Exploring the Nexus between One-on-One Coaching and Coaching Culture: Examining How Employee Experiences of Coaching in the Workplace May Lead to Cultural Change

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Abstract of Dissertation

Exploring the Nexus between One-on-One Coaching and Coaching Culture: Examining How Employee Experiences of Coaching in the Workplace May Lead to Cultural Change

One-on-one coaching in the workplace is intensive; and the type of widespread coaching sometimes said to lead to coaching culture represents a significant investment. However, coaching's returns on investment beyond the individual level are difficult to ascertain. I conducted this qualitative case study to add to our understanding of those returns and of the potential for the development of coaching culture as a result of those returns.

The case for this study was a coaching program established by a United States federal government agency in 2019. Since then, one-on-one coaching and other forms of coaching have been made widely available to agency employees. I interviewed employee program managers, coaches, and coachees to examine how they described the extent to which one-on-one coaching has changed their behaviors and their perceptions regarding working with their teammates at the organization.

The study results suggest that leaders can expect positive results when deploying one-on-one coaching in their organizations to support the personal and professional development of the individual members of their organizations, and to improve the relationships and collaboration among those individuals. The results of the study also suggest, however, that leaders should not expect that the mere accumulation of individual effects from one-on-one coaching and other elements of a coaching program will somehow automatically create organizational culture change. Leaders deploying

widespread coaching to change their organizational cultures should instead intentionally reinforce the effects of coaching in the same ways that other cultural change must be reinforced, with key organizational change interventions, along with other leadership and communication initiatives that go beyond coaching. This is especially critical with large, dynamic, and dispersed organizations, which will require the accumulation of effects well beyond just a few relationships.

As a qualitative case study, this study focused on generating new understanding rather than validating facts, causes and effects, or theory. The paper concludes by contributing recommendations related to theory, practice, and future research.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments iii

Abstract of Dissertation v

Table of Contents vii

List of Figures xiii

List of Tables xiv

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

Overview 1

Statement of the Problem 5

Purpose of the Study and Research Question 5

Statement of Significance 5

Table 1 6

Conceptual Framework 9

Figure 1 9

Summary of Methodology 11

Limitations and Delimitations 13

Definition of Terms 15

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 18

Overview 18

Search Strategies 18

The Development of Coaching in the Workplace 19

Definitions of Coaching 20

Table 2 22

Background on Coaching in the Workplace 24

Table 3 ..... **25**

Summary of the Literature on the Development of Coaching in the Workplace **29**

The Individual Experience of Coaching **30**

Theoretical Underpinnings of Coaching **31**

Table 4 ..... **33**

The Nature of the Coaching Relationship **41**

Table 5 ..... **44**

The Individual-Level Benefits of Coaching **44**

Table 6 ..... **45**

Summary of the Literature on the Individual Experience of Coaching **48**

Coaching Culture **50**

Theoretical Underpinnings of Coaching Culture Development **51**

Table 7 ..... **52**

Table 8 ..... **54**

Benefits of Coaching Beyond the Individual Level **56**

Table 9 ..... **57**

Definitions of Coaching Culture **58**

Coaching and the Dynamics of Organizational Culture Change **65**

Research on Coaching Culture **68**

Table 10 ..... **70**

Summary of the Literature on Coaching Culture **75**

Inferences for the Current Study **77**

Conceptual Framework **78**

Figure 2 ..... **78**

Chapter Summary **80**

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY **82**

Overview **82**

Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity **82**

Inquiry Paradigm and Methodological Approach **84**

Research Site and Case **85**

Data Collection **87**

Coaching Program Reports and Documents **88**

Interviews **89**

Table 11 ..... **93**

Data Analysis **94**

Figure 3 ..... **96**

Trustworthiness Techniques **98**

Bracketing **98**

Data Triangulation **99**

Member Checks/Respondent Validation **99**

Chair and Peer Checking of Pilot Interviews and Transcripts **100**

Chair and Peer Checking of Coding Development **100**

Rich, Thick Description **100**

Human Participant and Ethics Precautions **101**

Chapter Summary **101**

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS **104**

Overview **104**

Description of the Study Interview Participants **105**

Table 12 ..... **105**

Table 13 ..... **107**

Description of the Coaching Program in the Organization 108

The Purpose of the Coaching Program 108

History of the Development of the Coaching Program 111

Table 14 113

Table 15 114

The Elements of the Coaching Program 114

Summary Description of the Study Interview Participants and the Case 121

Interview Findings 122

Theme 1: Coachees and coaches decided to participate in one-on-one coaching to achieve changes in professional and personal behaviors and perceptions. . 122

Table 16 123

Theme 2: Coaching behaviors reported in the one-on-one coaching experience created a special kind of positive relationship between coachee and coach..... 128

Table 17 129

Table 18 130

Theme 3: The one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees to think bigger and differently. 136

Table 19 137

Theme 4: The one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees and coaches to interact differently with others. 140

Table 20 141

Theme 5: Coachees and coaches generally expected moderate broader effects from increasingly shared and normalized coaching experiences and coaching behaviors. 149

Table 21 150

Synthesis of the Themes 156

Chapter Summary 158

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND

RECOMMENDATIONS 160

Overview 160

Interpretations 161

Interpretation 1: One-on-one coaching's effects beyond the individual level will occur primarily in the interpersonal behaviors and relationships between coaching participants and others, as a result of the development of relational skills in coaching participants. 161

Interpretation 2: Interpersonal effects from one-on-one coaching will likely occur unevenly, without emphasis on practicing coaching behaviors beyond coaching. 164

Table 22 165

Interpretation 3: Any effects from one-on-one coaching beyond the individual level will likely be enhanced by the use of internal, part-time coaches. 166

Interpretation 4: Coaching culture development is a phenomenon that is more complex than suggested by some of the literature. 169

Figure 4 172

Conclusions 173

Conclusion 1: One-on-one coaching supports individual personal and professional development, including the development of relational skills. 173

Conclusion 2: One-on-one coaching can improve organizational interpersonal behaviors and collaboration. 174

Conclusion 3: Leaders deploying coaching to change their organizational cultures must do so with key interventions that reinforce the effects of coaching. 175

Recommendations 178

Recommendations Related to Theory 178

Recommendations Related to Practice 181

Table 23 186

Recommendations Related to Future Research 187

Final Thoughts 189

REFERENCES **191**

APPENDIX A: Study Participant Recruitment Memo **212**

APPENDIX B: Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study **213**

APPENDIX C: Program Manager Interview Guide for Coaching Research Study **215**

APPENDIX D: Program Participant Interview Guide for Coaching Research Study **218**

APPENDIX E: List of Provisional A Priori Codes **221**

List of Figures

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework……...……..……..9

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework……...…….…….78

Figure 3. Data Analysis Plan……...……..…….96

Figure 4. Revised Conceptual Framework……...…….…...……..172

List of Tables

Table 1. Study Contributions to Theory and Practice…….……..……...6

Table 2. Definitions of the Four Variants of Coaching Identified in Hamlin et al. (2008)…….…….22

Table 3. Descriptions of Coaching by Managers…….25

Table 4. The Core Principles of Andragogy and their Applications to Coaching…33

Table 5. International Coaching Federation Core Competencies for Coaches…..…44

Table 6. Descriptions of Coaching Emphasizing Individual-Level Results for Coachees…….…45

Table 7. The Three Levels of Culture…...…….……...52

Table 8. How Leaders Embed Their Beliefs, Values, and Assumptions…...….……54

Table 9. Definitions of Coaching Emphasizing Results Beyond the Individual Level……..……..57

Table 10. Sectors and Regions in which Coaching Culture Studies Reviewed Here Have Been Focused……..…..……70

Table 11. Percentages by Gender of Agency Employees and Coaching Program Participants through 2023 and of Global Coaching Participants …...…….....93

Table 12. Descriptions of Federal Civil Service Employee Grades to which this Case Study Refers ……..…….……105

Table 13. Profiles of Interview Participants……..…….…….....107

Table 14. The Development of the Agency Coaching Program since its Establishment in 2019…….113

Table 15. Agency Employee Requests for One-On-One Coaching Sorted by Civil Service Grade…….…….…….114

Table 16. Interview Data Categories and Codes Supporting Theme 1……...….123

Table 17. Interview Data Categories and Codes Supporting Theme 2…..……..129

Table 18. Agency Survey Data Showing Coachee Satisfaction Levels with One-on-One Coaching……..……...……..130

Table 19. Interview Data Categories and Codes Supporting Theme 3…….……...137

Table 20. Interview Data Categories and Codes Supporting Theme 4……..……..141

Table 21. Interview Data Categories and Codes Supporting Theme 5……..……..150

Table 22. Likelihood of Positive Effects from One-on-One Coaching on other Work Relationships……..…...……...165

Table 23. How Leaders Embed Their Beliefs, Values, and Assumptions in Support of Coaching Program Effects beyond the Individual Level ……...186

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview

This research study explored the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture. This study defines coaching using the International Coaching Federation (ICF) definition: "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential" (International Coaching Federation, 2023b). The ICF definition is the definition of coaching used by the organization which was the research site for this study.

Stelter (2014) described this type of coaching "as interaction and dialogue – not as intervention" (p. viii), and offered the following definition for what he specifically called "dialogical coaching":

> a developmental conversation and dialogue, a co-creative process between coach and coachee with the purpose of giving (especially) the coachee a space and an opportunity for immersing him/herself in reflection on and new understandings of 1) his or her own experiences in the specific context and 2) his or her interactions, relations and negotiations with others in specific contexts and situations. (p. 8)

One-on-one coaching of this sort is primarily designed to facilitate change at the individual level, but anticipated beneficial effects beyond the individual level may be an important element in justifying decisions to deploy one-on-one coaching across organizations. This is because one-on-one coaching can be significantly more costly and time consuming than other employee and leadership development strategies (Corporate Leadership Council, 2003, p. viii).

When behaviors and benefits from coaching accumulate beyond the individual level, this is often connected to the development of coaching culture (Clutterbuck et al., 2016; Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh, 2014; Hardingham, et al., 2004; Hart, 2005; Hawkins, 2012; Milner et al., 2020; Rock and Donde, 2008a; Vesso, 2014). This study defines a coaching culture as a space where a significant number of the individuals in an organization "practice coaching behaviors as a means of relating to, supporting, and influencing one another" (Hart, 2005, p. 7). This builds on the definition of culture in Schein & Schein (2017): "The culture of a group can be defined as the accumulated shared learning of that group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration; which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel and behave in relation to those problems" (p. 6)

One-on-one coaching in the workplace emerged as a distinct practice only relatively recently (Ely et al., 2010; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). Literature describing the practice began to accumulate only 30 years ago, when the practice was primarily called executive coaching, which referred to one-on-one consultations for an organization's executives and managers, usually in small numbers (Kilburg, 1996). These consultations were often focused on correcting the bad behavior or poor performance of the executives and managers who received coaching (Bono et al., 2009; Ellinger et al., 2003).

