hispanic, because us

Hispanics, we have a hard time listening [SMILING]. We try to interrupt while you are talking, I think it is the nature of where we come from. But it taught me to sit back. Let me see what is happening, let me listen, at a deeper level, and let me analyze what I am going to say before I say it.

I found it noteworthy when Isabella stated that, “I use listening skills all the time.

As I listen, I am always listening to get at the deeper, what is not being said, in order to name it.”

When describing her top three new skills Heidi indicated that one skill really stood out, remarking that, “Listening, definitely. Listening openly, so I would say [listening] is in my top three . . . and having a daughter has helped me.”

Pedro appreciated knowing the various levels associated with listening and how they can be applied. He recognized this was a significant area of growth for him when he stated:

A lot of times when you listen to somebody, you are already prepared to give an answer [NODDING]. Or you are listening just long enough that they are quiet, and then it is time for you to say how you feel. I really appreciate the fact that when you are doing these other types of [coaching] skills, you were able to listen, hear, go back, converse, make sure that you were able to relay the message back to them in a way that they felt comfortable, and that they felt understood and heard.

Moreover, Pedro reflecting on positive interactions, said that:

A lot of parents just want to be listened to. I would get really defensive. I would try to defend what am I doing, instead of listening to how they felt. When I would listen, I was able to give a better answer. The same thing would happen in friendships and in marital relationships as well. You don't have to be so defensive about what someone is thinking. (‘Are they wrong?’) Instead, you can carry on a conversation.

The essence of acquiring the listening skill provided the participant the ability to grow as a leader, find deeper meaning and understanding in conversations, improve communication with individuals, and recognize the need others have in wanting to be heard. It was meaningful to discover that this skill made the biggest difference to all

eleven participants in their growth as a leader recognizing their need to actively listen and be slow to respond.

Communication Skill

Another important skill recalled by participants involved the notion of being able to communicate effectively as an essential life skill and appreciated learning more about it through training. Often participants would discuss skills as a set of tools, recognizing that one skill supports another skill. Often, listening and communication worked together. The ability to connect learned skills was especially meaningful to participants.

It was revealing when Sophia expressed that:

Sometimes it is the not knowing that is so frustrating. So that was really helpful. Some of your basic reflective listening techniques, learning how to rephrase what [people] are saying, and not assume. That is critical. Tried that one on my husband! Worked really well!! [SMILING] Improved a lot of things in our communication. It's like you might be married for 30 years, but don't assume anything. Don't assume that when they say that, that is what it means. You know?

Hence, Josh summed it up very nicely for all participants concluding that,

“Communication is everything. I heard this from several leaders that I admire the most.

And just keeping the channels open in order to share, once again, what is working, what can be improved on.”

Affirmation as a Skill

I found there was a general feeling amongst participants that leaders find ways to install confidence as they interact in their professional and personal lives. Affirming people, and their abilities goes a long way in building a team and gaining trust. This important skill was also reflected on by most participants. John summed it up by remarking that:

“As a principal you learn that affirmation is a very big quality. . . . When people do something good, you let them know it. Let them feel like they are part of a team.”

The Skill of Confrontation

Many participants expressed that they routinely have fierce conversations and crucial confrontations. I noted that this learned skill was one that empowered them, enabled them to move out of their comfort zones, and gave them courage to resolve interpersonal conflicts. When participants were taught how to have a fierce conversation, to have an honest conversation, and to confront in safety, it moved them from fear toward courage. It was evident that this became an invaluable skill as noted by John when he stated that:

As a principal you are confronting people all the time. The training of crucial confrontations I think was one of the best parts of the training. It is a little bit intimidating when you don't know the person, but you are trying to confront them anyway. I think that I learned from the [training] that the best way to confront somebody is to try to stop the fire right there. Instead of continuing it . . . we can try to fix what happened. You can't hide away from not confronting. As a principal, if you don't confront, that problem is going to escalate and get even bigger. So, I learned not to be afraid to confront. But I also learned how to confront, when to confront, and when to just listen and not confront. So, listening and confrontation for me was the best thing that ever happened to me in any of the [trainings].

Moreover, Isabella routinely utilizes the skill of confrontation to resolve problems. She recalled that:

When I'm interacting with teachers or dealing with people, I am looking at [the possibility]to confront. I'm always searching for a win-win situation and looking to establish common ground, in order for a confrontation to be successful. But at the end of the day, nobody enjoys confrontation, but neither do I shy away from it, because I think [confronting]can be quite productive.

Naming as a Skill

Participants expressed that learning the skill of naming was a great tool for their

toolbox. Sometimes a peer coaching trainee was not sure why they reacted in certain ways or felt certain emotions. The coaching participant was not able to describe or articulate the reason for the feeling or emotion. Part of the job of a coach is to listen, to probe, and if the coachee is not able to describe why they feel a certain way, they are given permission to assist by "naming" a possible reason why the coachee may feel that way. To accomplish this task, it was once again apparent that multiple coaching skills were utilized to resolve a problem.

While learning the skill of naming, Sophia described her experience this way:

If you are verbal processor, you are not sure why you are upset, or you are not sure why you have this dissatisfaction. So, this is more from the point of coaching other people that I knew that they were really bothered by a certain situation, and they were talking to me, talking through it. I am listening, and I am hearing a lot of emotion but I'm still not understanding why they are so upset. So, definitely you need listening skills to be able to name a problem. But you also have to connect with their emotion [to have empathy]. So, I was thinking, there is something underneath [their strong emotion]. I may need to name it for them.

Sophia continued by describing that as she listened, empathized, and asked open ended questions, she was able to name the problem for her colleague. She finishes by stating that:

Once [the problem] was named, then we were able to talk about how that would be dealt with. What process would need to be in place, and what support she would need from me if there was any way that I could support.

Learning how to identify a problem is helpful as noted by John who stated that, "Naming the problem was huge. Because if you can name the problem, you can solve it. But if you can't name it, we are still going to be battling all the time over really, what is the situation."

While talking with a colleague, Isabella put naming skills to use without even intending to and mentioned that:

Just the other day I was talking with a colleague and we were talking specifically about a teacher that we perceive was having a problem. We compared notes, because I had been to observe that individual, and now she has [also] been to observe that individual. We both found the same kinds of things. As we were talking, she made a statement that basically summarized what we were both feeling, and I just said, 'That's it. You named it.' [CHUCKLE] So naming, being able [to use coaching skills] is something I do on a consistent basis.

Part of the philosophy in peer coaching is the belief that an individual that is being coached has the capacity to find their own answers to problems and sees the coach as a guide to that end. Earl shared that:

Getting people to name whatever it was and help draw out the solutions that they already had, and you just keep asking questions and letting them own it, as opposed to me coming in and then that's one of the really important things even to this day. I can give you some feedback and whatnot, sometimes naming it, but if you can come up with your own solutions, and I can give you feedback on that, I think that's better. You own your answers and [solutions].

The Skill of Unpacking Emotions

It continued to be evident during the interview process that newly acquired coaching skills were supporting each other and that this array of skills was hardly independent of each other. Participants noted that some skills could be useful as a stand-alone, however, that was rarely the case. Knowing when to use a skill and how to use a skill signaled growth. Again, knowing how to listen was often the prerequisite for other learned skills. Unpacking emotions was identified as a skill, valued by some participants, and needed to resolve an issue.

While discussing a situation at work, Mia recalled that:

Once [a parent] was able to get the emotions out of the way, then they were able to see things in a different light. Even with me, I've learned sitting with people across from me, I try to look at them. Another thing that [I gleaned from peer coaching training] was why would a normally rational person behave so irrationally? That one has stuck with me over time. I just look at the parents and say, "Why would a normally rational person behave so irrationally?" [WINK and CHUCKLE] so yeah. I think unpacking emotions and being able to dig down, go deep, mining the vein, those are most useful in coaching.

Additionally, Heidi stated that:

One of the most important skills learned was unpacking emotion. Just because sometimes we forget to deal with the real issue. Because we get so distracted with all the emotions. But when you know their emotions, and once you deal with them, then you are able to deal with the real issue. That to me was eye opening.

Open-Ended Questions, a Skill

Another learned coaching skill described by participants as having value to them was the discovery of allowing others the space and time to reflect and respond to queries. Participants described this as learning how to ask open ended questions. They noted learning how to phrase a question to a coachee by asking “what,” “how,” “where,” and “when.” This then required the person they were in dialogue with to go beyond a yes or no response, facilitating communication, and often resolving a problem.

Capturing this skill best, Sophia described that using this coaching skill was especially beneficial to her when planting a new church and interacting with three men and three women on a committee. She reflected that in this setting:

You allow them to speak into areas in your life by asking good open-ended questions. We have been taught how to do that. . . . We start by telling our story. So, each person starts by telling their story. This week one of the women said to me, ‘This reminds me of your story, how you felt early on in your Christian experience that you had to earn the approval of God. How did you deal with this feeling? It sounds like you are trying to earn something from Him in this area of your life.’ Like boom, cut. Cut in a good way, like that is exactly what was going on. So, it is interesting to see how those strategies have played out in my personal life, and how rich and encouraging that is.

It became evident that through the peer coaching process, learning, practicing, and honing new skills was a deliberate part of the training. It was meaningful for the participants to use these new skills in combination with ones already in their “toolbox.” Many participants expressed appreciation for learning how and when to use a skill, while others indicated using a learned skill was now a reflex and done without thinking. All of

these learned and honed skills provided participants an array of additional tools to improve their work performance and competence and improving relationships as well.

Personal Discovery in Peer Coaching

The second theme emerged from participation in the peer coaching process: personal discovery (see Table 4). Study group participants expressed that at times leading was difficult. The time spent in learning, practice, training, and application of new methods, philosophies, and skills became a time of personal discovery for all participants. These education leaders noted that they wear many hats, strive for clarity in interactions, and are open to discovery of new ideas as they try to better themselves professionally. Participants recognized they needed additional tools in the toolbox but were uncertain what those tools were, how to acquire them, and how to apply them.

The discovery of using a new methodology to lead was expressed best by Emma, who upon reflection stated that:

It was MBC or management by coaching, but it was not by control. It was by collaboration, consultation, care, and management by coaching. This became my new management and leadership style, MBC. [SMILE] Peer coaching gave me more methodology, more ways, more skills of doing the same thing, but in a much more professional way, in a kinder way, in a way that would grow the other person.

Another good example of personal discovery was recalled by Mia who found using many skills useful. For her the act or process of gaining knowledge or understanding of her abilities, character, and feelings was especially meaningful. She added that she continued to use learned skills as she coaches, formally and informally, and mentioned that:

By using many of the skills learned I am able to help somebody go deeper. . . . It left you very, very vulnerable and it caused you to have to go deeper and think

Table 4

Personal Discovery Subthemes Identified and Defined as They Relate to Leadership Training in the Florida Conference

Subtheme	Simply Defined
Finding Balance	Finding balance is a dynamic process that is fluid and is always in motion. It considers your relationships, work, fitness and health, and emotional well-being. It's about finding time to take care of yourself for renewal and to recharge your battery.
Life Preparation	The idea that leadership and peer coaching training provides an opportunity to explore theories and make applications to life and work. May include reading and watching movies for the purpose of drawing meaning and analogies from history.
Spiritual Worldview	The training program was predicated on spiritual core values, ethics, building a sense of community, and approaching life's struggles from a biblical perspective This belief system is about the nature of God, people and reality, as well as what is wrong with the world and where we find remedies for our conditions.
Vulnerability, Trust, Safety	The idea that for the coaching experience to succeed required a high level of trust, of feeling safe, and an openness to being vulnerable. In this context vulnerability can be described as the quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed emotionally.

more. With the person that I am coaching right now, I find it to be very useful. She just needed someone to help her go deeper and to declutter some things.

Because education leaders find themselves wearing more than one hat, Sophia provided a good example of providing clarity responding that:

I often find that I end up coaching people that I am also supervising. Which has been a little challenging because when they start to tell me something, I stop them, and I say, 'Are you telling me this as your coach, or as your supervisor, or as your school nurturer? Because I need to know what hat to put on right now.'

One participant, Isabella had training in psychology and saw that as an advantage in coaching. She stated that:

What coaching did for me was to hone-in on how the coaching aspect was a little different from what I had already been used to from my background as a psychologist. But in psychology you come at it from a little different perspective, so it was helpful to be able to differentiate the coaching process versus the therapy process. Although I have to admit, I draw from a little bit of both. . . . When we were going through the coaching process, [the presenters] made very clear that

[coaching and psychology] need to be separated, but when I am in a situation, I fluidly move in between both. [SMILE and CHUCKLE]

The first sub-theme identified in Personal Discovery is one of finding balance and will be discussed next.

Finding Balance

Many participants shared that to accomplish their goals, and to succeed on all fronts, they often failed to understand the importance of having balance in their lives. It was shared that the ideal of striving for a balanced life was introduced in the training program. Two key learnings were germane to the notion of finding life balance. This included learning time management strategies and using energy wisely. During the interview it became apparent that the ideal notion of finding life balance was interwoven in narratives and became a subtheme to Personal Discovery and was something that resonated with most participants who often tied this to the spiritual side of coaches training.

The realization that education leaders might be out of balance caused Heidi to reveal that finding balance is something she strives for daily. She mentioned that:

Finding balance for me as a young mom and professional, going to school, and trying to do so many things at the same time—finding balance, I would say, I would move it to number one [of things learned]. It has allowed me to make decisions that changed my future, actually where I am today. Because I know what is important to me now. I knew how important having [life] balance was, so I was free to make decisions just because I knew where I was [heading]. So, it helped me personally to a point that I changed jobs. I did different things just to go there.

One participant, John recognized that as an education leader he was not making the best use of time or personnel. He remarked:

I had to learn a lot when it comes to time management, when it came to delegating. . . . So, there were several areas that were new to me, and through the

coaching process I was able to do a better job at both.

Intimating that time is a commodity that is fleeting, Josh, through the peer coaching process discovers that using it wisely will pay dividends. He emphasized:

Invest time in strategic planning because that will give you peace of mind, because then you are going to feel good about the steps and the things that you are accomplishing along the way because you plan to do it. A lot of times we are reactive instead of proactive.

Josh continues this subtheme, noting that key learnings from the coaching program for him included the following:

Time management, self-awareness, the planning part of it, and how to apply and involve more people in the process, so that applies to different competencies, but probably you know the teamwork in order to accomplish things, develop things. I want to go back to one of the theories that we were taught, which was emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, what you believe and how do you develop and grow.

While discussing balance, not all shared the same perspective. Pedro questions if there can really be balance at work. He stated that:

A lot of times that is what we want [a balanced lifestyle], and that is the perfect ideal and the perfect message. However, the way that our system typically works, it is not as balanced as we would like to say that it is. It's a balanced lifestyle for anyone who doesn't work in the system. But [if] you work in the [Adventist] system, it's completely unbalanced [SILENCE].

Because Pedro wanted to be completely transparent, he asked for permission to speak his mind. I nodded approval, and he continued by expressing that:

For Adventists outside the system, I think you can live a balanced life, because you have more choices of what you do with your time. Where within our system, it almost comes across as disrespectful, or not caring. If you tell people, 'No, I don't want to do children's story this week.' Or 'I don't want to be a greeter.' Or 'I don't want to do Sabbath School.' Like you get frowned on. 'Well, why don't you want to? Don't you love Jesus?' 'Yeah, I do love Jesus, but I want to spend time with my family. I have been doing that all week.' Within the system, we do really push for a balanced lifestyle. I just don't think we practice it as much.

Preparing for life and work while applying both theory and practice will be explored next.

Life Preparation

The second subtheme derived out of Personal Discovery was the idea that leadership and peer coaching training provided education leaders an opportunity to explore theories and make applications to their life and work. Participants noted that integral to the training was required reading to understand theory, and even watching movies, for the purpose of drawing meaning and analogies from history.

The subtheme of life preparation was cogently expressed by Josh. He noted that:

I liked most of the required outside reading that provided a little different theory of leadership, especially the books on emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. I liked to understand those and go deeper to learn about self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship development. It helped me to think about and believe in what I can accomplish. What I believe I can do with the help of my mentor, in this case, my coach. The assigned reading material was especially helpful in putting theory to practice.

Moreover, Heidi supports the notion that she benefited from required readings.

She stated that, “I benefited from the tools that I gained. The reading, the books that go along with those tools provided theory for the practice.”

Heidi was motivated to take what she learned in leadership training and peer coaching to a whole new level. She explained that:

I created a whole nine-week process for coaching, and it was completely virtual. It was in a secular environment, a school district. It was for teachers, by teachers. So, it was done from an educational standpoint, but the skills were to be used with the students. So professionally that helped me. Because I was able to pull from [theory and practice], then add some educational coaching books to what we were doing. Then actually I used the same format to create instructional coaching [as well].

It was through reading that Earl discovered his increased interest in coaching and leadership. He shared that:

One of the benefits that have come for me [in peer coaching is that] I am doing a little bit more reading in the various topics on my iPad. I have several books that

I'm rolling through and I have a collection of books. These have helped me in my leadership.

He went on to note that taking a personality test can be very revealing. In addition, he reiterated the importance of reading. He stated that:

I am involved in reading another book right now about core values. I looked at it and shared this with my wife. She said, 'That's you to a T.' Again, I think that would be one of the pieces [reading] for anybody that wants to go on this journey. This is just another piece that you need to do, because there is enough information out there that can help you out with the flat spots in your journey.

Finally, Earl elaborated on how he has applied what he has learned to practice. He expressed that:

I have 32 educators I am also coaching, mentoring, and training [to becoming coaches]. I am trying to get all of them certified. That is one of the main things. How to help them grow to their full potential, to the best of their abilities. So, they can transfer that to the students.

Other sub-themes began to emerge, and coaching taught from a Christian perspective provided additional insights.

Coaching and a Spiritual Worldview

As the theme of Personal Discovery was being developed, a third subtheme of coaching within a spiritual worldview became evident. Participants expressed that having a Christian worldview is essential to coaching in the Florida Conference. It was also noted that most of the handout materials shared during the training were predicated on spiritual core values, building a sense of community, and approaching life's struggles from a biblical perspective. In general, participants expressed that the goal for the Florida Conference training was to achieve transformation of self for the purpose of having the skills needed to support and facilitate change. Two participants articulated it best.

First, Earl told me that there is value in having a spiritual community in

leadership training and the coaching process. He revealed that:

For me, the first part of the training is really trying to set the tone spiritually for you as a spiritual leader on your campus. Both externally to your group but also to yourself. Because if you don't have that piece in place, you're dead [WINK].

Then, Heidi expressed that:

You want to make sure that spiritually the leaders are being fed and directed, and taking time to grow that area, but then to make sure that the content aligns to the expectation of behavior. This, I felt, is how the trainings happened in the Florida Conference.

Discovering value in vulnerability was an important and interesting subtheme that will be discussed next.

Vulnerability in Peer Coaching Process

The final subtheme to emerge out of Personal Discovery and extracted from coding was the idea that for the coaching experience to succeed, there had to be a high level of trust, of feeling safe, and an openness to being vulnerable. Some participants noted that initially this was a hard thing to do with strangers and even colleagues. However, over time trust was established and became foundational to relationship building and transparency. Josh responded as follows:

The ones who coached me were honest. They said, 'We are learning how to do this, too.' But they were sharing with me what they already knew, what things they went through, so that made the process even better. The fact that I felt that they were not experts, that they didn't pretend to be. The message that was coming from the [district] office was like we are preparing [all leaders] here, at every level. I think that is the beauty of coaching as process. That everybody involved assumes from the beginning, it is not about me; it's about things we can learn together in this process.

I discovered that the ideas and concepts revealed during leadership training and the peer coaching preparation process was foreign to most participants. Speaking to how the training was being delivered, Heidi stated that, "I learned to trust the process, not so

much the specifics about the program, but the process. How it works.”

It was the notion of collaboration and everyone sharing from an equal space, that prompted Emma to remark that:

I liked the openness, the self-disclosure, the comradery from everyone. I didn’t find anyone so closed that we couldn’t share. So, I liked that part. There was no leader, and no follower; everybody was one. Whether it was the president, the chief superintendent, it was a oneness. I liked that.

Furthermore, Mia confessed that:

It isn’t easy for me to be vulnerable. . . . I would choose safer things usually [to talk about]. Over time I shared more, but I still held back quite a bit. So, that was always difficult for me.

However, over time Mia believed it was worth the effort, and noted that:

What I liked about coaching was the opportunity to feel that you are in a safe space where you can speak with someone, not just a colleague but someone who is willing to listen and help you process things. I learned quite a bit from my coaches, and from the training as well, that I have been able to apply. Like I said, I am still coaching someone as well, a young lady that is in and out of education.

In a similar vein, Heidi stated that, “The comradery, the social aspect was good, getting to see people in leadership in different roles where they were learning along with me, and being vulnerable and open. I felt safe.”

Pedro was surprised at how open participants were in the training. He remarked that:

To have [education leaders] actually open up and talk to you about some of their personal life, and their details, and stuff they are going through, and things they need to work on, and how to give better advice, and go to a place where I felt I was trusted. To me that was, again, it was just an eye-opener. . . . We all go through a lot of issues on the same thing, even though we keep them hidden. It is also a life lesson on the way that you can handle other people, and other people can relate to you.

Most participants noted that having someone walk beside you as you are going through issues was an important aspect in the peer coaching process. Pedro indicates that

he learned to have a comfort level when speaking to a coach. He revealed that:

You go through these moments where you are stressed or you want a place that is comfortable, where you are able to share things with [someone], and not so much be put down for the way that you feel, but also be enlightened, [with a coach] who helps you figure things out on your own.

The safety and comfort level of interacting with a coach would sometimes continue, even after the training was completed. Pedro stated that:

I was lucky. For the gentleman who was doing my coaching, I got to continue to call from time to time and have good conversations. Whether it's home issues, work issues, sometimes just trying to do better. We can drop into coaching at any time during the conversation and go to the safe place.

Finally, Isabella expresses that there was value in being open and a prerequisite for success. She reflected that:

In retrospect, I think the people that go through that training, if you don't already have the ability to open yourself up and be vulnerable to really take a good look at yourself, then it is not as valuable as it would be to the person who has the ability to do that.

To find meaning in Personal Discovery was especially useful to most participants in peer coaching training. It was apparent that participants learned more about themselves through this process and allowed them to do so in a place of safety. I found that by learning new techniques participants were able to leverage the skills they possessed and develop new skills "to go deeper." Through the openness of the training, participants, in general, were able to accept who they were, and at the same time, find it safe to share vulnerabilities, and to explore new ways of engagement. For some it meant they would be "kinder and gentler;" for others it meant leading more balanced lives; for one it meant finding a new career; and for others it meant they would manage their time more efficiently. The self-awareness that was expressed allowed for one to recognize

they worked in a school system that honored being unbalanced. For another it showed them their flat spots.