In the years since, the applications for coaching in the workplace context have expanded beyond executives and managers to individuals at all levels, and even to groups and teams (Baron & Morin, 2009), and the terminology associated with that coaching has

multiplied (Blackman et al., 2016; Ely et al., 2010). The coaching field has simultaneously become increasingly oriented toward the development by coachees of their own personal strengths and solution-construction capabilities, rather than the delivery by coaches of problem analysis and correction, or directive consulting (Blackman et al., 2016; Kilburg, 1996; Myers & Bachkirova, 2018; Stelter, 2014).

As literature on systematic empirical research on coaching in the workplace began to accumulate in recent years, it focused on exploring how the quality of the relationship between coach and coachee is key to the results generated at the individual level. This is the approach that was taken by the eleven studies among those I reviewed that I considered most significant by a wide margin, given the scope of the research done and the methodologies employed. Nine of those eleven studies were focused on how the characteristics of coaches and their coaching techniques lead to successful relationships between coaches and coachees which generate helpful individual-level results for coachees (Bickerich et al., 2018; Bozer et al., 2014; de Haan et al., 2011; Gaddis & Foster, 2015; Grant & Cavanagh, 2007; Grant et al., 2009; Nieminen et al., 2013; Olivero et al., 1997; Smither et al., 2003). The other two studies focused on how characteristics of coachees lead to successful relationships which generate the same positive individual-level results (Baron & Morin, 2009; de Haan et al., 2011).

Little work has been done on the aggregated effects of one-on-one coaching in the workplace (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016), and empirical research addressing coaching culture in the workplace has been limited (Eustice, 2021; Milner et al., 2020; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). Several studies have nevertheless laid relevant groundwork by exploring how the effects of multiple one-on-one coaching

engagements in organizations can amass in ways that facilitate new levels of dialogue and mutual support in the relationships between colleagues across those organizations, potentially helping to generate coaching cultures. These studies examined relatively small-scale organizations, but they have helpfully begun to explore how coaching dynamics can inform and shape day-to-day behaviors throughout an organization when coaching is embraced for developmental rather than intervention purposes. Among these sources are Agarwal et al. (2009), Evans (2011), Mansor et al. (2012), Swart & Harcup (2013), Lawrence (2015), Westcott (2016), Anthony & van Nieuwerburgh (2018), and Milner et al. (2020). Collectively, these studies have made a case for the positive effects of coaching dynamics in organizations, especially when structured one-on-one coaching engagements are combined with coaching skills training for supervisors and managers, and with group coaching, expanding the shared coaching experiences and behaviors present in an organization. The organization that is the subject of this study uses this combination with the intent of fostering a coaching culture.

Additional work has specifically explored how coaching's impact beyond the individual level is enhanced by using internal coach employees, rather than external coach consultants (Bussu & Marshall, 2020; Mukherjee, 2012; Rock & Donde, 2008), another way to expand the shared coaching experiences and behaviors present in an organization, as employees both receive and provide coaching services. Internal coach employees are used in the organization that is the subject of this study, though not exclusively.

Statement of the Problem

One-on-one coaching in the workplace is intensive; and widespread coaching for individuals at many levels of responsibility in an organization represents a significant investment of resources and remains uncommon. However, the returns from coaching beyond the individual level are difficult to ascertain (Blackman et al., 2016). As a result, and despite the increasing popularity of coaching in the workplace in recent years (Ciporen, 2015; Gray, 2006; Griffiths, 2005; Jones et al., 2016; Ogunsanya, 2020; Theeboom, 2016), leaders considering deploying widespread coaching in their organizations do not have much information or empirical data to help them understand if and how coaching and the formation of a coaching culture can change the relationships the members of their organizations have with one another. This study was undertaken to further our understanding of the value of coaching beyond the individual level, as it applies more generally to interpersonal dynamics across organizations.

Purpose of the Study and Research Question

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture. More specifically, the research was intended to answer the following research question: How do the members of an organization describe the extent to which one-on-one coaching has changed their behaviors and their perceptions regarding working with others at the organization?

Statement of Significance

This study to explore the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture makes several contributions to theory and practice related

to coaching and coaching culture development. See Table 1 below for a summary. The results from this study should be important to organizational development theorists, to coaching practitioners, to leaders who are interested in deploying coaching in their own organizations, and to coaching researchers who can apply this study's results to future research.

Table 1

Study Contributions to Theory and Practice

Theory	Practice
Links coaching and coaching culture development to dialogic organization development and its focus on dialogic developmental processes	Focuses attention on the potential for interpersonal effects from coaching behaviors learned in one-on-one coaching and other coaching experience
Highlights the opportunity for theoretical modeling related to coaching culture using the dialogic organization development framework	Highlights the importance of interpersonal effects from the practice of coaching behaviors in any movement from coaching experience to coaching culture
	Provides practitioners and organizational leaders with a blueprint for practices that can support movement from coaching experience to coaching culture

The study contributes to theory by linking coaching and coaching culture development to dialogic organization development and its focus on dialogic developmental processes. Dialogic organization development focuses on the transformative power of dialogue and communication in facilitating change in individuals and within organizations (Bushe & Marshak, 2015), as I will discuss below, and the dialogical nature of one-on-one coaching has been discussed in the literature on coaching (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Stelter, 2014). However, in the course of conducting this research, I encountered no other empirical studies on coaching culture which used

dialogic organization development as a theoretical lens. This linkage represents promising potential support for coaching culture research and practice.

The study further contributes to theory by highlighting the opportunity for theoretical modeling related to coaching culture using the dialogic organization development framework. The coaching culture literature includes no unifying theoretical perspective or model regarding how to plan and execute coaching culture development. Instead, the literature provides an assortment of atheoretical descriptions of how coaching initiatives have been executed at a variety of institutions, many of which represent fairly small populations. The development of theoretical models which highlight the dialogic, relational nature of one-on-one coaching and coaching behaviors as the starting point for coaching culture development will make the coaching culture literature richer and support better informed practice and more effective coaching program implementation.

This study contributes to practice by focusing attention on the potential for interpersonal effects from coaching behaviors learned in one-on-one coaching and other coaching experience. Most of the coaching literature is focused on the effects and benefits that come to individual coachees from their coaching experiences. Little work has been done on the aggregated effects of one-on-one coaching in the workplace (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016), and empirical research addressing coaching culture in the workplace has been limited (Eustice, 2021; Milner et al., 2020; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). When coaching programs are intended to produce effects beyond the individual level, this study suggests that practitioners and leaders must focus on and reinforce the potential effects of coaching experience on the interpersonal behaviors between coaching participants and others.

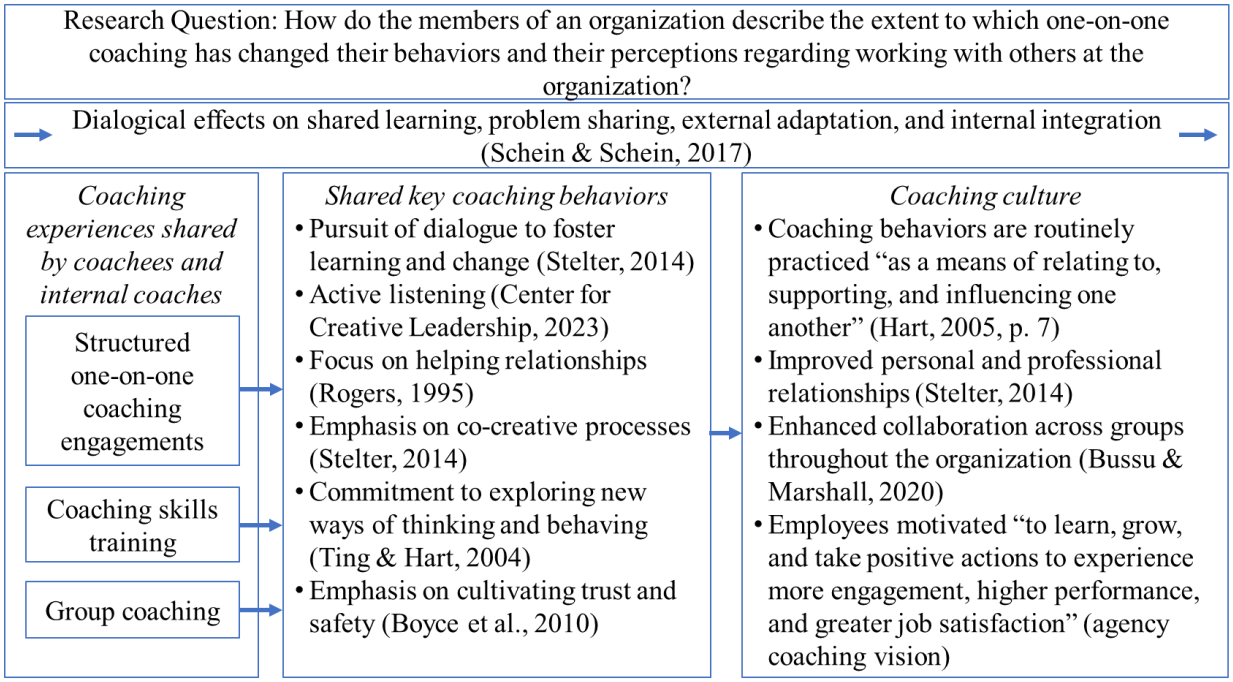
This study further contributes to practice by highlighting that any movement from coaching experience to coaching culture will follow primarily from the interpersonal effects from the practice of coaching behaviors outside coaching relationships in an organization, due to the relational skills associated with coaching behaviors. This is how coaching behaviors can become a shared "means of relating to, supporting, and influencing one another" (Hart, 2005, p. 7) with impact beyond the individual level.

Finally, and building on the previous contributions to practice noted above, this study further contributes to practice by providing practitioners and organizational leaders with a blueprint for practices that can support movement from coaching experience to coaching culture. These practices include use to the maximum extent practical of internal, part-time coaches; explicit emphasis on the utility of practicing coaching behaviors in relationships with others outside the coaching relationship; and consistent, prioritized messaging and action from organizational leaders that makes it clear that the organization's leaders are committed to supporting and practicing coaching behaviors themselves, and that they value the effects those behaviors can have on the interpersonal behaviors between members of the organization. By using this blueprint, organizational leaders can introduce coaching conversations and interactions into an organization as a model for how to engage in conversations and interactions of all kinds, in a way that allows the accumulation of individual coaching experiences to contribute to the development of coaching culture as the "accumulated shared learning of [a] group" (Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 6).

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: Study of the Connections Between Coaching Experiences, Coaching Behaviors, and Coaching Culture



I pursued the answer to my research question via a qualitative case study. My research explored the applicability of the conceptual framework shown above in Figure 1, in which the effects of coaching in the workplace are shown accumulating in a coaching culture.

In this framework, multiple structured one-on-one coaching engagements within an organization are shown generating shared coaching behaviors, in combination with coaching skills training for supervisors, managers, and others (including non-supervisors trained to use coaching skills and behaviors in their interactions with other employees), and with group coaching. Those shared coaching experiences and behaviors are then shown generating coaching culture, which is characterized by improved personal and

professional relationships and enhanced collaboration throughout the organization, even among those who are not directly involved in coaching as coachees or coaches.