I noticed that the peer coaching training process supported theory and practice in a way that was experiential. Participants took away life skills that they would use to enhance their work and relationships. It helped them to believe in themselves and what they could accomplish. Through this shared experience, as one participant said, “We can drop into coaching at any time during the conversation and go to the safe place.” I believe the value found in Personal Discovery for participants was the ability to open oneself up, and be vulnerable, to really take a good look at yourself.

Concerns and Challenges of Peer Coaching

The third emerging theme was a reflective look back on shared experiences of participants on what they perceived to have been concerns and challenges in the process of leadership and peer coaching training (see Table 5). Generally, no one wanted to express anything negative about the experience but the desire for complete transparency allowed participants to be open.

Inadequate Preparation

One shared perception was that not everyone who entered the leadership training and coaching seminars were there to improve their lives or professional disposition. Jerry, a superintendent, notes concern in the induction phase. He commented that:

I think the biggest flaw [in the peer coaching training process] is the assumption that people could start to make good progress without first having a clear identification of issues that were happening in their lives. I mean really! . . . I don't think there were enough guidelines for a person to know when he was over his head. Number two, I don't think it allowed them to really identify clearly beyond the basic level of what type of person they were.

Table 5

Concerns and Challenges Subthemes Identified and Defined as They Relate to Leadership Training in the Florida Conference

Subtheme	Simply Defined
Inadequate Preparation	In this context it refers to not having the proper requisite knowledge to engage in peer coaching training and that insufficient or inadequate preparation was observed.
Training Structure	Educators are accustomed to a structured program as part of their professional training. In this setting it was observed that initially the training program did not have a clearly detailed outline of activities, assignment of responsibilities, well defined goals and consequences or a path toward assessment.
Time Constraints	Participants expressed concern about limitations to fully engage during some exercises causing anxiety when a goal or expected outcome was not reached due to shortage of time.
Participating for the Wrong Reasons	Some participants questioned the motive of others who engaged in leadership training. Some assumptions were made by participants.
Selection Process	The process of selecting candidates to attend the leadership training program. The shortlisting of the candidates was based on their leadership roles and qualifications.

Over time, Jerry was able to process his experience and continued by expressing that:

We are great at deceiving ourselves; the Bible even tells us that. So, we are thinking we are great listeners, we think we're all these things, we think that we do all these things well, and we are stunned when we find out that possibly that is not our strength. One of those things actually turns out to be our weaknesses.

Furthermore, Jerry remarked that his training experience was mixed and discovered that there are limitations to being a life coach. He stated that:

In my opinion there were people who were trying to be counsellors; they were trying to be psychologists, and they were way out of their field. They were getting people to open up about things, and they were trying to work it through with no tools to do that.

Additionally, Josh provides another perspective. He shared that:

I would probably have liked to have had, occasionally, somebody who is an expert that went through some of the same things [that I did]. . . . At times I felt

that the coach was not an expert in that area. So, [there was a gap] in the sharing of information.

An additional shared concern emerged about the structure of the training program.

Training Structure

Viewing the training from the perspective of an educator would be expected from all the participants. There was a desire for more structure, learning outcomes, and assessment. Heidi provided this insight:

At first it was very frustrating for me not to see a structure. It felt like someone had an idea of what was going to be done, but initially there was no syllabus, no structure, no curriculum, no objectives, or things like that. Or no expectation at the beginning that I would know would be expected at the end. With time that changed.

Another participant, Earl, when discussing how the coaching process could be improved felt that education leaders need to be ready ahead of time to better receive the process. He noted that:

I would like to see a more formalized program of empowering principals. I think it would be a condition, an expectation of anyone who is coming in: 'You are going to be in this thing.' But I would like to sit down and talk with them a little bit more about it as this all depends on your mindset. If you are not ready to receive it, it is going to be a waste of time. Well, not a waste of time, but you are not going to gain the benefit that really is available to you if your mind is in the right place. So, even with those who are not administrators yet, but that want to get into that track. To really have somewhat of an extended conversation with them other than, 'You'd better show up for this meeting.'

Additionally, Earl mentions that he had to get over some initial resistance to coaching training. He stated that, "It was me and my inability to be able to receive it. . . . I feel that in the pre-coaching phase, [the trainers need to] better equip those that are stepping into administrative role."

The notion that time constraints impacted some participants is described next.

Time Constraints

Three of eleven participants stated that, “I can’t think of anything that caused me any concern.” There was the general sentiment that to have been actively engaged in the process longer and more frequently. Sophia made this observation:

I would say this is hard when you are being coached and you are on a time limit because I don’t know how to answer the questions right away. [The answers are] not on the top of my head. I sometimes give a first answer that I thought of, but that may not be the real answer, because I process things by thinking about it. Like I just need time, right? So, the first person that coached me, if I paused, it was like they would jump in with advice. It was very difficult. That may have been a combination between their personality of having a hard time of not giving advice, and my personality which needed a lot of reflective time.

Time was also a concern to John. He stated:

In the beginning, I didn’t like reading the books. There were some books that were very boring. But there were other books I found very interesting. I also think there was so much material that they had very little time to cover everything. That is why, I guess, I went to three different [trainings], but sometimes it was boring just sitting down and listening and listening. . . . I said, ‘Come on, let’s get going. Let’s do triads. Let’s do this. Let’s do that.’ So that part I didn’t really appreciate.

Some participants questioned the motive of others for engaging in leadership training.

Participation for Wrong Reasons

Not everyone believed that joining the leadership and peer coaching training was there for personal growth and development. Isabella made this observation, stating that:

They went into [the coaching training] probably wanting to learn these skills from an academic perspective. They did not have that ability to really open themselves up, make themselves vulnerable to their own self-reflective process. . . . In other words, they went through the coaching process, but the coaching process did not go through them. If they had developed [the skills] when given this opportunity, they probably would have become much better leaders.

The process for induction into leadership training was by invitation and enumerated on by some participants as described next.

Selection Process

The idea that the skills derived from participation in leadership training would benefit all educators was shared by some participants. Sophia recommended that:

[Trainers] should make the course an e-learning, or something where people could just find it, so it wouldn't be a select group that only certain people can be a part of. All educators should have access to coaching in a spiritual context.

Sophia would have liked the coaching training selection process to be more democratic, a sentiment shared by others.

Looking back at her experience, Heidi mentions that if she could make a change to the training it would be:

Making it more democratic, and maybe creating an online version of it. And people sign up for it, so everyone will have access to it. . . . Anyone who is interested in it, they can go ahead and do it.

Lastly, Pedro recalled how difficult it was to engage educators outside of the training to be coached. He mentioned that one of the assignments of peer coaching was to find a peer to coach for ten sessions. He remarked that:

When we originally start off doing the coaching, it was cool because you were working with other people there that were involved in [coaching]. [As part of the training] you were told to go get other people that weren't involved to start coaching them as well. It was harder to get them on board, because number one, they didn't know much about it, and then number two, it felt more like a job, because people weren't excited about doing it.

In summary, I noted that participants found freedom in expressing their concerns and challenges experienced in peer coaching training. It was my observation that the opportunity to reflect on what could have improved the process empowered each participant to support solutions for better outcomes going forward. This was highlighted by participants who asked for better induction processes and curriculum structure; a more democratic process of choosing participants and weeding some out; and increasing the

allotment of time while training. Interestingly, this is a byproduct of ensuring safety and trust in the peer coaching training. Being honest and vulnerable in sharing concerns and challenges is the essence of what peer coaching has to offer.

Benefits of the Coaching Experience

The study group participants also expressed what they perceived to be key benefits to the coaching experience, either being coached, coaching, or training, and providing a fourth emerging theme (see Table 6). During the interview process, the narrative took on special meaning because emotions of tears, laughter, satisfaction, and regret were expressed. Ten of eleven participants expressed that the coaching process was to some degree life changing. This theme is best expressed through highlighting the subthemes.

Transformation

Emerging from the theme of Benefits of the Coaching Experience, was a subtheme of transformation. For some it was subtle, others more overt, and others career changing. Participants discovered that it is not just one specific skill, but it is the combining of skills, the interplay of skills, the connecting of concepts, that paves the way for great coaching and great leadership. The indispensable quality from participating in the leadership and peer coaching experience was expressed by most participants in the study.

As a result of being actively engaged in peer coaching, Jerry stated that, “We are all flawed, but we don’t have to stay there.”

Some participants have continued with peer coaching, even after the training ended. Pedro noted that:

Table 6

Benefits of Coaching Subthemes Identified and Defined as They Relate to Leadership Training in the Florida Conference

Subtheme	Simply Defined
Transformation	Transformation in another word for “change.” Through Leadership Training, for some change occurred subtly, for others more overt, and for others it was career changing. Participants discovered that it is not just one specific skill, but it is the combining of skills, the interplay of skills, the connecting of concepts, that paves the way for transformation
Validation	The idea that in Leadership Training you were not alone was expressed throughout the interview process providing validation, recognition, and affirmation. Validation in this instance is reflected by the process of the training affirming leaders and recognizing their contribution and importance.
Retention	Leadership Training was viewed by participants as a mechanism to provide skills and methodology to their learning, thereby, motivating, and empowering education leaders to remain in their jobs.
Reflective Practice	Participants were able to think back upon their training experience often, trying to capture the essence of what was learned and its impact on their leadership. Reflective practice provided an opportunity to reflect on one’s actions enabling them to engage in a process of continuous learning.

I still have a coach. I enjoy the gentleman who does my coaching. I got a lot of good insight over the last years. It has helped me with understanding marriage, and it has helped me with understanding people more.

One participant, Josh expressed that:

It was through coaching that I was able, not only to accept criticism, or a negative suggestion, but I was able to turn it into a positive outcome. . . . The good thing about the coaching experience is that it helped me to understand that even when we cannot make absolutely everybody happy, we never stop trying. So, you always keep building: you listen, you ask for feedback, you try to evaluate yourself all the time.

Aside from the transformative nature of the training program additional benefits emerged.

Validation, Recognition, Affirmation

Another subtheme that expressed the benefit of coaching to participants was the idea that you were not in it alone. Participants mentioned that the leadership and coaching

training provided validation, recognition, and affirmation. Mia stated that:

I think it would have been beneficial for more principals to be involved in the program. It is a lonely position. Even though you get to speak with other principals at principals' meetings, anytime like that when you are together and you see each other, I think that having that opportunity where you can really just let go and bounce ideas off of someone, and have someone validate how you are feeling, and also help you to search deeper is a great tool to have in your life. Someone to help you really hone-in on your skills as a principal.

Sophia mentions that because of the peer the coaching training she now views things through a different lens. She expressed that her colleagues noticed a change in her.

She shared that:

I have earned a nickname now. Everyone calls me Dr. Phil. [CHUCKLE] It's Dr. Phil. Oh, my goodness, I'm never going to live this down. They said it's because there have been some meetings where I went out with other [educators]. They've just been part of that, and I've had to stop and say, 'Feelings are neither bad nor good. She is describing the way that she feels right now. So, let's hear what she has to say.' So, that's why I have this nickname now that I have to live down.

John feels strongly that leadership training and development of coaching skills is essential for success. He shared this story:

I was named principal without any experience whatsoever of what a leader was. I was reading the principal's handbook that I had to find because it was never given to me. It said a lot of things that I was supposed to know that I didn't know. Anybody who takes a leadership position should first go through trainings of leadership before they are put in positions of leadership because we make a lot of mistakes along the way. My first four years were hard. They shouldn't have been that hard, but I didn't know what I was doing. It was just trial and error, trying to get a school that was falling apart, a school that was divided, trying to get it back together without any training. So, I really would love to see that anybody that is named principal or superintendent or whatever, go through some trainings like this. That they get taught the correct way to do it, or where to go to find answers because sometimes you don't even know where to go. Sometimes you call the people above you, and they are too busy to really talk to you. So, a lifeline [of coaching skills] should be there for everybody who is named principal or leader of any position.

In short, Isabella stated that leadership training and the coaching process was, "Very applicable and useful to me. I think the training was exactly what I needed."

She had this additional take on some who attended the training:

Individuals who were already good communicators and who were already open, I saw were more channeled and more focused. So, they were able to refine those skills, and be more conscientious of how to use them as a result of the training.

Finally, to summarize her leadership training and coaching experience, Isabella expressed that:

Coaching was [a method] of going through a self-reflective process that helps you to analyze where you are in life, define the things that are really important to you, and then learn a set of skills that you can use for yourself in everyday life, as well as in work situations that focus you more as a leader.

Additionally, Earl sums up his experience in the coaching process when he shared that “There is enough value here. There are a lot of skills that you can learn in this stuff, skills hopefully [that will] really be beneficial to you and your staff down the road.”

Continuing, Earl after coaching sessions, expressed that, “I always come away feeling validated with what I am doing because he will pat me on the back and it just encourages me. Yeah, I need to keep leaning into this thing.”

An interesting perspective on the coaching training process was noted by Heidi who framed leadership training membership in this light, when she stated that:

It felt almost like a cliché. Like a cool kid’s club of the ones that were chosen to attend, and the ones that were not. Just by being a part of it, the people who were chosen had a direct line to the leadership. So, I’ve seen a lot of people move up in the organization who were in the program. Sometimes I wonder [CHUCKLE] because it gives you a direct line into the ear of the people who are making decisions about jobs. It does get you close, the intimacy that was created between people attending and the leadership. Then was it just a coincidence that the same people were getting promoted?

Finally, Sophia noted that, “I thought [coaching] was very, very valuable.”

Other benefits to the training program were discovered including retention of leaders as noted next.

Retention

One participant, Earl, shared that the principal turnover rate is high in the Florida Conference, as it is across the Adventist Education system. He stated that, “Getting all those people [education leaders] involved in coaching is one way that we can really try to empower the principals and lessen the turnover rate that we are dealing with.”

Also, being able to relate to personnel is important for a leader. Emma expressed that:

Coaching leads you to be a nurturer. I am someone that depends on the Holy Spirit’s guidance. But I find the knowledge and skills gained through coaching enhances the way you relate to people under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the ability to be a nurturing leader. This will retain personnel.

Both participants express that leadership training in the Florida Conference, of which peer coaching is the framework, should benefit retention. This outlook provided an additional subtheme to the benefits of coaching training and was also shared by some others.

Participants expressed the benefit in having gone through the training program included being able to look back and reflect as noted next.

Reflective Practice

Study group participants were often reflective in their thoughts and expressions, leading to a fourth emerging subtheme of the benefits to peer coaching training.

Participants mentioned that not only do they use the learned coaching skills often, they think back upon their training experience often, trying to capture the essence of what was learned and its impact on their leadership.

Even into retirement, Emma stated that she was happy for the experience of

learning peer coaching techniques and uses her skill set to coach and mentor. She reflected that:

I am still growing. I have had the best opportunities this year to put coaching into practice because I am pulling a lot from my coaching experience and what I learned. When I retired, I said, 'God, I am not retiring from service. So, if You would want to use me, to share my experience to build education ministry anywhere, I would want to know that.' Because I am learning how to affirm, how to encourage, how to listen, and the nurturing part of it, the affirmation, I have seen good results.

Looking back at the coaching experience, Jerry projected a sense of peace. He recalled that:

Coaching is a journey . . . because it helped me to realize I can't be all things to everybody. But any conversation I am in, I can be fully engaged. I can bring the energy there. I can be part of something. I can listen well. I can learn. I can do those things. And I can forgive myself for not being that thing everyone was projecting. . . . So, I have grown in coaching, and [participated in] peer coaching.

Taking note of her experience in peer coaching training, Sophia mentioned that:

I still have lots of areas to grow in. So, I'm not there. I have not arrived. There are situations where I am like, 'Oh, my goodness, I don't know what to say right now or to do.' . . . I would love to be coached again in the future so I can receive more out of it. At this point I have really received more from being a coach and that has been wonderful.

One participant, John, looking back at his experience, related what he might do differently in the coaching training if he could do it again. He confessed that:

I think I would take more time while I am reading. Cause to be honest with you, I would read it the day before I was going to go. Then I missed out on a lot of things. After all the training finished, I stayed with the books. When I started reading them slowly, I said, 'Man, if I had read this before, I would have known exactly where we were heading.'

Upon reflection on the leadership training program and peer coaching specifically, Isabella stated that:

I went into [the training] thinking I wanted to learn something from it. I wanted to grow. So, I was not afraid to open myself up and ask myself some hard questions

along the way. That takes a certain degree of ability to self-reflect, ability to not be afraid to ask yourself questions and see where they lead you.

Continuing, Isabella felt that one thing she would do differently during the training would be to master one skill. Looking back, she expressed that:

I would probably spend more time in the confrontation aspect of the[training]. I think just by its very nature most people shy away from confrontation. . . . In leadership, if you don't have that ability, you can't fix problems. Or you can't initiate a fix for a problem. I have seen many good leaders that are not successful in the situation where they are, because they don't have the ability to confront. And to do it with integrity. Just add a little bit more time to the confrontation process because it is hard for people to do that. For some people. Other people thrive on it [CHUCKLE].

It was over time, that Earl was able to appreciate what he learned. He reflected that, "Eight or ten years further into my life journey, I am in a much better place to receive the information and apply what I have learned."

Additionally, Earl found it beneficial to learn how to take time to journal and engage in reflective practice. He mentioned that he works in a culture that allows for "time away to recharge the batteries." He stated that:

I think the best thing which really came from here was getting involved, trying to take a couple days a year at least to just not show up here, not stay at home. I've gone to the beach and just sat at the beach, with a pen in hand, and just reflected. That has been very, very valuable to me. I think probably the best outcome for me, or one of the really good outcomes, is the reflective nature of leadership [and coaching] training.

Remembering a conversation with a peer coach, Josh recalls a statement that was impactful to him. He shared that:

I remember the words until today. He told me, 'You are a trend-setter!' [WATERY EYES] Those two words right there changed my mindset for everything. When I heard those two words, it's like God touched the heart of this person to tell me that. That was really deep to reevaluate myself as a professional, to see where I want to go now because I realized that was true. What I learned through this program is that I'm not on this journey alone.

In general, participants appreciated the friendships and relationship building that

took place during the training. Pedro mentioned that:

It really lifts barriers. You end up making relationships with people you probably wouldn't have relationships with on a regular basis. Then there is, I don't want to say, hidden, like this secretive bond when you guys run into each other. There is an old saying, 'Is the juice worth the squeeze?' So, 'Is the time you put in really worth what you are going to get back from it?' I believe it was!

Reminiscing, Mia expressed that she would love to go through the training again with some changes. She reflected that, "I would have been a little bit more open; I would have chosen some [specific skills] to work on, the ones I was struggling with."

Finally, Josh summing up his training experience, shared that, "To me growth never ends. Learning how to combine many skills, that's probably the biggest [benefit] I received."

The significance of the benefits to peer coaching was expressed in the collective satisfaction of participants. This shared experience allowed leaders to grow in new and exciting ways. It put all leaders on equal footing along the journey to self-improvement. I listened as participants purported a sense being transformed; allowing them the space to reflect and to understand the true benefits to coaching and being coached. There was expression that words could be impactful; that better practices could be learned; and that there was validation in their work. The participants generally indicated that the time commitment to the training was worth the outcome. For many in the peer coaching training, the opportunity provided a lifeline for improved performance and confidence.

Unexpected Findings

As the researcher, I disclosed that I had participated in the Florida Conference leadership and coaching training program. Additionally, I mentioned to participants that I had actively coached numerous education leaders, that I had been a recipient of peer

coaching in the Florida Conference, and that I was still engaged in coaching and receiving coaching. It is because of this background that I was able to appreciate comments, perceptions, and expressions from study group participants that were unexpected, leading to the fifth and final emerging theme (see Table 7). To capture the essence of this unexpected and unanticipated experience, I may retrace earlier comments and statements from study group participants, along with new ideas and perceptions.

Table 7

Unexpected Findings Subthemes Identified and Defined as They Relate to Leadership Training in the Florida Conference

Subtheme	Simply Defined
Visioning and Core Values	Participants were provided an opportunity to develop personal vision and mission statements based on a process identifying their core values. Together, the vision, mission, and values statements provide direction for a person's dreams. They keep the person focused on where they are, where they want to go, and holds accountability for how to behave.
Triads	A group or set of three connected people would meet to practice coaching skills that were learned in the training. One person would practice the skill as a coach, another would receive the coaching, and the third person would watch, evaluate, and provide feedback to the experience. Participants would then rotate positions after a specified time.
Coaching Skills Crossover	Participants discovered that learned coaching skills provided them with the ability to be more effective in motivating their team and connecting with them on a deeper level. It was also discovered that these coaching skills crossed over from the work environment as an effective tool while connecting with friends and family.

Visioning and Core Values

It was expressed by some study group participants that as part of the Florida Conference leadership training, and in preparation for peer coaching training, the seminar presenters guided participants through a visioning process of what the ideal future might look like for them. It was explained to me that this involved the development of a

personal vision and mission statement. It was further explained that, as a part of that process, the training presenters had participants identify what they believed to be their core values. It was noted that this was done to assist the coach to identify what was of value to a person, enabling the coach to hold the coachee accountable to those self-identified core values in a coaching setting. The importance that participants attached to the process of visioning, identifying one's core values, and goal setting was of a surprise to me.

It was unexpected when Jerry expressed that he used his identified core values to filter decision making. He stated that:

It was good being able to crystalize and put concise words to a thought or a sentence. You could say, 'A core value is this,' or 'My core value is that' or whatever. I try to make decisions based on those values in anything that I do in life period. I think your core values are who you are. So, identifying them when you feel that thing, you can say, 'That is going against my value(s)' or whatever.

Also, it was unanticipated when Mia mentioned that:

The visioning exercise was very helpful looking back at it now. At the time it was kind of like pie in the sky. So, you are going to put down all those core values. But when you become real with yourself, and you look back and you see, you stop beating yourself up. You can see where you made unrealistic goals. You can look back and say, 'Why didn't I get there, if that's where I wanted to be.' It's definitely a helpful exercise. It would have been greater if I had continued in the group to be able to speak to others about it. Or still have a coach. I wish I did.

The practice of visioning, Heidi recalls, had value to me, and it was a surprise when she noted that:

In my personal life, the visioning, I still do it. I still every year take the time to do visioning. . . . Actually, I still have my [original] vision statement, and the core values statement. I pulled it back out recently. It's interesting to note the values that I identified [several years ago], some core values have not changed, and some changed so that is very accurate. Vision, I still have some of the same vision, but how to get there, that is the one thing that has changed. What would it look like when I get there? Life is an experiment, so we are always prototyping and changing. But that was extremely valuable at the time, and it is valuable today because I still use it.