Key theoretical underpinnings of coaching related to this study include andragogy, experiential learning theory, transformative learning theory, and dialogic organization development. All these theories help to explain how coaching functions to facilitate learning, in order to encourage growth and development in individuals.

The theoretical framing of this study draws especially heavily upon dialogic organization development, as it applies to the process described above, as members of an organization share coaching experiences and behaviors over time. Dialogic organization development is a theoretical framework that focuses on the transformative power of dialogue and communication in facilitating change in individuals and within organizations (Bushe & Marshak, 2015). That framework emphasizes the importance of open and inclusive conversations, active listening, and collaborative decision-making processes.

Dialogic organization development suggests that by engaging in meaningful dialogue, individuals and groups can develop a deeper appreciation for and understanding of diverse perspectives, effectively challenge their own and one another's assumptions, co-create new knowledge, and foster positive change. It views dialogue as a catalyst for personal and organizational transformation, leading to improved relationships, increased creativity, enhanced learning, and more effective problem-solving. Bushe & Marshak (2009) described dialogic forms of organization development as "change processes [that] involve confronting, engaging, or otherwise raising consciousness about alternative perspectives (paradigms, schemas, mindsets, social realities, etc.) leading to new

syntheses, perspectives, or outcomes" (p. 356).

Key theoretical underpinnings of coaching culture development related to this study come from the work of E.H. Schein on organizational culture theory, which built on the work of Kurt Lewin. Schein & Schein (2017) explained that the accumulated shared learning that they called the culture of a group is "a pattern or system of beliefs, values, and behavioral norms that come to be taken for granted as basic assumptions and eventually drop out of awareness" (p. 6). The authors then laid out their theory that an organization's culture exists and can be studied at three different levels: its artifacts; its espoused beliefs and values; and its basic underlying assumptions.

Schein & Schein (2017) made the case that leaders who want to enable their organizations to survive in changing environments can and must manage the evolution of their organizational cultures by influencing items at all three of the levels of culture listed above. The authors described this process as a leader's work of "embedding and transmitting culture" (p. 181), which is accomplished via embedding mechanisms. This work helps to explain how a coaching culture may develop when a coaching program is established as an embedding mechanism in the form of an organizational system and procedure.

Summary of Methodology

The site for this study was a United States federal government agency which established a coaching program in 2019. In the years since, one-on-one coaching and other forms of coaching have been made widely available to employees across the agency.

The organization designed its coaching program with the intention of accelerating

career and leadership development and shifting the organization's culture. The vision statement for the coaching program is to foster "a coaching culture to motivate employees to learn, grow and take positive actions to experience more engagement and connection, higher performance and greater job satisfaction" (Personal Communication). In pursuing achievement of that vision, the agency has made one-on-one coaching available to employees at all levels; has taught two courses of coaching skills for leaders (one for supervisors and one for non-supervisors), in addition to incorporating coaching skills training into classes for new supervisors; and has conducted group and team coaching. From the program's inception until July 2024, 1,185 of the agency's 17,202 employees had received one-on-one coaching, 956 employees had participated in coaching skills training, 254 employees had participated in group coaching, and more than 30 agency teams had participated in team coaching.

This study was conducted as a qualitative case study via an interpretive, constructivist lens. This research focused on meaning, understanding, and process to explore the coaching and coaching culture experiences of members of the organization, "to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 23). Data that was collected included reports, documents, and interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Observations of coaching were ruled out because of the confidentiality inherent in coaching relationships.

Coaching program reports and documents supported development of a picture of the coaching program's rationale, design, desired outcomes, and processes. Four interviews with the current and former coaching program managers supported a better understanding of how the program was established and how it has operated. Additional

interviews with a purposeful, non-random sampling of coach and coachee participants in the program allowed for the exploration of coaching experiences and behaviors in the organization, and how they relate to the possible development of a coaching culture.

The key theoretical underpinnings of coaching and coaching culture noted above informed the protocols for the employee interview data collection instruments developed for the study, the results from which were collated with agency coaching program documents (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2018). These theoretical frameworks also supported this study's data analysis once data collection was complete, as the conceptual framework was informed by what was learned in the field, rather than deductively tested (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, I pursued credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) via bracketing; data triangulation with reference to the reports and documents I collected and the interviews I conducted; member checks/respondent validation with reference to the interviews I conducted and my initial findings; chair and peer checking of my pilot interview process and initial transcripts; chair and peer checking of my coding development; and rich, thick description developed with reference to the background information I collected and the interviews I conducted (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Limitations and Delimitations

As a qualitative case study, this study focused on generating new understanding rather than validating facts, causes and effects, or theory. The study relied on my ability to analyze the rich description in employees' perceptions about the agency's coaching program and its effects, to amplify coding schemes organized around themes that

emerged from the organization's coaching program reports and documents (Saldaña, 2016). This was an iterative process, "gradually building more complex combinations, groups of codes, and higher-order concepts" (Yin, 2018, p. 166).

A key limitation of my study was that I was the primary instrument for data collection and interpretation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Given that I am a coach practitioner, this limitation posed a risk of interpretive errors resulting from my personal biases. This made it important for me to recognize and control for my biases. I did this by immersing myself in the data, particularly when it came to reviewing my interview transcripts. During that process, I reflected on each of the conversations I had with my study participants, in order to monitor how my beliefs and biases may have shown up, to support my ability to see and assess the individual perspectives and interpretations of each person I interviewed. This was supported by journaling and memoing.

A second key limitation of my study was that I conducted interviews with program managers and with volunteer program participants who had their own biases. These study participants sometimes had strong opinions that should not be assumed to be representative of the "typical, normal, and average" (Patton, 2015, p. 268) perceptions in the organization regarding coaching and its possible effects. This made it important for me to assess and note the apparent biases of study participants. I did this during my review and analysis of my interview transcripts by comparing and contrasting the individual perspectives and interpretations of all those I interviewed. This was also supported by journaling and memoing.

A third key limitation of my study was that the program participants I interviewed were reporting their own subjective perceptions of any effects of one-on-one coaching on

themselves and on their organization. Similar perceptions about coaching can reinforce one another but they cannot validate the effects of coaching. There is also no way to capture the full spectrum of the experiences of coaching.

A fourth key limitation of my study was that it examined employee experiences of coaching in a coaching program established in 2019, a program which has had only limited reach within the organization to date. One-on-one coaching has been made widely available to employees across the agency, but only 1,185 of the agency's 17,202 employees, or less than 7% had received one-on-one coaching between the program's inception and July 2024, when this study's data analysis was conducted.

A key delimitation of my study is that it is a single case study focused on the coaching program at a single organization. That coaching program was examined as an instrumental case (Stake, 1995) in order to help develop an understanding of the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture. However, even though this instrumental case may shed light on the kinds of effects coaching can have in other workplaces, this study's findings are not directly applicable to other organizations. This is a qualitative study that focused on a deep analysis of a coaching program in a unique organization.

Definition of Terms

Active listening: "Active listening requires you to listen attentively to a speaker, understand what they're saying, respond and reflect on what's being said, and retain the information for later" (Center for Creative Leadership, 2023).

Coaching: "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential"

(International Coaching Federation, 2023b).

Coaching culture: a space where a significant number of the individuals in an organization "practice coaching behaviors as a means of relating to, supporting, and influencing one another" (Hart, 2005, p. 7)

Co-creation in coaching: "Coach and coachee are both viewed as experts and as dialogue partners, and they are both involved in the shared production of meaning and knowledge that takes place in the reflective process of development, learning and transformation in the coaching dialogue" (Stelter, 2014, p. 49)

Collaboration: "an interpersonal relationship in which the parties show cooperation and sensitivity to the others' needs" (American Psychological Association, 2023)

Culture: "The culture of a group can be defined as the accumulated shared learning of that group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration; which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel and behave in relation to those problems" (Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 6)

Dialogue: "spaces where people are willing and able to speak their minds, and where people are willing and able to listen carefully to one another" (Bushe & Marshak, 2009, p. 20).

Dialogic change: "change processes [that] involve confronting, engaging, or otherwise raising consciousness about alternative perspectives (paradigms, schemas, mindsets, social realities, etc.) leading to new syntheses,

perspectives, or outcomes" (Bushe & Marshak, 2009, p. 356).

Helping relationship: "a type of relationship in which at least one party has the intent of promoting growth, development or improved functioning and coping skills of the other person" (Rogers, 1995, p. 39-40)

Shared coaching behaviors: Shared behaviors that result from shared coaching experiences. These behaviors can include pursuit of dialogue to foster learning and change; active listening; a focus on helping relationships; an emphasis on co-creative processes; a commitment to exploring new ways of thinking and behaving; and an emphasis on cultivating trust and safety.

Shared coaching experiences: The common experience shared by members of an organization as a result of multiple structured one-on-one coaching experiences in an organization, in combination with the organization's use of coaching skills training for supervisors, managers, and others (including non-supervisors trained to use coaching skills and behaviors in their interactions with other employees), and group coaching.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to this qualitative case study to explore the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture. After describing the literature search strategies used for this study, the chapter presents a review of the relevant literature on coaching in three sections.

The first section reviews the literature on the development of one-on-one coaching in the workplace, as it has emerged as a distinct practice over the last 30 years. The second section reviews the literature related to the individual experience of coaching, beginning with a discussion of key theoretical underpinnings of coaching. The third section reviews the literature on the concept of coaching culture, beginning with a discussion of key theoretical underpinnings of coaching culture development.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of inferences for this study drawn from the literature review, and a discussion of the study's conceptual framework, including how the key theoretical underpinnings of coaching and coaching culture development relate to the framework's depiction of the development of coaching culture.

Search Strategies

The literature providing context for this study was identified by searching the human resources and management literature with ProQuest Central, EBSCOhost, ABI/INFORM Complete Plus, Web of Science, JSTOR, Business Source Ultimate, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, and Google Scholar. This search drilled down to the literature most relevant to and focused on one-on-one coaching in the workplace, coaching culture, and the benefits thereof. The search for sources began in the fall of

2020 and continued through the completion of the dissertation process.

The literature search identified a variety of sources using the following keywords: coaching, executive coaching, leadership coaching, coaching culture, and dialogic change. These keywords created crossover with the literature on sports and athletic coaching, which led to the requirement to eliminate multiple search results out of hand. The literature review was further circumscribed by screening for and focusing on peer-reviewed work in scholarly journals and relevant dissertations published in the last 25 years.

The Development of Coaching in the Workplace

This section reviews the literature on the development of one-on-one coaching in the workplace, as it has emerged as a distinct practice over the last 30 years, in order to present definitions of coaching, and the background on coaching in the workplace. This section provides the historical context for the coaching being conducted by the organization which was the research site for this study, and a lead-in to the next section's discussion of the individual experience of coaching.