While coaching a principal, Sophia realized the value of finding out a person's core values. This allowed her to better walk along beside them and understand where they are coming from. She shared this story:

I taught with her, so I've known her a long time, and now she is a principal. I just assumed that she was more of a helper, a nurturer. Come to find out she was nothing like that, far from that. She is more of a commander. She likes justice. She doesn't care. She just wants justice to be served [SMILE]. . . . My approach with her would have been to spend more time on her feelings, her emotions, and things like that. Really, truthfully, what she wanted, and what she needed, was more of a factual approach. . . . I like to be coached to connect more with the emotions and the heart. But with her, it's not that she is not an emotional person, but that's just not important to her personality. It's not something she values. So, the best way I can be of help and support to her is to address the things that matter to her [addressing her core values] which are: 'Is justice happening? Is this fair? Am I delegating well?' She just wants a cause. She just wants to make a difference in the world. She has to have a cause always. So, if the steps that she is [taking] today are not impacting the future, then she is not happy. So, it is interesting [CHUCKLE].

As a coach, Sophia held one of her coachees accountable to their stated core values. It was unexpected when she mentioned that:

I talked a teacher right out of her job [SMILE]. And pouf, right off to another [school district], which was like, 'Oh great, I think I did too well on that one' [CHUCKLE]. But for this person, one of their core values, their most important core value was the sense of community. Community, creativity, but community was so important. And here is a single woman that is in a school, a church with everyone over 70.

John also mentions that through the visioning process and goal setting he was able to make changes at the school he was working in. He stated that:

[In my first principalship] I set goals. I said, 'Man, this school is going downhill.' So, I [set] goals that I wanted to reach. Then I [set] goals that I could achieve easily. Then I [developed] other goals that were going to be harder to do. But they were all part of the personal vision I was able [to identify in the coaching process]. So, all those dreams and visions that I had were accomplished by what I learned and what my values were. I had to make sure that I didn't lose my core values along the way.

As she makes decisions today, Isabella still feels the impact of creating a personal

vision and identifying her core values. She emphasized that:

You can very easily just go through life and avoid asking yourself really crucial questions. That process [of visioning] was probably one of the most useful processes I've encountered. I remember that was a period of a lot of growth for me. Because it helped me to solidify, and it forced me to think about what my core values were. 'What are the things that are important to me?' It helped me to really write a mission for my life. . . . Helped me to be able to steer my ship, and to be able to say, 'Is this decision consistent with my mission and vision? Is this decision consistent with my core values?' If it isn't, then I need to speak up. Or I need to do something differently. So, it is one of those guiding principles that when you have been through it, it lends clarity to your life.

Recognizing the importance of knowing and understanding core values, Earl stated that through additional reading:

I have been able to start to pull stuff together about why I act the way I do. Or when I see these actions, [know] why they bother me. So, the identifying my core value piece has been very helpful for me to help me understand myself better.

Adding to the theme of Unexpected Findings was an exercise that encouraged participants to practice skills with one another called Triads.

Triads (Practice Time)

It was also unexpected to have participants discuss the high value attached to triads. I was told that in the peer coaching dynamic, it was important to have a place to practice coaching skills. It was relayed to me that triads were a time when three people would practice newly acquired coaching skills; one to observe and critique; one to be the coach; and the other became the coachee. Every 10-15 minutes trainees would rotate within the triad, having opportunity to experience each element. Many times, the coachee would bring out real life issues of importance to be coached on. Participants shared that this exercise created real coaching opportunities and exposed surprising emotions of crying, fear, anger, anxiety, and sometimes disappointment.

The volume of information presented at trainings, especially the theoretical, was

enormous. The idea of being able to practice and put skills to good use benefited all participants. Jerry remarked that:

Triads were a time that you could work on the skills that were presented with another person and someone would be an observer. That was the time I liked the best because it gave you an opportunity to have communication and fellowship, those type of things.

What Emma appreciated most was that:

Triads taught you to listen. [The practice] taught you to listen. Because you are a part of the triad, and it rotated. You rotated the part that you played in the triad. So, I found that it also helped to listen and to affirm. That was a part I could have spent some more time with [CHUCKLE], the listening and the affirmation. I benefited in growing with that through the triads.

Moreover, Mia remarked that:

Triads are awesome. Having the ability to be a coach, be a coachee, and observe, it helps you, especially if you get to observe first [CHUCKLE]. That is always the best situation to be in. You get to watch someone else in action.

Interestingly, Sophia was adamant when she stated that:

I think specifically what I found most helpful was when we did the triads. We had different roles, whether it was to observe coaching that was going on, or to be the coachee and to have an opportunity to practice in a safe place. I found that very, very useful, as opposed to a lot of PowerPoints and lecture.

Continuing, John related that he has incorporated the techniques from practicing in triads to his work at school. He shared this observation:

I loved the triads. I looked forward to the triads. I think that was the best part of the training when we got into the triads. Cause you get to sit back, and you see two people going at it, and then you start saying, 'Wow, am I doing that? That's how I do it?' Or you also say, 'That is an awesome approach he took.' So not just being involved in the one-on-one with somebody but being the third person looking in and seeing how it was resolved was very beneficial. Not only that, sometimes I saw it, and I said, 'Wait a minute, why are you going that way? If you were to go this way, you wouldn't have got to that point.' So, I saw the right way to do the thing, but I also saw the wrong way. Then the good thing about the triads was that after the triads, the two that were discussing finished, you had an opportunity to talk to the two and say, 'Look, I think you did this great, this part. I think you need to improve your listening' or whatever. Then it was your turn to get looked at by one of the others. Taking turns like that really helped. I even incorporate it here with my teachers. I put them in triads, and I put them to look at

each other, listen to each other. I made up situations, real situations that have happened in the past, and saw how they dealt with it. Even the teachers really felt good. I felt that that should be done to every teacher. Every teacher should go to those seminars.

Being able to practice also had value to Isabella. She commented that:

I think for the training portion [triads were] valuable because it gave us the opportunity to practice the skills we were learning. When you are first learning a skill, and in order to really implement it, you can learn about it on a theoretical level, but when you are actually coaching somebody, you want to try it. Even though it was a bit artificial. Because you were seeing what you could pull up, whether it was an issue or not. So, it was a bit artificial in that nature. But it still gave you an opportunity if you were learning naming, for example, you were listening for that specific thing why you were listening to a person and trying to come up with that. That really gave you an opportunity to see if you had really learned that skill. Obtaining feedback was very useful.

Initially, Earl had doubts about triads, but felt over time there was benefit. He stated that:

I picked up at least a few mechanical pieces. . . . In hindsight I wish we'd had a little bit longer time so you could pick the brains of all three people in the group as to how that one little session went. I would probably gain more information out of it at this point, so I would say, begrudgingly yeah, it got to a better place for me. Initially, I thought it was nuts.

To sum up the experience of triads, Heidi reflected that:

The triads provided a safe environment to practice the skills. Those were new. So, it required people to actually be vulnerable. But we were safe. People were not so much paying attention to the story we were telling, but the skills we were using. So, it provided a perfect environment to learn and practice before you went out there and made a mess [CHUCKLE]. So, it was a safe place to learn, practice, and get feedback. The aspects of the triad were very powerful, not to mention the experience itself. Sometimes we had breakthroughs during triads. So, it was two-way. One was the safe environment to practice learn the skills, but at the same time we were using the skills. So, people were having breakthroughs, crying, hugging, and becoming best friends for life [SMILE].

Discovering that learned skills could have a positive impact on both professional and personal interactions was an added benefit most participants applauded and is discussed next.

Coaching Skills Crossover to Personal Life

The final unexpected finding focused on how many of the learned coaching skills crossed over into the participants personal life. Not only did this finding surprise me as the researcher, but it was also revealing to the participants.

I included statements from seven participants who commented on this in other parts of the analysis. Here I will provide several excerpts from participants to briefly express this phenomenon.

Isabella stated that it was beneficial to, “Be able to transfer [coaching skills] to everyday life working with people.”

Reflecting on how ingrained skills are, Pedro expressed that, “So, it just kind of like made me realize that sometimes, a lot of times people just want to talk, they just want to be heard.”

Olivia, noted that:

I’ve learned to use that [skill] with my special need’s daughter. Communicating and listening to her is key for me to be able to work with her and understand her better. My boys and I, we communicate differently, because of the way that I listen more. I listen more carefully.

Describing interactions with family, friends, and colleagues, Emma, stated that, “It [coaching skills] also helped us in dealing with situations in a more forthright manner, lovingly, but honestly. Honestly. Definitely.”

She also stated that, “[While interacting with church members] I have been able to honestly, frankly, deal with some crucial confrontations, crucial conversations with people, which as it turned out they appreciated it in the long run.”

On a very personal note, Sophia, remarked that, “So that was really a big shift in our marriage, and it just came down to not assuming, asking good questions, clarifying,

and some of those tools that I learned in coaching.”

While describing the big picture of coaching, Isabella, expressed that:

I want to leave a legacy of helping people and making everybody that I touch better for the fact that they have associated with me or the path that I travel. . . . My motto is, if you see an open door, walk through it [CHUCKLE]. So, I do.

Through the discovery of unexpected findings, participants were surprised by the impact of identifying core values had on their lives. It was my observation that this particular exercise provided participants a compass to guide their decision making and behavior. Of special significance, was the underlying notion that an education leader was being held accountable to whom they purported to be. It was also intended by study group participants that an emphasis be placed on the importance of having someone walk along beside a leader on their life journey. Someone they could trust to be honest with them.

Summary

I conducted a qualitative study, using a phenomenological approach, to provide a credible in-depth explanation for how the participants expressed their shared leadership training and coaching experience. This “big picture” view was a focused look at the story told by participants from their own perspectives sharing how their experience impacted their ability to carry out their responsibilities as education leaders. All the data were gathered during the interview process, subsequently codified, with emerging themes and subthemes identified from the participants shared experience. In summary, this study revealed five major findings relating to the belief that Adventist education leaders must have confidence and skills to effect change in the Adventist education system, and that coaching is one avenue to acquire those skills.

The first major finding revealed that participants (education leaders) recognized the importance of peer coaching as an invaluable tool to assist them in their quest for growing in confidence as leaders. Through the experience of being coached and coaching, ten of eleven participants remarked that it was “life changing.” By actively participating in leadership and coaching training, the participants acquired new skills providing a mechanism to achieve positive results in interactions. The participants identified those coaching skills and understood how to apply them, thus paving the way for new methods for engagement. Also, the study revealed that through the experience of coach’s training participants appreciated having a new “set of tools” for their toolbox, providing them competencies to address current challenges, improve relationships, and inspire confidence across all relationships.

The second major finding revealed that coaching provided a safe space for personal discovery combining theory and practice. It allowed participants a place to be vulnerable, to share, and create an openness to trust the coaching process. The participants gained personal insights that translated into improved effectiveness. This openness provided opportunity for deeper learning and personal growth in emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship development. The study also revealed the need for life balance and time management, noting that the Adventist education system may make life balance difficult for leaders to attain.

Further, another major finding revealed by this study was that the coaching training process did have some drawbacks. Concerns and challenges were noted. Participants would like to have seen a more robust induction process. Interestingly, the

study also revealed that participants felt the training should have been open to all educators. In addition, the study revealed that a more structured program would have been desirable. Furthermore, time constraints were a barrier for some participants. Lastly, the study revealed that some of the training participants may have been there for the wrong reasons.

The fourth major finding revealed significant benefits to the coaching training experience, often evoking an array of emotions as participants shared their experience. This study revealed that being actively engaged in the process resulted in personal transformation. One participant stated it well, remarking that “we are all flawed, but we don’t have to stay there.” Also, the study revealed that through the training process, education leaders recognized that they are not in it alone. This led to the understanding of validation, recognition, and affirmation. Furthermore, the study revealed that coaching is a valuable tool and may benefit the retention of education leaders. In essence, the process makes education leaders feel valued and improves retention. Lastly, the study revealed that education leaders routinely engage in reflective practice. Participants looked back to understand how the coaching experience impacted their lives causing one participant to reflect, “Eight or ten years further into my life journey, I am in a much better place to receive the information and apply what I have learned.”

Lastly, the fifth major finding revealed some unexpected findings. It was unexpected to find the visioning exercise and subsequent core values assignment having a major impact on participants during their tenure as leaders. It provided a compass for some, accountability for others, and a guide for future outcomes for many. The study also revealed that the introduction of Triads or time to practice coaching skills in a small

group was invaluable. Key elements of the triad time included improved communication, heightened listening, safe place to practice skills, and relationship building. In addition, the study also revealed that learning a coaching skill was also learning life skills. Many participants expressed the positive impact these new skills had on family, friends, and work relationships.

The research concludes that through the narrative of participants lived experiences in the peer coaching training process, education leaders affirmed that leadership training, utilizing coaching methods, substantially increased their effectiveness as education leaders in the Florida Conference. This supports the notion that for change to take place education leaders can clearly be agents for personal and organizational transformation. Finally, this study supports the effectiveness of the Florida Conference peer coaching model that was used as the delivery system to re-educate, support, empower, and equip education leaders.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND FURTHER STUDY

This chapter includes an overview of the study—including summary (background and research questions), findings (discussion of the findings, analysis, conclusions, implications), recommendations for practice, recommendations for further study, and epilogue.

Summary

According to Cauley (2006), the once prosperous and affluent Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists had ceased to keep up with contemporary evangelistic and leadership styles. To be relevant in the early part of the 21st century, leadership styles needed to have a significant makeover to meet the needs of society and maintain relevancy. His goal was to affect a paradigm shift in how church ministry was conducted with both pastoral and education leaders. He noted that, “the New Testament model for church life and ministry is presented as the key to a revitalized church” (Abstract). Finding a way to equip Florida Conference leaders to become agents for personal and organizational transformation required a new system of support and delivery. This study focuses on the phenomenon of transformation and change in education leaders using the conduit of peer coaching. It follows early adopters of the Florida Conference peer coaching model that was used as the delivery system to re-educate, support, empower, and equip education leaders.

We know that leadership matters. Having education leaders that are well prepared to handle complex personnel issues, navigate community expectations, and provide 21st century pedagogy to students is a requirement for all education leaders. Ensuring that education leaders have the skills needed to provide for the myriad of expectations requires rethinking in how to better prepare school leaders. The traditional methods of leader preparation are still needed; however, new models must be explored, developed, and implemented. There are skills needed that go beyond the theory of the classroom and are not learned in traditional tertiary settings.

It is my belief that Adventist principals, head teachers, and other school leaders are overworked, stressed, experience greater challenges than ever before, are generally undercompensated, sometimes underappreciated, and too often live a life out of balance. If school leaders are out of balance the school system may also be affected. To effectively lead, education leaders need more skills today than ever before to have vibrant lives, experience authentic joy, know hope and wholeness, develop vibrant schools, and have the confidence to lead change. Whitmore (2009) states that “change is the real job of every effective leader because change is about the present and future and not about the past” (p. 98). If we are to do better, peer coaching has promised to provide the school leaders additional and refined skills to impact student learning and improve relationships.

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of education leaders of their experience of coaching or being coached during their participation in leadership training seminars provided by the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. In the study, I conducted semi-structured interviews with eleven education leaders in the Florida Conference who have participated in leadership training, to know, and understand what

acquired skills in the coaches training may have influenced their ability to lead change. I collected data that show what skills were learned by leaders, if those skills were beneficial to education leaders, and how those skills impacted their lives.

Finally, it was Senge (2006) who reminds us that for organizations to truly thrive and not just survive there must be radical rethinking of corporate philosophy. He emphasizes that the active force is the people within the organization. He implores institutional leaders to give up the old way of doing business and to understand “the almost sacredness of their responsibility for the lives of so many people . . . providing the enabling conditions for people to lead the most enriching lives they can” (p. 130). In this study, I explored the impact of leadership training for education leaders and how rethinking might lead to personal and organization transformation.

Findings and Discussion

This study was guided by the following research question:

How do Adventist education leaders describe the experience of coaching or being coached?

- a. What is the lived experience as a coach?
- b. What is the lived experience as a coachee?

The study revealed five major findings relating to the belief that Adventist education leaders must have confidence and leadership skills to effect change in the Adventist education system, and that coaching is one method to acquire those skills.

The first major finding revealed that participants (education leaders) recognized the importance of peer coaching as an invaluable tool to assist them in their quest for growing in confidence as leaders. By actively participating in leadership and coaching

training, the participants acquired new skills providing a mechanism to achieve positive results in interactions. The participants were able to identify those skills, understood how to apply those skills, paving the way for new methods for engagement. Also, the study revealed that participants appreciated having a new “set of tools” for their toolbox, providing them competencies to address current challenges, improve relationships, and inspire confidence across all relationships. This supports Shirk (2005), Whitmore (2009), and Whitworth et al. (1998) who found that coaching in organizations has helped to develop employee leadership skills, to provide skill sets for emerging leaders, and provides a resource for leaders to work with employees.

The second major finding revealed that coaching provided a safe space for personal discovery combining theory and practice. It allowed participants a place to be vulnerable, to share, and an openness to trust the coaching process. The participants gained personal insights that translated into improved effectiveness. This openness provided opportunity for deeper learning and personal growth in emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship development. The study also revealed the need for life balance and time management, noting that the Adventist education system for leaders may be out of balance. Additionally, this study supports the findings of Bolch and Shirk (a synopsis of Bolch, 2001, pp. 58–64, as cited in Shirk, 2005, p. 1), who report that executives engaged in coaching reported increases in productivity, improvement in relationships with direct reports and colleagues, and greater job satisfaction.

The third major finding revealed by this study was that the coaching training process did have some drawbacks. Concerns and challenges were noted. Participants

would like to have seen a more robust induction process. Interestingly, the study also revealed that the participants believed the training should have been open to all educators. In addition, the study revealed that a more structured program would have been desirable. Furthermore, time constraints were a barrier for some participants. Lastly, the study revealed that some of the training participants may have been there for the wrong reasons.

The fourth major finding revealed significant benefits to the coaching training experience, often evoking an array of emotions as participants shared their experience. This study revealed that being actively engaged in the process resulted in personal transformation. One participant stated succinctly, “We are all flawed, but we don’t have to stay there.” Also, the study revealed that through the training process, education leaders recognized that they are not in it alone. This led to an awareness of validation, recognition, and affirmation positively impacting retention. This supports studies that found significant improvements in manager and employee satisfaction, commitment, retention, and overall firm performance when coaching and 360-degree feedback processes are combined, rather than done alone (Luthans & Peterson, 2003; Thach, 2002). Furthermore, the study revealed that education leaders routinely engaged in reflective practice. Participants looked back to understand how the coaching experience impacted their lives causing one participant to reflect, “Eight or ten years further into my life journey, I am in a much better place to receive the information and apply what I have learned.” The research supports that the skills taught and used in Co-Active Coaching “profoundly help clients develop positive new neural networks, respond more calmly to stress, make choices more easily, and access much more of their creativity. This

inevitably leads to more effective, successful, and fulfilling lives” (Betz, 2012, p. 2).

Lastly, the fifth major finding revealed some unexpected findings. It was unexpected to find the visioning exercise and subsequent core values assignment having a major impact on participants during their tenure as leaders. It provided a compass for some, accountability for others, and a guide for desired future outcomes for many. The study also revealed that the introduction of Triads or time to practice coaching skills in a small group was invaluable. Key elements of the triad time seemed to include improved communication, heightened listening, safe place to practice skills, and relationship building. In addition, the study also revealed that learning a coaching skill was also learning life skills. Many participants expressed the positive impact these new skills had on family, friends, and work relationships.

The research concludes that for the participants interviewed they believe that coaching substantially increased the effectiveness of education leaders in the Florida Conference when acquiring and implementing coaching strategies and coaching skills. This supports the notion that for change to take place education leaders can be agents for personal and organizational transformation. The peer coaching model was based on the premise that the fundamental nature of a coaching relationship is one where the coach and client are active collaborators. Essentially, this relationship is an alliance between two equals for the purpose of meeting the client’s needs (Whitworth et al., 1998).

I believe that this study supports the use of resources to develop and implement the Florida Conference peer coaching model that was used as the delivery system to re-educate, support, empower, and equip education leaders. These findings are supported by the study conducted by Metric Global on the coaching process in Fortune 500 companies.

It was discovered that a 529% return was realized from providing resources for coaching, in addition to other intangible benefits (Wilson, 2004). Additionally, in a study on The Perceptions of The Impact of Coaching on Principal Performance (Talley, 2011) it was concluded that leadership coaching is a promising practice for principals.

All participants expressed that the leadership and coaching training has improved since its beginning, that they support continued coaches training for education leaders in some modality, and that peer coaching has had a positive impact on their lives.

Conclusions

I analyzed the findings from the study to conclude the following:

1. The study affirms the intended outcome of the Florida Conference Administration, that the experience of coaching and being coached was “life changing.”
2. The study supports that learning coaching skills better equipped its leaders to become agents for personal and organizational transformation.
3. That peer coaching is a structured framework that can be easily replicated, maintained, upgraded, and transferable as supported by participants who noted that the training improved over time, that they routinely and reflexively utilized concepts and methods in their daily work and relationships.
4. That peer coaching can serve as a framework for leadership development and support to guide employing organizations who want to improve their culture.
5. That education leaders can begin leadership training at point of induction due to its emphasis on leadership skills.
6. That coaching skills can be used in both professional and personal

interactions, often reflexively. The practical skills learned can also be loosely transferred to family and friends.

Recommendations for Practice

As was noted in Chapter 1, the Florida Conference attempted a paradigm shift in performing ministry and leadership by developing a system of support to develop leaders for transformation. The goal is for leaders to move the Adventist church in Florida closer to the New Testament model of church life and mission. Integral to church life and ministry, are Adventist education leaders, who must have adequate skills to effect systemic change in the Adventist education system. There must be a process for leaders to acquire the necessary skills. The Florida Conference leadership group determined that through leadership training and the process of being coached and coaching, leaders will realize personal growth and can effect change. This model is open to all Christian organizations looking to impact change through leadership development.

Below are 5 recommendations for practice:

1. The Florida Conference leadership group should consider expanding peer coaching to all its employees.
2. That peer coaching or some modality of leadership training with a coaching component should be continued in the Florida Conference.
3. Other Christian entities can benefit from this model of peer coaching as they consider training for their leaders.
4. Induction is seamless for leaders, however, having some prior knowledge of peer or executive coaching and theory is helpful.

5 Leadership and Coaching training for future leaders can become part of leadership courses at tertiary institutions.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. To help conferences plan for total involvement of employees, further studies should explore the value and viability of offering peer coaching to all employees.
2. Further studies on the benefits of peer coaching should be investigated in other church territories to discover if demographics makes a difference in its value.
3. Further studies are needed to investigate if the perceived benefits of coaching training vary by other factors such as age, gender, or ethnicity.
4. As leadership training is discussed within the Adventist system, further study should be done to determine if peer coaching is the best model for educators or if other coaching models might be more effective, or more effective by others.
5. A comparative study between church pastors and education leaders' perceptions of the benefits to peer coaching would add insight into its transferability between professions.