One-on-one coaching in the workplace emerged as a distinct practice only relatively recently (Ely et al., 2010; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). Literature describing the practice began to accumulate only 30 years ago, when the practice was primarily called executive coaching, which referred to one-on-one consultations for executives and managers in an organization, usually in small numbers (Kilburg, 1996). These consultations were often focused on correcting the bad behavior or poor performance of the executives and managers who received coaching (Bono et al., 2009; Ellinger et al., 2003).

In the years since, the applications for coaching in the workplace have expanded beyond executives and managers to individuals at all levels, and even to groups and teams (Baron & Morin, 2009), and the terminology associated with that coaching has multiplied (Blackman et al., 2016; Ely et al., 2010). That terminology will be discussed below.

As the applications and terminology for coaching in the workplace have expanded and multiplied, the coaching field has simultaneously become increasingly oriented towards the development by coachees of their own personal strengths and solution-construction capabilities. This has moved coaching away from the delivery by coaches of problem analysis and correction, or directive consulting (Blackman et al., 2016; Kilburg, 1996; Myers & Bachkirova, 2018; Stelter, 2014).

Definitions of Coaching

There are several applications and styles of coaching which will be discussed below. Given coaching's relatively recent emergence and rapid evolution as a distinct practice with a multitude of professionals dedicated to the practice, no universally accepted definition has emerged to create a single, unique identity for coaching in the workplace (Bachkirova et al., 2010; Ellinger & Kim, 2014; Ting & Hart, 2004).

Ellinger et al. (2003) reported that the term coaching had previously often been used as a synonym for counseling and mentoring in an organizational context, even though many scholars and practitioners have written about how these activities are differentiated. Counseling for employees is generally a short-term intervention designed to address issues that interfere with an employee's performance on the job, while mentoring for employees has traditionally been a longer-term, career-focused

developmental process generally conducted by a more senior, more seasoned colleague. Mentors have been expected to share their own experiences with their mentees, so that those mentees could benefit from hearing how their mentors proceeded through that experience and what they learned along the way (Blackman et al., 2016; Burdett, 1998; Gray, 2006). By contrast to both counseling and mentoring, coaching in the workplace, as it has developed beyond correcting the bad behavior or poor performance of executives and managers, is a process that begins with and focuses on the coachee's professional development needs and their own experience (Burdett, 1998; Clutterbuck, 2008).

Grant & Zackon (2004) analyzed the results of a 2003 online survey which engaged 2,529 coach members of the International Coaching Federation (ICF), to collect data on their credentialing, professional backgrounds, and coaching practices inside and outside the workplace. Without providing any specific original definitions of their own or any definitions from other sources, the authors of the study settled on executive coaching, workplace coaching, and life coaching as the primary variants in the field, as it was described to them by the participants in their study. These variants each had increasingly broader applications, beginning with workplace issues and concerns for executives, then expanding to workplace issues and concerns for non-executives, and ultimately expanding beyond workplace issues and concerns for executives and non-executives alike.

Hamlin et al. (2008) did detailed work parsing the variants of coaching inside and outside the workplace by analyzing 37 definitions for coaching in other sources stretching from 1987 through 2007. The authors grouped those individual definitions into four variants that overlap with the variants in Grant & Zackon (2004). Hamlin et al. (2008)

specifically defined those four variants as shown in Table 2 below, including the general coaching variant which has no special focus area.

Table 2

Definitions of the Four Variants of Coaching Identified in Hamlin et al., 2008, p. 295

Executive coaching	a process "that enables the executive (or a manager) to achieve personal-, job- or organizational-related goals with an intention to improve organizational performance"
Business coaching	a process "that helps businesses, owner/managers and employees achieve their personal and business related goals to ensure long-term success"
Life coaching	a process "which brings about an enhancement in the quality of life and personal growth of the coachee, and possibly a life-changing experience"
Coaching	a process "designed to improve existing skills, competence and performance, and to enhance [a coachee's] personal effectiveness or personal development or personal growth"

The definition of executive coaching in Hamlin et al. (2008) describes coaching for executives and managers, as it has developed since the earliest days of coaching in the workplace, with an emphasis on how the individual executive's or manager's performance can affect organizational performance. Business coaching, as the authors defined it, can address broader issues, but it has tended to focus on evaluating the coachee's current business situation, and on exploring the coachee's options for achieving success specifically while developing, promoting, and growing a business venture (Clegg et al., 2003; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). Life coaching, as the authors defined it, can address workplace issues, but it has tended to focus on the overall quality of life of coachees (Richardson, 1999; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000) and can even extend to "life-changing experience" (Hamlin et al., 2008, p. 295).

An additional, very common variant of coaching specific to organizational contexts but not identified by Hamlin et al. (2008) is leadership coaching. Ely et al.

(2010) described leadership coaching in simple terms as the "relationship between a client and a coach that facilitates the client becoming a more effective leader" (p. 585). In examining the literature on leadership coaching, Ely et al. (2010) used the definition of coaching for individual leader development provided in Ting & Hart (2004), in which a coachee and a coach establish a formal one-on-one relationship for the purposes of collaborating "to assess and understand the coachee and his or her developmental task [as a leader], to challenge current constraints while exploring new possibilities, and to ensure accountability and support for reaching goals and sustaining development" (p. 116). Leadership coaching can apply to anyone in an organization, regardless of their current authority level or leadership responsibilities.

Despite the absence of the term in Grant & Zackon (2004) and Hamlin et al. (2008), McLean & Hudson (2012) asserted that leadership coaching was "the dominant coaching specialty" in the marketplace at that time (p. 38). Many others have reported how coaching has emerged as a significant leadership development practice (Allen & Hartman, 2008; Gray, 2006; Maltbia et al., 2014; Yukl, 2013). Leadership development can be considered a special focus for the coaching variants listed by Grant & Zackon (2004) and Hamlin et al. (2008), with the exception of life coaching.

Hamlin et al. (2008) found that all four coaching variants identified by the study shared the key element of providing some form of facilitation activity to help individuals "to improve their performance in various domains, and to enhance their personal effectiveness, personal development and personal growth" (p. 291). Leadership coaching involves this same facilitation, with a focus on improvement and development in the leadership domain.

This study focused on coaching in the workplace conducted along these developmental lines in formal one-on-one relationships, whether the coaching is provided by external coaching consultants, or by internal coaches who coach full-time or part-time. The coaching variants of primary interest to this study are the executive coaching and general coaching variants identified and defined by Hamlin et al. (2008), and the leadership coaching variant described by Ely et al. (2010). The use of coaching skills by supervisors and managers is also addressed.

This study defines coaching using the broad International Coaching Federation (ICF) definition: "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential" (International Coaching Federation, 2023b). This definition captures the common ground among the coaching variants described above, and other variants beyond the scope of this study, like relationship coaching and career coaching. It also goes farther than the general definition of coaching in Hamlin et al. (2008), by saying more about the coaching process as it has developed over the years. The ICF definition is the definition used by the organization which was the research site for this study.

Background on Coaching in the Workplace

Evered & Selman (1989) examined the history of coaching in the workplace, tracing its first appearance in the management literature back to the 1950s, when the concept of the manager as coach first appeared. Coaching in this sense was one way among many in which managers fulfilled their responsibility to develop their subordinates as apprentices, but this form of coaching was part of a hierarchical relationship focused on the manager-coach's work to improve the subordinate's job

skills, in the same way that sports coaches work to improve the skills of athletes and athletics teams. In the 1970s, articles linking sports coaching to organizational management began to multiply, but much of that continuing work to translate sports coaching techniques into techniques for organizational management centered around how manager-coaches could drive individuals and teams to reach higher levels of performance (Evered & Selman, 1989; McLean & Kuo, 2000; McNutt & Wright, 1995). See Table 3 below for descriptions of coaching by managers along these lines which have persisted into the current century.

Table 3

Descriptions of Coaching by Managers

Source	Description (**emphasis** added)
Orth et al. (1987)	"a day-by-day, 'hands-on' process of **helping employees recognize opportunities to improve their performance and capabilities**" (p. 67).
Hargrove (1996)	"Coaching starts with giving people the gift of your presence. It means **challenging and supporting people to expand their capacity to produce the results they desire**. A coach's role is not only to inspire and empower people to go for breakthrough goals but also **to intervene in their learning process with the intent of causing improvement**" (p. 18).
Peterson & Hicks (1996)	"The process of **equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective**" (p. 14).
Burdett (1998)	"Coaching is, exclusively, **a process focusing on enhanced performance**" (p. 2).
Fournies (2000)	"The face to face process, called the coaching discussion, is **to redirect an employee's behavior to solve a performance problem**: to get the employee to stop doing what he or she shouldn't be doing or to start doing what he or she should be doing" (p. 156).
Redshaw (2000)	"Systematically **increasing the capability and work performance of someone** by exposing him or her to work-based tasks or experiences that will provide the relevant learning opportunities, and **giving guidance and feedback** to help him or her to learn from them" (p. 107).

This approach to coaching in the workplace by managers put the bulk of the responsibility to define goals and to improve behavior on manager coaches, rather than on coachees (Ellinger, 2003). This encouragement to apply authoritarian sports coaching techniques to organizational management resonated with many managers, but it paid inadequate attention to the sense of committed partnership with which many of the best sports coaches operate, while using an "acknowledge-create-empower paradigm," rather than a "control-order-prescription paradigm" (Evered & Selman, 1989, pp. 20-21).

The more nuanced view of coaching in partnership to empower, rather than to prescribe, aligned with managerial concepts that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, with emphasis on managerial practices that valued and supported employee learning and growth (Ellinger, 2003; Ellinger et al., 1999; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). Coaching in the workplace grew in popularity in the subsequent years, as that concept of partnership was embraced by line managers who coached their employees, by external professionals hired to coach executives and then other lower-level members of organizations, and by internal coaches who were employed to coach fellow employees, often in combination with other duties (Ellinger & Kim, 2014). Combining coaching with other duties also made coaching an especially important competency and role for human resource professionals, as Human Resource departments evolved into Human Resource Development departments (McLagan, 1996; Hamlin et al., 2009).

As popular press books and practitioner-focused articles on coaching as a partnership began to accumulate, professional coaching organizations started to sprout up. One example is the International Coaching Federation (ICF), which was founded in 1995 as a nonprofit organization designed to enable professional coaches to support one

another, and to advance the coaching profession. Just a year after the organization's founding, more than 60 ICF chapters had been established worldwide. (International Coaching Federation, 2023d); and, in 2022, ICF reported that it had 139 chapters and 56,397 members (International Coaching Federation, 2022).

The ICF professional coaches surveyed by Grant & Zackon (2004) reported that 97.4% of their time was devoted to one-on-one coaching, rather than to group training (p. 8). This highlights the unique way that coaching has focused on the development and sustainment of dynamic one-on-one working relationships between individual coaches and their individual coachees (Ely et al., 2010), in contrast to other employee development initiatives conducted in group settings without the necessity of such close, one-on-one partnerships.