Epilogue

For the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists leadership team to embark on the development and implementation of a leadership training course for the purpose of developing a peer coaching cohort of leaders within a system was revolutionary at the time of its inception. Florida Conference leaders recognized that to train effective leaders for the purpose of change would require a new process with a system of support. The goal of having professional leaders at similar levels observing each other, being trained to coach each other, learning new skills together, being vulnerable with one another,

building trust, ensuring confidentiality, providing a safe space for professional growth, professional development, and relationship building was unmatched in other Conference trainings.

This journey of personal transformation and accountability in the Florida Conference was the conduit to providing institutional transformation and accountability. The skills acquired from leadership training workshops and subsequent coaches training sessions was the catalyst to revolutionize the reeducation of leaders. In essence, mindsets were developed for collaboration and leading teams. Education leaders spoke of an increased confidence to have non-threatening conversations with subordinates, acquiring an increased capacity to listen, and finding a desire for deeper conversations about pedagogy and mutually important school growth paradigms. Of particular interest was the added value found in the peer coaching process that provided a crossover of new skills that could be used in personal and family relationships.

Peer coaching is a framework for leaders and others in education to improve their capacity for collaboration, reflective learning, and relationship building. The skills that I acquired through peer coaching were not taught anywhere else in my formal training. It taught me to become a better listener, it provided me the skillset to confront in safety while having crucial conversations. In addition, it increased my capacity for empathy and affirmation. What I really appreciated through the peer coaching process was knowing that I had someone who was walking along beside me as a guide. It was good to know you are not alone, you are in this together with people with the same challenges and fears.

APPENDIX A

NAD Request Letter

**North American Division
Office of Education**

9705 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046
Ph.: 443-391-7284
Fax: 443-259-4887
Email:
arnenielsen@nadadventist.org

October 15, 2017

Dear Dr. Blackmer,

Greetings! As you know, my name is Arne Nielsen, Director of Secondary Education and Accreditation for the North American Division in Columbia, MD. I am currently pursuing a PhD in Leadership and Administration from Andrews University. My qualitative study is on the benefits of coaching Adventist education leaders (vice-presidents, superintendents, principals, vice-principals) who have participated in Florida Conference Leadership Training programs within the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

I am requesting your permission to dialogue with the Southern Union Conference Director of Education, President of the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Vice-president for Education to seek additional approval for my study. The central question of my study is How do education leaders describe the experiences of having been coached or have who have coached other leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists? The criteria that I will use to identify the education leaders are:

- The education leader has participated in the Florida Conference Leadership Training Program.
- The education leader has coached and has been coached over a minimum 10 session period.

My goal is to select up to 15 education leaders who fit the criteria noted above. Your endorsement for this study in this preliminary phase will allow me to begin contacting participants who will make a significant contribution on the framing of this study for education leadership training in the Florida Conference and the Adventist education system in general.

If you have any questions about the study, I encourage you to contact my advisor, Dr. Randy Siebold, Associate Professor of Leadership at Andrews University, (269) 471-3200.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request and a response can be sent to arnenielsen@nadadventist.org or it can be mailed to Arne Nielsen, 9705 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046-1565.

Blessings,

Arne Nielsen

APPENDIX B

NAD Permission Letter

**North American Division
Office of Education**

9705 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046
Ph.: 443-391-7280
Fax: 443-259-4887
Email: larryblackmer@nadadventist.org

October 17, 2017

Arne,

The North American Division is excited about this study and grant you full permission to contact the Southern Union and the Florida Conference to gain specific permission to survey within their fields. I believe this study could inform conferences and unions as they try to support and grow quality leaders. Thank you for your passion in this area and we look forward to the results.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Larry D. Blackmer'.

Larry D. Blackmer, EdD

Vice President, NAD

APPENDIX C

Florida Conference Request Letter

**North American Division
Office of Education**

9705 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046
Ph.: 443-391-7284
Fax: 443-259-4887
Email:
arnenielsen@nadadventist.org

October 15, 2017

Dear Dr. Cauley,

Greetings! As you know, my name is Arne Nielsen, Director of Secondary Education and Accreditation for the North American Division in Columbia, MD. I am currently pursuing a PhD in Leadership and Administration from Andrews University. My qualitative study is on the benefits of coaching Adventist education leaders (vice-presidents, superintendents, principals, vice-principals) who have participated in Florida Conference Leadership Training programs within the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

I am requesting your permission to dialogue with the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Vice-president for Education, Elder Frank Runnels, for the purpose of identifying education leaders and securing contact information for potential participants. The central question of my study is How do education leaders describe the experiences of having been coached or have who have coached other leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The criteria that I will use to identify the education leaders are:

- The education leader has participated in the Florida Conference Leadership Training Program.
- The education leader has coached and has been coached over a minimum 10 session period.

My goal is to select up to 15 education leaders who fit the criteria noted above. Your endorsement for this study in this preliminary phase will allow me to begin contacting participants who will make a significant contribution on the framing of this study for education leadership training in the Florida Conference and the Adventist education system in general.

If you have any questions about the study, I encourage you to contact my advisor, Dr. Randy Siebold, Associate Professor of Leadership at Andrews University (269) 471-3200.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request and a response can be sent to arnenielsen@nadadventist.org or it can be mailed to Arne Nielsen, 9705 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046-1565.

Blessings,

Arne Nielsen

APPENDIX D

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Education Leaders

Exploring Leadership Training Experience and Perceptions

Principal Investigator - Arne Nielsen

IRB # 17-166

Protocol - Face-to-Face Interview

Thank you for meeting with me and your interest in taking part in this study - *Benefits of Coaching Education Leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*.

I have six general demographic questions and then three primary questions in which I hope to better understand your perspective and experience in leadership training and its benefit to your life. Feel free to share any details you feel pertinent and/or any examples you feel would help me understand your experience and how it has shaped your life. Please share with me:

First, several general demographic questions regarding your service in education:

1. Your current job title?
2. Your years of service in education?
3. Your years of service in education leadership?
4. Number of leadership trainings?
5. Number of coaching opportunities?
6. Number of coachee opportunities?

Explain purpose of study---

Now, questions regarding leadership training and coaching:

1. What did you like about it? (listen for value judgements) Allow the participant to drive the narrative and ask follow-up questions as needed. Focus on coaching skills . . .
2. What didn't you like about it? (listen for value judgements) Allow the participant to drive the narrative and ask follow-up questions as needed. Focus on coaching skills . . .
3. What would you do differently?

Thank you for taking the time to be involved in this study! If you think of something you would like to add later, feel free to contact me by using the contact information on your copy of the consent form.

APPENDIX E

Florida Conference Permission Letter

FLORIDA CONFERENCE *of* SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

November 27, 2017

Institutional Review Board
Andrews University
4150 Administrative Drive, Room 322
Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355

RE: IRB #17-166 Arne Nielsen

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that we give permission to Arne Nielsen to conduct interviews, gather data, present findings, and other necessary duties to assist in his dissertation on *The Benefits of Coaching Educational Leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*. As the central question needing to be studied is "How do education leaders describe the experiences of having been coached or who have coached other leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists?" we look forward to gaining a better perspective on the coaching process among our educators.

Please feel free to contact me should there be a need for any other clarifications.

Sincerely,

Frank Runnels

Vice President for Education Superintendent of Schools

FR/cg

351 S. State Road 434, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714-3824

• (407) 644-5000 •

• www.floridaconference.com

APPENDIX F

Request for Contact Information Letter

**North American Division
Office of Education**
9705 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046
Ph.: 443-391-7284
Fax: 443-259-4887
Email: arnenielsen@nadadventist.org

October 12, 2017

Dear Elder Runnels,

Greetings! As you know, my name is Arne Nielsen. I am the Director of Education and Accreditation for the North American Division in Columbia, MD. I am currently pursuing a PhD in Leadership and Administration from Andrews University. My qualitative study is on the benefits of coaching education leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. I am requesting your approval and assistance in contacting education leaders (vice-presidents, superintendents, principals, vice-principals) who have participated in the Florida Conference Leadership Training Program. The North American Division Vice-president of Education, the Southern Union Conference Director of Education and your Conference president are aware of my interest in this study and given their endorsement to dialogue with you. The central question of my study is How do education leaders describe the experiences of having been coached or have who have coached other leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The criteria that I will use to identify the education leaders are:

- The education leader has participated in the Florida Conference Leadership Training Program.
- The education leader has coached and has been coached over a minimum 10 session period.

I will need the assistance of the Florida Conference Office of Education in identifying those education leaders who have participated in the Leadership Training Program by filling out the attached form and returning it to me? Your involvement in identifying the education leaders from your conference will enable me to contact education leaders that I will select for my study. My goal is to select up to 15 education leaders who fit the criteria noted above. Your involvement in this preliminary phase will allow me to begin contacting participants who will make a significant contribution on the framing of this study for education leadership training in the Florida Conference and the Adventist education system in general.

If you have any questions about the study, I encourage you to contact my advisor, Dr. Randy Siebold, Associate Professor of Leadership at Andrews University (269) 471-3200.

Thank you for taking the time to complete and return the attached form to arnenielsen@nadadventist.org or it can be mailed to Arne Nielsen, 9705 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046-1565.

Blessings,

Arne Nielsen

APPENDIX G

Participant Letter

March 6, 2018

Dear Participant:

My name is Arne Nielsen and I am a doctoral student at Andrews University, in the Leadership program within the School of Education. I am conducting a research study, which I am inviting you to take part in. This study is being conducted because the Florida Conference has attempted a paradigm shift in performing ministry and leadership by developing a system of support to develop leaders. Integral to church life and ministry, are Adventist education leaders, who must have adequate skills to effect systemic change in the Adventist education system.

You have been referred to me as an education leader in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. As you may know, for many years the North American Division Office of Education has been concerned about development, growth, and retention of Adventist education leaders. You work in a conference that is proactive in leadership development and training and, as I understand, you have participated in a leadership develop program.

The topic for my research is “A Qualitative Study of Coaching Education Leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.” The basic procedure for the study will include:

Before the Interview—You will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview and a response will be requested that you agree with the informed consent form. Should you agree to participate, the general interview questions will be sent to you ahead of time.

During the Interview—You will be asked to bring any documents or artifacts that you received or where beneficial to you in leadership training and the coaching process. The interview will involve a series of questions about your experience with leadership training and coaching and is planned to last approximately 60 minutes. The time limit may be increased at your discretion. By participating, you will be audio and/or video recorded to make sure that I am able to accurately recall all the information you provide.

After the Interview—Your responses [may] appear in my dissertation and subsequently may appear in presentations or articles resulting from this work but will not reveal personal identifiers (such as name, etc.). Privacy and confidentiality are a high priority, and the study is design for you for you to have complete anonymity. Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible.

Attached is an informed consent form for you to read and sign if you are willing to be a participant in the study. Once again, participation would take approximately 1 hour of your time in a face-to-face interview at your institution.

If you agree to participate, would you be kindly return the signed informed consent form and respond to this email stating that you have read the form and agree to take part in the study. After

receiving your response, I will contact you to set up the interview time. My goal is to conduct an interview with you sometime in March/April of 2018.

If you have any comments, concerns, or questions I would be happy to dialogue with you. My contact information is noted below.

Thank you for your time and consideration. May the Lord continue to bless your important work.