The scholarly literature that has examined coaching has included many articles that have examined the linkage between the practice of coaching and the practice of psychotherapy, including the theoretical constructs which the two practices have in common (Bachkirova & Cox, 2005; Day et al., 2008; Hart et al., 2001; Judge & Cowell, 1997). Gray (2006) suggested that the linkage between coaching and psychotherapy exists because coaching and psychotherapy both encourage clients to discuss personal challenges while exploring biases, blind spots, and shortcomings, in order to gain new insights and perspectives that can improve and enrich their personal and professional lives.

Hart et al. (2001) reported that many coaches at the time of that study were counseling practitioners by profession; and Gray (2006) reported that many coaching engagements begin with a personality assessment or inventory such as the Myers-Briggs

Type Indicator, even when the coach is not a counseling practitioner by profession. The overlaps between coaching and psychotherapy have been significant, but coaching and psychotherapy diverge in important ways.

Day et al. (2008) provided a good discussion of the places where coaching and psychotherapy diverge. Whereas therapy focuses on an individual's emotions as they face challenges, often exploring the origins of those emotions in the past, coaching is more action and results focused, with primary reference to the present and the future. This difference in focus creates additional practical differences of frequency and duration. Coaching sessions tend to be spaced out by several weeks, unlike therapy sessions which often take place on a weekly or more frequent basis (Day et al., 2008); and coaching engagements generally do not last more than 12 months (Grant & Zackon, 2004), while therapy can continue for years.

Another important difference between coaching and psychotherapy has to do with the balance of power in the relationship between practitioner and client. The balance of power in therapy is skewed toward the therapist, something like how early coaching in the workplace that was modeled after sports coaching skewed the balance of power toward the manager coach. In contrast, coaching, as it has developed in recent years, is founded upon the expectation of equality of power, collaborative learning, and transparent two-way communication between coach and coachee. This applies whether the coach is an external professional coach or an employee coach internal to the coachee's organization (Cox et al., 2014). The coaching dynamics here allow for no hierarchy in the coaching relationship (O'Broin & Palmer, 2009). Even today's coaching skills training for supervisors and managers is intended to deemphasize hierarchy and

authority and enhance collaboration.

Summary of the Literature on the Development of Coaching in the Workplace

One-on-one coaching in the workplace is a relatively new practice (Ely et al., 2010; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001), with literature describing the practice that began to accumulate only 30 years ago. In its early days, the practice was primarily called executive coaching, which referred to one-on-one consultations for an organization's executives and managers, usually in small numbers (Kilburg, 1996). These consultations were often corrective in nature relative to bad behavior or poor performance by the executives and managers who received coaching (Bono et al., 2009; Ellinger et al., 2003). Since those early days, coaching in the workplace has expanded beyond executives and managers to individuals at all levels, and even to groups and teams (Baron & Morin, 2009).

This study focused on the developmental coaching now conducted in the workplace in formal, collaborative one-on-one relationships between coach and coachee. These relationships are oriented toward the development by coachees of their own personal strengths and solution-construction capabilities, rather than problem analysis and correction, or directive consulting provided by coaches (Blackman et al., 2016; Kilburg, 1996; Myers & Bachkirova, 2018; Stelter, 2014).

No universally accepted definition has emerged for coaching in the workplace (Bachkirova et al., 2010; Ellinger & Kim, 2014; Ting & Hart, 2004). This study defines coaching using the broad International Coaching Federation (ICF) definition: "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential" (International Coaching Federation, 2023b).

The ICF definition captures the common ground among the coaching variants described above, and also applies to other variants beyond the scope of this study, like relationship coaching and career coaching. It is the definition used by the organization which provided this study's research site.

Coaching, as the ICF defines it, is based on the assumption that coachees already have within them the answers they need or the ability to discover those answers: "the role of the coach is not socio-educational, but is more guided discovery, with the skill of the coach in shaping questions and focusing attention on the next step of the journey" (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011, p. 74). Coaching, as it has developed in recent years, is founded upon the expectation of equality of power, collaborative learning, and transparent two-way communication between coach and coachee, whether the coach is an external professional coach or an employee coach internal to the coachee's organization (Cox et al., 2014). The coaching relationship dynamics here are intended to be hierarchy free (O'Broin & Palmer, 2009). Even today's coaching by supervisors and managers is intended to deemphasize hierarchy and authority and enhance collaboration.

The next section will explore the literature that addresses the individual experience of coaching as it occurs within the context of the coaching relationship dynamics described above.

The Individual Experience of Coaching

This section reviews the literature related to the individual experience of coaching in the workplace, beginning with a discussion of key theoretical underpinnings of coaching related to this study. Those underpinnings include andragogy, experiential learning theory, transformative learning theory, and dialogic organization development.

Following the discussion of those theories and how they apply to the individual experience of coaching, this section discusses the nature of the coaching relationship and the individual-level benefits coaching delivers. This section provides a lead-in to the next section's discussion of coaching culture.

As noted above, when one-on-one coaching in the workplace emerged as a distinct practice about 30 years ago, it was primarily called executive coaching, which referred to one-on-one consultations for executives and managers in an organization, usually in small numbers (Kilburg, 1996). These consultations were often focused on correcting the bad behavior or poor performance of the executives and managers who received coaching (Bono et al., 2009; Ellinger et al., 2003).

As the coaching field became increasingly oriented toward the development by coachees of their own personal strengths and solution-construction capabilities, rather than the delivery by coaches of problem analysis and correction, or directive consulting (Blackman et al., 2016; Kilburg, 1996; Myers & Bachkirova, 2018; Stelter, 2014), the new style of coaching that emerged was "a form of facilitating learning to encourage growth and development" (Ellinger et al., 2003, p. 438). This was a far cry from the early executive coaching consultations described above (Bono et al., 2009; Ellinger et al., 2003). The theoretical frameworks discussed below help to explain how coaching functions to facilitate learning, in order to encourage growth and development in individuals.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Coaching

Andragogy

Malcolm Knowles introduced andragogy in the United States – and the concept

that adults and children learn differently – in the early 1970s. The adult learning theory espoused by Knowles is based on the assumption that adult learning is an internal process controlled by the learner.

As conceived by Knowles, pedagogy is a curriculum-driven content model for the education of children, while andragogy is a process model for the education of adults:

> The difference is not that one deals with content and the other does not; the difference is that the content model is concerned with transmitting information and skills, whereas the process model is concerned with providing procedures and resources for helping learners acquire information and skills. (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 115)

The distinction between information and skills that are transmitted to learners and information and skills that are acquired by learners is key. Knowles argued that adult learning cannot be a passive process.

Andragogy builds on constructivist learning theory which maintains that learning is an active process of constructing meaning from experience (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). The six core principles of andragogy, described in Knowles et al. (2015), are listed below in Table 4, along with their applications to coaching, as explained in Cox et al. (2014). This study explored how these principles have played out in the coaching program of the organization that was examined.

Knowles et al. (2015) defined adult learning as "the extension and clarification of the meaning of one's experience" (p. 11). This is what coaching is designed to produce, in accordance with andragogy's process model. By complying with the core adult learning principles listed in Table 4, coaches facilitate personalized learning experiences

that encourage self-directed learning and growth in their coachees, where the coachees ensure that the learning is "clearly relevant to the needs of the adult" (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 294).

Table 4

The Core Principles of Andragogy and their Applications to Coaching

Principle 1	- the learner's need to know: adults need to know why they should learn something
Application	- coachees own the coaching agenda (Bachkirova et al., 2014)
Principle 2	- self-concept of the learner: adults need to be involved in planning and evaluating their learning
Application	- coaches provide specific feedback to their clients without evaluation or judgment (Cox, 2012)
Principle 3	- prior experience of the learner: experience provides the foundation for adult learning
Application	- coachee experience is the catalyst for learning and unlearning (Cox, 2012)
Principle 4	- readiness to learn: adults are most interested in learning with immediate relevance to their work and/or their personal lives
Application	- coaching is best received in situations that create a need to know or understand, or a need for change
Principle 5	- orientation to learning: adult learning is oriented toward problem solving rather than content mastery
Application	- coaching outcomes should apply to immediate challenges
Principle 6	- motivation to learn: adults respond better to internal motivation, not external motivation
Application	- coaching outcomes should connect to coachee needs and values

Cox (2006) suggested that "andragogy has reached its zenith with the advent of coaching as a learning approach" (p. 195). This is because coachees are expected to be mature, motivated, voluntary, and equal participants in their learning relationships with their coaches. Coaches facilitate coachee learning by aiding the learner in their own achievement of primarily self-determined learning objectives. This self-determination is critical to adult learning because "adults are not preparing for life; they are living their lives" (Ades, 2020, p. 68).

With the help of coaches, adult learners work to make meaning out of their experiences for themselves, by actively acquiring information and skills, rather than passively receiving information and skills that are transmitted to them, as noted above. They do this by adapting and integrating past experiences with new experiences to facilitate future action of their own. This links andragogy to the experiential learning theory developed by David Kolb.

Experiential Learning Theory

Kolb developed his constructivist theory of experiential learning in the 1970s and 1980s. Kolb's theory emphasized the significance of a cyclical adult learning process involving concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. As a result of this process, Kolb said that "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (1984, p. 38). Kolb's experiential learning theory built upon the experiential work of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget (Kolb, 1984, 2014).

Kolb & Fry (1975) explained that the adult experiential learning process can begin with any of the steps laid out in the process, but that it often begins with concrete experience, where a learner engages in a new activity or task or reimagines a previous activity or task. In the second step of the process, reflective observation, the learner reflects on the activity or task. During this stage in the learning cycle, the learner seeks to identify any discrepancies between their understanding and the experience itself. This will often involve discussing the experience with others. In the third step of the process, abstract conceptualization, the learner seeks to understand the concepts related to the activity or task. This allows the learner to connect the activity or task to other activities or tasks like it, to allow for generalizations and integration across learning experiences. In

the final step of the process, active experimentation, the learner returns to the activity or task, this time with the goal of applying their learning conclusions to new experiences.

Discussion and engagement with others provide a key opportunity to enrich the experiential learning process, and coaches can be key partners in that learning. Some ways that coaches partner with adult learners include by encouraging a full exploration and description of their experiences; by inviting the consideration of feelings connected to their experiences; by facilitating an assessment of the perspectives of others on the same experiences; by assisting learners in connecting their experience to other experiences, both directly and via abstract conceptualization; by supporting learners in the process of making sense of their experiences; and by encouraging learners while they apply their learning conclusions to new experiences (Cox, 2006). As coaches engage with adult learners in these ways, they "…need to be experts at the process of coaching but recognize their clients are the experts on the content of their own experience" (Stober, 2006, p. 20).

Transformative Learning Theory

Taking a constructivist orientation like Knowles' and Kolb's, emphasizing the importance of meaning making for human beings, Jack Mezirow developed transformative learning theory in the 1970s and 1980s (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Since Mezirow first developed the theory, it has matured into "a comprehensive and complex description of how learners construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experience" (Cranton, 1994, p. 22).

Transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a learner's frame of reference, defined by Mezirow (1997) as follows: "Frames of reference are the structures

of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. They selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings. They set our 'line of action'" (p. 5).

Transformative learning moves learners "toward a frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). Mezirow presented this as a rational process "of interrogating our assumptions and then correcting the distortions in our meaning schemes and perspectives" (Taylor & Cranton, 2012, p, 472). Correcting distortions is important because a learner's frame of reference is routinely acquired uncritically during childhood, especially as a result of interactions with authority figures, and, over time, this perspective becomes more ingrained as a result of numerous congruent experiences (Taylor, 1998).

As with experiential learning, discussion and engagement with others provides a key opportunity to enrich the transformative learning process. Mezirow argued that transformative learning usually results from "disorienting dilemmas," but that it can also occur as the result of "the accretion of transformations in related specific beliefs or meaning schemes" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 144). Discourse with others, which involves the conscious effort to place biases aside and to review the evidence thoughtfully, is a key part of this cumulative transformative learning process (Mezirow, 1997, p. 145).

Gray (2006) explained how coaches are ideal partners for this type of discourse because they come alongside learners as "objective outsiders" (p. 488), engaging with coachees in dialogue to facilitate their work of critically examining their experiences and carefully considering alternative perspectives. Coaches provide space for this discourse, which allows learners to avoid turning to authorities or traditions to make judgments for

them (Mezirow, 1997).

Coaches help their coachees to overcome constraints to learning, related to their situations, their thinking, and their emotions, so they can develop the capacity to participate in fully rational and transparent dialogue with their coaches and others, as they pursue transformation (Gray, 2006). Cox et al. (2014) explained that coaching dialogue helps learners to challenge their frames of references so that deep, transformative learning can occur. This learning involves achieving "a broader, more discriminating, permeable and integrative understanding of [their] experience as a guide to action" (Mezirow, 1994, p. 226).

Dialogic Organization Development

Dialogic organization development is a theoretical framework that aligns with the principles of andragogy, experiential learning theory, and transformative learning theory described above. Dialogic organization development focuses on the transformative power of dialogue and communication in facilitating self-directed change in individuals and within organizations (Bushe & Marshak, 2015). It emphasizes the importance of open and inclusive conversations, active listening, and collaborative decision-making processes.

Bushe & Marshak (2009) argued that this dialogic approach to organization development is a departure from traditional, diagnostic forms of organization development.

> In the diagnostic form, the [organization development] consultant helps bring externally validated new thinking to the system about things like job design, teamwork, and communication. In the dialogic approaches, the focus is on

eliciting new thinking in the targets of change themselves (p. 361).

Dialogic organization development suggests that by engaging in meaningful dialogue, individuals and groups can develop a deeper appreciation for and understanding of diverse perspectives, effectively challenge their own and one another's assumptions, co-create new knowledge, and foster positive change. It views dialogue as a catalyst for personal and organizational transformation, leading to improved relationships, increased creativity, enhanced learning, and more effective problem-solving. Bushe & Marshak (2009) described dialogic forms of organization development as "change processes [that] involve confronting, engaging, or otherwise raising consciousness about alternative perspectives (paradigms, schemas, mindsets, social realities, etc.) leading to new syntheses, perspectives, or outcomes" (p. 356).

Bushe and Marshak were the editors of 2015's *Dialogic Organization Development: The Theory and Practice of Transformational Change*, which they presented as the first comprehensive introduction to dialogic organization development. In describing the Swart (2015) chapter dedicated to coaching within the volume, Bushe & Marshak (2015) called coaching a dialogic practice like the others covered in the book, even though coaching falls outside "the world of more structured Dialogic [Organization Development]" (p. 7). The authors explained that typical dialogic organization development activities involve work with groups, while coaching involves "the facilitation of dialogic processes in one-on-one, in-the-moment encounters" (p. 7). The goal in both cases is learning and change as a result of dialogue, but Bushe & Marshak (2015) emphasized the relational nature of one-on-one coaching.

De Haan et al. (2011) emphasized the dialogic, one-on-one nature of executive

coaching as it has developed in recent years by describing it like this:

> In executive coaching, leaders and managers submit issues from their practice to conversation, the aim of which is to explore and bring those issues forward with the help of an executive coach. The promise of executive coaching is not so much to offer instant, ready-made solutions, but rather to foster learning and change. (p. 25)

Redshaw (2000) did not emphasize the role of conversation or dialogue in coaching but did make the case that coaching is quite different from teaching or instructing. According to Redshaw (2000), the coach is best described as a facilitator who encourages the learner to learn for themself. In that learning to learn process, a coachee's improved performance occurs as a byproduct of the coachee's exploration and learning, as it is facilitated by the coach, rather than as a primary objective of the process.

The definition of executive coaching in Dingman (2006) was explicit about both dialogue and facilitation in one-to-one interactions between coaches and coachees. These interactions happen within the context of "a helping relationship offering experiential learning and dialogue that facilitates an executive's desire to reach specified goals" (p. 2).

Stelter (2014) described this type of coaching "as interaction and dialogue – not as intervention" (p. viii), and offered the following definition for what the author specifically called "dialogical coaching":

> a developmental conversation and dialogue, a co-creative process between coach and coachee with the purpose of giving (especially) the coachee a space and an opportunity for immersing him/herself in reflection on and new understandings of 1) his or her own experiences in the specific context and 2) his or her interactions,

relations and negotiations with others in specific contexts and situations. (p. 8)

By design, according to Stelter (2014), this kind of coaching relationship is meant to facilitate and enable the coachee's exploration of new ways for the coachee to think and behave within the context of the topic(s) addressed in the coaching relationship's conversations.

Stelter (2014) called the shift to a dialogic approach a "third generation" of coaching, after its first generation focused on helping coachees to achieve specific current goals, and its second generation focused on building on coachees' existing resources and strengths in preparation for future challenges. Coaching's third generation is a co-creative and collaborative process between coachee and coach, revolving around personal values and meaning making. This is coaching as ICF defines it: "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential" (International Coaching Federation, 2023b).

Within that context, Swart (2015) highlighted the importance of coachee client narratives in coaching:

> In the coaching conversation the multiplicity of narratives of the client are invited, welcomed, and explored, with all their ambiguity and competing natures, to come and be told, retold and re-storied... The client is seen as the expert of all the richness of the multiplicity of narratives that he or she brings as well as the sponsor or author of his or her own life and narratives. (p. 349)

The coachee is the expert, and the coach in a properly constructed coaching relationship will not and cannot provide any solutions – or, as Schein (2015) put it when comparing "the early spirit" of organization development with what became "tool-oriented"

diagnostic organization development, the coach is merely a convener of a process of inquiry, whose outcomes the coach does not control, and whose answers the coach does not and cannot already have (p. ix). Bushe & Marshak (2009) explained that the new thinking that emerges from dialogic coaching or from any other dialogic organization development practice is never prescribed by the practitioner, but instead emerges as individuals and groups of individuals experience the dialogic change process for themselves.

In coaching, this happens within the context of the coaching relationship, in accordance with the overlapping adult learning principles of andragogy, experiential learning, and transformative learning described above. This learning is an active process in which coachees construct meaning from experience (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Coaches facilitate coachee learning by aiding the learner in their own achievement of primarily self-determined learning objectives, as coachees adapt and integrate past experiences with new experiences to facilitate future action and transformation. The dialogue within coaching relationships encourages coachees to examine their experiences, and to consider alternative perspectives, while developing their own (Gray, 2006).

The Nature of the Coaching Relationship

As an employee development initiative, one-on-one coaching depends on the establishment of a collegial relationship between the coach and coachee. The coach collaborates with the coachee, but not from a position of authority, nor even from a position of expertise regarding the coachee's technical responsibilities. It is the coachee who has the ultimate responsibility for defining and achieving the outcomes that are

desired (Gray, 2006). This coaching process is based on the assumption that coachees already have within them the answers they need or the ability to discover those answers: "the role of the coach is not socio-educational, but is more guided discovery, with the skill of the coach in shaping questions and focusing attention on the next step of the journey" (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011, p. 74). The importance of this kind of relationship between coach and coachee, and the vulnerabilities that come with that relationship when it is at its best have led to a push for greater standardization of coaching credentials and services, to an increase in the scholarly literature examining coaching, and to an increase in empirical research on the effectiveness of coaching (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001).

McDowall & Palmer (2010) reported that increasing focus on the coaching process has generated "increasing evidence of the importance of interpersonal, or relational aspects of coaching" (p. 12). Others have also emphasized the essential importance of the quality of the coaching relationship in enabling coachees to achieve the stated goals of coaching engagements (Baron & Morin, 2009; Boyce, et al., 2010; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Flaherty, 2010; O'Broin & Palmer, 2009).

As noted above, the relational aspects of coaching are one of the key ways in which coaching and psychotherapy are different. The balance of power in therapy is skewed toward the therapist, something like how early coaching in the workplace that was modeled after sports coaching skewed the balance of power toward the manager coach. In contrast, coaching, as it has developed in recent years, is founded upon the expectation of equality of power, collaborative learning, and transparent two-way communication between coach and coachee. The coaching dynamics here allow for no

hierarchy in the coaching relationship (O'Broin & Palmer, 2009). Even today's coaching skills training for supervisors and managers is intended to deemphasize hierarchy and authority and enhance collaboration.

In studying 74 coaching pairs to examine coaching relationships, Boyce et al. (2010) found that coaching program outcomes were positively predicted by the combination of coaching relationship processes supporting coach and coachee rapport and mutual trust, and the commitment to the coaching engagement shared by the coach and coachee. In making the case that "relationship remains the beginning point of coaching and its foundation" (p. 62), Flaherty (2010) argued that the three essential elements in a good coaching relationship are mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual freedom of expression, and that the commitment to that relationship and the coaching process shared by the coach and coachee is the background for the coaching relationship. Bacon & Spear (2003) argued that "coaching is anchored in a trust relationship" (location 222).

The ICF Core Competencies for coaches highlight the importance of the ways in which an ICF-certified coach is expected to support the development and sustainment of a properly constructed coaching relationship (International Coaching Federation, 2020). The Core Competencies are defined as shown below in Table 5. All ICF-certified coaches are expected to embody these competencies, as they coach in accordance with the ICF coaching definition. These competencies allow coaches to partner with their clients while the clients remain ultimately responsible for their own development.

Table 5

ICF Core Competencies for Coaches

Competency	Definition
Demonstrates Ethical Practice	Understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards of coaching
Embodies a Coaching Mindset	Develops and maintains a mindset that is open, curious, flexible, and client-centered
Establishes and Maintains Agreements	Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to create clear agreements about the coaching relationship, process, plans and goals. Establishes agreements for the overall coaching engagement as well as those for each coaching session.
Cultivates Trust and Safety	Partners with the client to create a safe, supportive environment that allows the client to share freely. Maintains a relationship of mutual respect and trust.
Maintains Presence	Is fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded, and confident
Listens Actively	Focuses on what the client is and is not saying to fully understand what is being communicated in the context of the client systems and to support client self-expression
Evokes Awareness	Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor, or analogy
Facilitates Client Growth	Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.

The Individual-Level Benefits of Coaching

The emphasis described above on the quality and the power of the coaching relationship has kept most writing about coaching in the workplace focused on individual-level results for coachees, and on the related factors for success for coachees and coaches, either individually or in their relationships as dyads (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Baron & Morin, 2009; de Haan et al., 2011). See Table 6 below for how descriptions of coaching have typically emphasized those individual-level results, with a

focus on the individual coachee's personal and professional learning, growth, and development.

Table 6

Descriptions of Coaching Emphasizing Individual-Level Results for Coachees

Variant Label	Source	Description (**emphasis** added)
Coaching	Mink et al. (1993)	Coaching is "the process by which one individual, the coach, creates **enabling relationships with others that make it easier for them to learn**" (p. 2).
Coaching	Clutterbuck (2008)	"coaching in most applications **addresses performance in some aspect of an individual's work or life**" (p. 9).
Coaching	International Coaching Federation (2023b)	"a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires [coachees] **to maximize their personal and professional potential**"
Executive coaching	Zeus & Skiffington (2000)	"a collaborative, individualized relationship between an executive and a coach, the aims of which are to bring about sustained behavioural change and **to transform the quality of the executive's working and personal life**" (p. 35).
Executive coaching	Grant (2001)	"Workplace coaching is a solution-focused, result-orientated systematic process in which the coach **facilitates the enhancement of work performance and the self-directed learning and personal growth of the coachee**" (p. 8).
Executive coaching	McCauley & Hezlett (2001)	"Executive coaching involves a series of one-on-one interactions between a manager or executive and an external coach in order **to further the professional development of the manager**" (p. 322).
Executive coaching	Orenstein (2002)	"…a one-on-one intervention with a senior manager **for the purpose of improving or enhancing management skills**" (p. 356).
Executive coaching	Caplan (2003)	"Executive coaching is about bringing out the best in people and conveying them from where they are now to where they want to be. It is a highly personalized learning process that is tailored to the learner's knowledge base, learning style and pace. It raises self-awareness, uncovers blind spots and **enables the executive to accomplish more than otherwise he or she would have**" (p. 34).

Variant Label	Source	Description (**emphasis** added)
Executive coaching	Plunkett et al. (2004)	"…processes and interventions facilitated by qualified consultants utilizing psychology and other HRD-related knowledge, skills, and techniques **to assist positional leaders in the improvement of individual effectiveness, learning, and performance**" (p. 19).
Leadership coaching	Ellinger (2003)	"a form of **facilitating learning to encourage growth and development**" (p. 438).
Leadership coaching	Ting & Hart (2004)	"a practice in which the coachee and coach collaborate **to assess and understand the coachee and his or her developmental task**, to challenge current constraints while exploring new possibilities, and to ensure accountability and support for reaching goals and sustaining development" (p. 116).
Leadership coaching	McLean & Hudson (2012)	"coaching that occurs in organizations today is most often focused on **facilitating the developmental growth of leaders** around specific challenges and natural next steps in their leadership role" (p. 35).

Like the descriptions of coaching represented by those listed above in Table 6, the limited research literature on coaching in the workplace has also generally been focused on individual-level results for coachees. The literature review conducted for this study identified several systematic reviews and meta-analyses of empirical and practitioner research on coaching in the workplace, including Ely et al. (2010), Theeboom et al. (2014), Jones et al. (2016), Grover & Furnham (2016), and Athanasopoulou et al. (2018). All these articles provided support for the positive effects of coaching in the workplace, but they also highlighted the limited number of significant empirical studies of coaching to date, as well as the limited focus of those studies.

Of the eleven studies I considered most significant, given the scope of the research done and the methodologies employed, nine were focused on how the characteristics of coaches and their coaching techniques lead to successful coaching

relationships which generate helpful individual-level results for coachees (Bickerich et al., 2018; Bozer et al., 2014; de Haan et al., 2011; Gaddis & Foster, 2015; Grant & Cavanagh, 2007; Grant et al., 2009; Nieminen et al., 2013; Olivero et al., 1997; Smither et al., 2003). The other two of the eleven most significant studies identified by this author focused on how characteristics of coachees lead to successful relationships which generate the same positive individual-level results (Baron & Morin, 2009; de Haan et al., 2011). The predominant focus on coaches in these studies underscores the previous discussion above of the coaching literature's emphasis on how the quality of the relationships between coachees and coaches affects coachee outcomes and on how coaches have an outsized influence on the quality of those relationships (Baron & Morin, 2009; de Haan et al., 2011).

The individual-level coachee results examined in these studies are characterized by things like enhanced personal productivity and effectiveness (Bickerich et al., 2018; Bozer et al., 2014; Gaddis & Foster, 2015; Nieminen et al., 2013; Olivero et al., 1997); improved personal goal setting (Grant et al., 2009; Nieminen et al., 2013; Smither et al., 2003); and heightened personal resilience and wellbeing (Bickerich et al., 2018; Gaddis & Foster, 2015; Grant et al., 2009; Nieminen et al., 2013). All these types of individual-level results are positive, and well worth pursuing and facilitating; but none of the studies discussed here spent any significant time exploring or discussing how the results from one-on-one coaching can facilitate positive change in an organization, the focus of this study.

In conducting a systematic review of the research literature on the outcomes from executive coaching (EC) in particular, during the practice's first three decades,

Athanasopoulou & Dopson (2018) described the level of analysis that is typically applied to one-on-one coaching like this:

> [The field] has been mostly focused on a micro-level analysis of EC outcomes, which is unsurprising considering the one-on-one nature of coaching practice. EC research has also been indirectly preoccupied with the meso level (how changing one's behavior or improving one's leadership skills leads to better interactions with individuals and groups within and outside the organization) and very limitedly with the macro level (organizational benefits from EC) (pp. 70-71).

Summary of the Literature on the Individual Experience of Coaching

As coaching in the workplace moved away from the early days of executive coaching consultations, the coaching field became increasingly oriented toward the development by coachees of their own personal strengths and solution-construction capabilities, rather than the delivery by coaches of problem analysis and correction, or directive consulting (Blackman et al., 2016; Kilburg, 1996; Myers & Bachkirova, 2018; Stelter, 2014). Ellinger et al. (2003) described the new style of coaching as "a form of facilitating learning to encourage growth and development" (p. 438), which is a far cry from early executive coaching consultations (Bono et al., 2009; Ellinger et al., 2003).

Key theoretical underpinnings of coaching related to this study include andragogy, experiential learning theory, transformative learning theory, and dialogic organization development. All these theories help to explain how coaching functions to facilitate learning, in order to encourage growth and development in individuals.

Malcolm Knowles introduced andragogy in the United States – and the concept that adults and children learn differently – in the early 1970s. Knowles et al. (2015)

defined adult learning as “the extension and clarification of the meaning of one’s experience” (p. 11). This is what coaching is designed to produce, in accordance with andragogy’s process model.

David Kolb developed his theory of experiential learning in the 1970s and 1980s. Kolb’s theory described a cyclical adult learning process which created new knowledge “through the transformation of experience” (1984, p. 38). Discussion and engagement with others provide a key opportunity to enrich this experiential learning process, and coaches can be key partners in that learning.

Jack Mezirow developed transformative learning theory in the 1970s and 1980s (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a learner’s frame of reference (Mezirow, 1997). As with experiential learning, discussion and engagement with others provides a key opportunity to enrich the transformative learning process. Gray (2006) explained how coaches are ideal partners for this type of discourse because they come alongside learners as “objective outsiders” (p. 488), engaging with coachees in dialogue to facilitate their work of critically examining their experiences and carefully considering alternative perspectives.

Dialogic organization development is a theoretical framework that aligns with the principles of andragogy, experiential learning theory, and transformative learning theory. Dialogic organization development focuses on the transformative power of dialogue and communication in facilitating self-directed change in individuals and within organizations (Bushe & Marshak, 2015). It emphasizes the importance of open and inclusive conversations, active listening, and collaborative decision-making processes. According to Stelter (2014) and others discussed in this section, coaching has taken on a

dialogic approach to change in ways that make the coaching relationship a means of facilitating and enabling new ways for the coachee to explore how to think and behave within the context of the topic(s) of the coaching relationship's conversations.

Many sources in the literature have emphasized the importance of a properly constructed coaching relationship. Flaherty (2010) made the case that "relationship remains the beginning point of coaching and its foundation" (p. 62), arguing that the three essential elements in a good coaching relationship are mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual freedom of expression, and that the commitment to that relationship and the coaching process shared by the coach and coachee is the background for the coaching relationship. The ICF Core Competencies for coaches highlight the importance of the ways in which an ICF-certified coach is expected to support the development and sustainment of a properly constructed coaching relationship (International Coaching Federation, 2020).

This emphasis on the quality and the power of the coaching relationship has kept most writing about coaching in the workplace focused on individual-level results for coachees, and on the related factors for success for coachees and coaches, either individually or in their relationships as dyads (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Baron & Morin, 2009; de Haan et al., 2011). The next section will explore the literature that addresses how the results from one-on-one coaching can facilitate positive change within an organization beyond the individual level via coaching culture, the focus of this study.

Coaching Culture

This section reviews the literature on coaching culture, as it relates to potential benefits of coaching beyond the individual level, following a discussion of key

theoretical underpinnings of coaching culture development. Those underpinnings come from the work of E.H. Schein on organizational culture theory. Following discussion of that theory and how it applies to coaching culture development, this section presents definitions of coaching culture and a discussion of the research on coaching culture. Establishing that context will set the stage for an exploration of the inferences for the current study in the next section.

As noted above, Ellinger et al. (2003) described the type of coaching that is the focus of this study as "a form of facilitating learning to encourage growth and development" (p. 438). This facilitation process is based on the assumption that coachees have within them the answers they need or the ability to discover those answers (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011).

One-on-one coaching starts with individuals, but its proponents argue that it facilitates the collective inquiry and creative unity described by Isaacs (1993) and Roman (2005), across the groups to which those individual coachees belong (Swart, 2015). This section will explore what the literature says about what happens when one-on-one coaching is embraced for developmental purposes and coaching dynamics subsequently inform how an organization routinely does business outside the formal one-on-one coaching context, with the development of coaching culture (Hart, 2005).

Theoretical Underpinnings of Coaching Culture Development

In a classic definition of culture, Geertz (1973) called it "the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through socialization" (p. 44-45). Schein & Schein (2017) defined culture like this:

> the accumulated shared learning of [a] group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration; which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel and behave in relation to those problems (p. 6).

Schein & Schein (2017) further explained that the accumulated shared learning that they called the culture of a group is "a pattern or system of beliefs, values, and behavioral norms that come to be taken for granted as basic assumptions and eventually drop out of awareness" (p. 6). The authors then laid out their theory that an organization's culture exists and can be studied at three different levels: its artifacts; its espoused beliefs and values; and its basic underlying assumptions. See Table 7 below.