Sincerely,

Arne Nielsen
Director of Secondary Education
North American Division
Seventh-day Adventist Church
9705 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046-1565
Email: arnenielsen@nadadventist.org
Cell: (407) 448-3585
Work: (443) 391-7284

APPENDIX H

Research Protocol

Title: COACHING AND BEING COACHED: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATION LEADERS IN THE FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Primary Investigator: Arne Nielsen

Other Investigators: None

Institutional Affiliations: North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD)
Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (SUC)
Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

1. Objectives

The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences and perceptions of education leaders who have participated in Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists leadership training seminars; have coached peers; and who have been coached by leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

2. Background and Rationale

The Florida Conference's president states that:

The Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has long been considered a prosperous, evangelistic organization within the Adventist Church. However, it has ceased to be effective optimally because society has changed, and the ministry and leadership style of the organization is no longer relevant. There is a need for a paradigm shift among pastors, laity, and judicatory staff regarding how to perform effective ministry and church leadership. The New Testament model for church life and ministry is presented as the key to a revitalized church. Moving to this model involves a new way of thinking and doing on the part of both clergy and laity. Church leaders must be equipped to become agents of personal and organizational transformation. Equipping effective leaders of change requires a careful process with a system of support. This project contemplates developing leaders for transformation in order to lead the Adventist Church in Florida closer to the New Testament model of church life and mission. I will utilize personal coaching as the delivery system for this process of equipping and re-education (Michael Cauley, Abstract from Thesis).

For over 10 years, the FLCSDA has been intentional about developing leaders of transformation. To effect change, and to properly equip and reeducate its leaders, workshops and seminars introduce leaders to a process or system of support called "Leadership Training." A framework for these training's is executive coaching, known as co-active coaching, and called "peer coaching" in the FLCSDA. Through the Leadership Training process, leaders are given skills to provide confidence in their leadership ability, to make them accountable to themselves for their dreams and vision, and to allow them the

vulnerability to engage in the coaching process. Considerable investment of time and financial resources are provided to ensure the success of these leadership workshops and seminars, and exposure to the benefits of coaching and being coached. To date, there has been no study to see if the coaching initiative in the FLCSDA is-producing the desired outcome of restoration and transformation of its ministry and education leaders.

3. Procedures

a) Research Design, Sample, and Measurement/Instrumentation

A qualitative research design based on a phenomenological approach, in a multi-case setting, and utilizing narrative inquiry was chosen in that the participants have all experienced the same leadership training and coaching experience in the FLCSDA's, helping to explore the main question: How do Adventist education leaders describe the experience of coaching or being coached? I am entertaining the idea of doing a sample size of 10-15 education leaders. This will allow me to go broader in the data collection process as compared to a smaller sampling. A constructivist approach is being considered to allow for flexible guidelines, interpretation, and inquiry that may be influenced by the researcher (Creswell, 2007; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Rudestam & Newton, 2007).

b) Participant Description

According to Patton (2002) and Suri (2011) purposeful sampling requires access to key informants in the field who can help in identifying information-rich cases. The participants I chose were selected because of their specific characteristics who can inform the research question most appropriately. My participants fall into the non-random scheme's category. Onwuegbuzie, Jiao, & Bostick (2004) discuss the selection of non-random group of education leaders that I have chosen in a category of "homogeneous sampling." This involves sampling individuals, groups, or settings because they all possess similar characteristics or attributes. Also, studies in purposeful sampling (Miles and Huberman, 1994 and Onwuegbuzie, et. al., 2004) discuss "criterion sampling," of individuals, groups, or settings that meet a selected criterion. This is generally done for quality assurance purposes. The purposeful sampling criterion used for this study helped to identify the appropriate participants needed for a rich case study. Criteria I plan to use include:

1. The education leaders have been in a supervisory role as either a vice-principal, principal, associate superintendent, superintendent, director, vice-president, or any combination of these job titles.
2. The FLCSDA's vice-president for education selected participants based on their voluntary participation in the FLCSDA's leadership training program.
3. The participants' willingness to be interviewed.
4. Within the total sample, I will try to maintain diversity within categories of sex, ethnicity, race, and leadership categories.

c) Interview Protocol/Procedure

For the past 11 years the Florida Conference president has engaged leaders of pastoral ministry and education in an optional leadership training program. Other Seventh-day Adventist entities within the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists have also engaged their leaders in training and coaching programs. I have also been a participant of leadership training and coaching and continue to be engaged in the coaching process. The interview protocol will assume that education leaders who participate in leadership training acquire skills that are useful in leadership. I will attempt to discover through the interview process and a case-study approach, what skills acquired were most beneficial to Adventist education leaders for personal and professional growth, and which skills were most beneficial for impacting organizational change within the Adventist education system.

The FLCSDA's administration and leadership training personnel will receive a questionnaire asking what skills are taught in the training program. A table/chart will then be developed listing the acquired skills by participants. The study will chart to what degree on a 5-point Likert scale (5=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree) each skill has impacted the participants personal and professional lives. This will help me understand skills that participants believe are most beneficial for leaders of change and will inform the development of interview questions for the case study.

The research participants chosen for this study will be education leaders in the Florida Conference who have been or are actively engaged in some form of executive coaching, as a coach and/or coachee. Permission to interview participants and email contacts have been given by the Florida Conference Administration and Office of Education and will be limited to purposive sampling participants who are willing to be engaged in an interview process and have their experiences recorded. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face or via video conferencing. Preference will be given to the face-to-face format to provide a better environment for participants in terms of establishing rapport, comfort, and reducing stress. This will also provide the researcher an opportunity to read body language, allow for spontaneity, and to build relationships with the participants. All interviews will be recorded to ensure accuracy. I will send the interview protocol ahead of time to allow the participants time for thought and reflection.

d) Privacy Details/Minimizing Risk/Confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality are a high priority. I will provide a consent form for all participants. As specified in the form, study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. I will keep recordings in a locked folder that will only be accessible to the lead investigator and clerical assistant (if needed). Once the audio recordings have been transcribed, they will be kept in safe storage. In research analysis and publication, a pseudonym will be used to protect each identity, unless a specific request is made to be identified by a true name. A document kept in the locked folder will connect each of the participants to each of the codes. All documents and audio recordings will be kept for a period of 3 years.

e) Methods for Data Collection

Interviewing and observing are two data collection strategies used to address the research question. Furthermore, documents such as written, visual, digital, and physical material that is relevant to the study and found in the research setting are beneficial to qualitative research. Finally, artifacts are things or objects, often three-dimensional that can assist the participant with communicating something meaningful is often beneficial to qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This study will be supported by collecting documents and artifacts from participants in leadership training in the Florida Conference. The format is a semi-structured interview with the researcher asking several key questions to define those areas needing exploration but allowing for both participant and researcher to pursue an idea or response in greater detail. The semi-structured approach allows for flexibility, discovery, and elaboration, providing better context for the study. My goal was to provide an environment for education leaders to engage in open dialogue concerning their views on leadership training and the coaching process leading to an alignment with the purpose of my study and a deeper understanding of a social phenomenon (Ledesma, 2011; Seidman, 2006).

f) Internal Validity

In qualitative research, I recognize that humans are the instruments of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998). Through interviews, observation, collection of documents and artifacts, I will be responsible for accurate interpretation of the narrative and data collection (Miles, 2014). It is my objective to listen, analyze, interpret, record, understand, and report on what education leaders believe is truth about the coaching process in the FLCSDA's. I will follow the standards of the

American Anthropological Association (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Wanting to ensure that the account of the study is valid, reliable, objective, trustworthy, and reflective of qualitative work, I will attempt to use recognized quantitative terminology in the study, such as “credibility,” “authenticity,” “transferability,” “dependability,” and “confirmability” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For validation of my study, I will have spent time in the field, received a peer review from my cohort regional group, identified my bias, asked for narrative feedback from participants to ensure clarity, followed the guidelines for reporting generalizability and transferability (Creswell, 2007). My goal is to begin the interview process in February of 2018 and complete all interviews by March of 2018. Once I have completed the transcription of participant interviews, personal information will be deleted. A copy of the transcription will be sent to each participant for the purpose of correcting any discrepancies and to provide clarity. This should be completed by June of 2018.

g) Data Analysis

To analyze my data, I will transcribe the interviews and put the analytical data into analytical software and code recurring themes. Findings will be analyzed by the principal researcher. Results may be used in education forums and appropriate publications.

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APPENDIX I

Southern Union Request Letter

North American Division
Office of Education
9705 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046
Ph.: 443-391-7284
Fax: 443-259-4887
Email: arnenielsen@nadadventist.org

October 15, 2017

Dear Director Fryson,

Greetings! As you know, my name is Arne Nielsen. I am the Director of Education and Accreditation for the North American Division (NAD) in Columbia, MD. I am currently pursuing a PhD in Leadership and Administration from Andrews University. My qualitative study is on the benefits of coaching education leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. I am requesting your approval to visit your Union territory for the purpose of interviewing education leaders (vice-presidents, superintendents, principals, vice-principals) who have participated in the Florida Conference Leadership Training Program. The NAD Vice-president of Education is aware of my interest in this study and given permission to dialogue with you. The central question of my study is How do education leaders describe the experiences of having been coached or have who have coached other leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The criteria that I will use to identify the education leaders are:

- The education leader has participated in the Florida Conference Leadership Training Program.
- The education leader has coached and has been coached over a minimum 10 session period.

My goal is to select up to 15 education leaders who fit the criteria noted above. Your endorsement for this study in this preliminary phase will allow me to contact the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventist President and Vice-president of Education, and subsequently education leaders, who will make a significant contribution on the framing of this study for education leadership training in the Florida Conference and the Adventist education system in general.

If you have any questions about the study, I encourage you to contact my advisor, Dr. Randy Siebold, Associate Professor of Leadership at Andrews University, (269) 471-3200.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request and a response can be sent to arnenielsen@nadadventist.org or it can be mailed to Arne Nielsen, 9705 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046-1565.

Blessings,

Arne Nielsen

APPENDIX J

Southern Union Permission Letter

SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE

Office of Education
www.adventistedge.org

October 18, 2017

Mr. Arne Nielsen
North American Division Office of
Education 9705 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046

Dear Arne:

Congratulations on pursuing a PhD in Leadership and Administration from Andrews University. I fully endorse your qualitative study on the benefits of coaching education leaders in the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. You are more than welcome to visit the Southern Union to interview willing education leaders who have participated in the Florida Conference Leadership Training Program.

When your research is completed, please share your findings. I am very interested to learn the impact of coaching on leaders who have been coached as well as on those who have served as coaches.

Sincerely,

Debra C. Fryson,
Director Southern
Union Conference
Office of Education

SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH
www.southernunion.com

P.O. Box 923868
Norcross, GA 30010
302 Research Drive
Norcross, GA 30092

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REFERENCE LIST

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Curriculum Vitae

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

An educational leader who has coached, mentored, directed, instructed, and supported colleagues and employees in three conferences and two divisions spanning a 37-year career, working for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As part of my responsibilities, I have developed the leadership potential of directors and associates in Camp Ministry, Children's Ministry, Education, Family Ministry, Youth and Young Adults Ministry, in a joint venture of collaboration to disciple God's children.

EDUCATION

PhD in Leadership, Candidate
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI
MA in Education Administration, May 1989
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HIGHLIGHTS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2019-Present	Vice President for Education, NAD, Columbia, MD
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1996-2003	Principal/Business Manager/Teacher, Maxwell Adventist Academy, Nairobi, Kenya
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