Table 7

The Three Levels of Culture (adapted from Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 24)

1. Artifacts
• Visible and feelable structures and processes
• Observed behavior
– Difficult to decipher
2. Espoused Beliefs and Values
• Ideals, goals, values, aspirations
• Ideologies
• Rationalizations
– May or may not be congruent with behavior and other artifacts
3. Basic Underlying Assumptions
• Unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values
– Determine behavior, perception, thought, and feeling

Artifacts are simultaneously easy to observe and difficult to interpret. Espoused beliefs and values portend to explain why an organization does what it does, but groups of individuals must take joint actions and together observe and respond to the outcomes

of those actions before espoused beliefs and values become shared beliefs and values, and ultimately shared assumptions.

Schein & Schein (2017) made the case that leaders who want to enable their organizations to survive in changing environments can and must manage the evolution of their organizational cultures by influencing items at all three of the levels of culture shown in Table 7 above. The authors described this process as a leader's work of "embedding and transmitting culture" (p. 181).

Schein & Schein (2017) suggested that exercising charisma is the simplest way by which leaders can shape organizational culture, but they also argued that leader charisma is not a reliable mechanism for shaping culture, "because leaders who have it are rare and their impact is hard to predict" (p. 182). As an alternative to or in support of charisma, the authors delineated 12 other embedding mechanisms, six of which they considered primary and six of which they considered secondary. See Table 8 below. Schein & Schein (2017) argued that a combination of primary and secondary mechanisms is needed in most cases to overcome resistance to change and produce cultural transformation.

The primary embedding mechanisms shown in Table 8 represent the most influential things leaders can do personally on a daily basis, while the secondary mechanisms support and reinforce the primary mechanisms more formally but less powerfully. In the mix of embedding mechanisms in Schein & Schein (2017), a coaching program is a secondary embedding mechanism in the form of an organizational system and procedure, which will link to other secondary mechanisms, as well as to primary mechanisms.

Table 8

How Leaders Embed Their Beliefs, Values, and Assumptions (adapted from Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 183)

Primary Embedding Mechanisms
1. What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis
2. How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises
3. How leaders allocate resources
4. Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching by leaders
5. How leaders allocate rewards and status
6. How leaders recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate

Secondary Embedding Mechanisms
1. Organizational design and structure
2. Organizational systems and procedures
3. Organizational rites and rituals
4. Design of physical space, facades, and buildings
5. Stories about important events and people
6. Formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charters

Schein & Schein (2017) explained that all 12 mechanisms in Table 8 are visible cultural artifacts, as discussed above with Table 7. The significance of those mechanisms in the process of changing organizational culture comes with their role in introducing new values, and then facilitating their acceptance and their ultimate absorption into the unconscious assumptions held by members of an organization. Hatch (2018) explained that this cultural change can sometimes occur as the result of the decree or example of top leaders, but more commonly requires that members of an organization experience successful or desirable outcomes tied to the new values: they "must personally experience the benefits of proposed new values for cultural change to take hold" (p. 210). The discussion below will explore how individual experiences of the benefits of coaching foster coaching culture development.

Schein's (1996) developing theory of organizational cultural change built on the seminal discussion in Lewin (1947a) of his three-step model of change, or "changing as three steps" (CATS): the "unfreezing, moving, and freezing of group standards" (p. 34):

> A successful change includes therefore three aspects: unfreezing (if necessary) the present level L1, moving to the new level L2, and freezing group life on the new level. Since any level is determined by a force field, permanency implies that the new force field is made relatively secure against change. (Lewin, 1947a, p. 35)

The unfreezing step overcomes inertia at the present level. The moving step is when change occurs. The freezing step (often incorrectly called "refreezing") is when change is secured.

Lewin's three-step model has been criticized over the years for being simplistic, for being too linear and prescriptive, for not depicting a naturally occurring sequence, and for lacking a cognitive dimension (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015; Kanter et al., 1992; Palmer & Dunford, 1996; Weick & Quinn, 1999). Many others have nevertheless considered the model to be the fundamental, classic approach to understanding and managing change (Jeffcutt, 1996; Sonenshein, 2010).

Michaels (2001) reported that CATS has "dominated almost all western theories of change over the past fifty years" (p. 116). Other academics have claimed that all subsequent theories of change have been "reducible to this one idea of Kurt Lewin's" (Hendry, 1996, p. 624). Schein (1996) embraced and elaborated on Lewin's work with the concept of change as managed learning, which links to coaching's function as "a form of facilitating learning to encourage growth and development" (Ellinger et al., 2003, p. 438).

Even though Lewin conducted his work long before the cognitive revolution in the social sciences, he acknowledged the role of cognition and emotion in change. Lewin's CATS model is simple, but it functions quite well as "a thin description of how the participants are supposed to feel and experience change according to its sequential phases of unfreezing, changing, and freezing" (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015, p. 168).

When Schein (1996) expanded on Lewin's model years later, he was explicit in acknowledging that change requires cognitive restructuring, involving things like cognitive broadening, semantic adjustments, and new standards of judgment or evaluation (p. 30). This cognitive restructuring is what the embedding mechanisms laid out in Schein & Schein (2017) deliver when they produce cultural transformation and coaching culture development, in particular.

Schein (1996) argued that "the most basic mechanism of acquiring new information that leads to cognitive restructuring is to discover in a conversational process that the interpretation that someone else puts on a concept is different from one's own" (p. 31). Coaching encourages conversational processes that make space for this cognitive restructuring across organizations. The next section will show how descriptions of coaching began to explore the possible benefits of coaching beyond the individual level, before the concept of coaching culture expanded that portion of the discussion around coaching.

Benefits of Coaching Beyond the Individual Level

Table 6 above presented examples of how descriptions of coaching have typically emphasized individual-level results, with a focus on the individual coachee's personal and professional learning, growth, and development. Of the 37 definitions of coaching

collated in Hamlin et al. (2008) and discussed above, Table 9 below shows that only the six definitions listed spoke specifically to the potential for, and the intention of, generating results beyond the individual level.

Table 9

Definitions of Coaching Emphasizing Results Beyond the Individual Level

Variant Label	Source	Definition (**emphasis** added)
Executive coaching	Hall et al. (1999)	"Coaching is meant to be a practical, goal-focused form of personal, one-to-one learning for busy executives and may be used to improve performance or executive behaviour, enhancing a career or prevent derailment, and **work through organizational issue or change initiatives**" (p. 40).
Executive coaching	Kilburg (1996, 2000)	"a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to assist the client to achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and consequently **to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization** within a formally defined coaching agreement" (p. 65).
Executive coaching	Dingman (2006)	"a one-to-one interaction between a coach and an executive in a helping relationship offering experiential learning and dialogue that facilitates an executive's desire to reach specified goals and may affect individual self-, job-, and **organization-related outcomes,"** with **effects that "extend to improved organizational performance**" (p. 2).
Executive coaching	Peltier (2010)	"one-on-one services to top-level leaders in an organization on the principle that **positive changes can be leveraged to filter down and enhance the entire organization**" (p. xxiv).
Coaching	Evered & Selman (1989)	"Coaching . . . refers to the managerial activity of creating, by communication only, the climate, environment, and context that **empowers individuals and teams to generate results**" (p. 17).
Coaching	Grant (2006)	"Coaching is a collaborative solution-focused, results-orientated and systematic process in which the coach **facilitates the enhancement of performance, life experience, self-directed learning and personal growth of individuals and organizations**" (p. 112).

The first five definitions in Table 9 connect coaching to the possibility of improved performance and effectiveness in a coachee's organization. Only the last definition went beyond that to talk about learning and growth in an organization. The concept of coaching culture has expanded that portion of the discussion around coaching. The next section will explore how the literature has suggested that the dialogical experience of one-on-one coaching can lead to the development of coaching culture as the "accumulated shared learning of [a] group" (Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 6), when new kinds of conversations and interactions are introduced into an organization.

Definitions of Coaching Culture

The "third generation" of coaching described by Stelter (2014) entails a coaching approach that gives coachees the opportunity to immerse themselves in reflection on, and new understandings of, their experiences and their relationships with others. It also gives coachees the opportunity to develop the skills needed to change those relationships by communicating and interacting with others dialogically and collaboratively, in the same way their coaches interact with them. When this process leads to micro-level outcomes from the individual experiences of coaching that accumulate in mutually reinforcing ways, helping to generate subsequent outcomes first at the meso level and then even at the macro level, this has been referred to as the development of coaching culture.

As with the term coaching itself, no universally accepted definition has emerged for coaching culture (Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh, 2014). This section will explore some of the alternatives that have been offered for explaining and defining coaching culture.

Hart (2005) explained that coaching culture develops when structured coaching engagements and related training engender coaching behavior that becomes ubiquitous in an organization: “Ideally, everyone whose organizational function involves influencing or supporting others would practice coaching behavior” (p. 7). Shared coaching behaviors that result from shared coaching experiences are depicted in the conceptual framework in Figure 1 above. These behaviors can include pursuit of dialogue to foster learning and change (Stelter, 2014); active listening (Center for Creative Leadership, 2023); a focus on helping relationships (Rogers, 1995); an emphasis on co-creative processes (Stelter, 2014); a commitment to exploring new ways of thinking and behaving (Ting & Hart, 2004); and an emphasis on cultivating trust and safety (Boyce et al., 2010). These coaching behaviors can be learned by members of an organization when they are trained to provide coaching as internal coaches who coach full-time or part-time; when they are trained to interact with others like coaches, in their positions as supervisors or managers; when they are coached by internal or external coaches; and when they encounter coaching behaviors practiced by others.

Stewart et al. (2008) argued that a significant determinant of coaching’s organizational impact is “the sustained application of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other qualities acquired during coaching in the workplace” (p.88). When those who have experienced coaching apply what they have learned in that experience to their interactions with others outside formal coaching, coaching culture follows (Hart, 2005).

Hawkins (2012) proposed that:

> A coaching culture exists in an organization when a coaching approach is a key aspect of how the leaders, managers, and staff engage and develop all their people

and engage their stakeholders, in ways that create increased individual, team and organizational performance and shared value for all stakeholders. (p. 21)

This definition of coaching culture aligns with the discussion in Hart (2005) noted above, by emphasizing how the experience of coaching can create a coaching approach to working together among the leaders, managers, and staff in an organization. This is especially true when coachees in an organization share the experience of coaching with internal coach employees who are their colleagues on a daily basis, rather than with external coach consultants who are not members of the same organization (Bussu & Marshall, 2020; Mukherjee, 2012; Rock & Donde, 2008).

Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh (2014) suggested that "coaching cultures exist when groups of people embrace coaching as a way of making holistic improvements to individuals within their organizations through formal and informal coaching interactions." (p. 92) This definition adds to the definition in Hawkins (2012), by emphasizing that coaching culture has developed when shared coaching experiences and behaviors affect the individuals across an organization both formally and informally, within relationships between coachees and their coaches and within non-coaching relationships.

Hardingham, et al. (2004) emphasized the informal effects of coaching by describing a coaching culture as one in which "people coach each other all the time as a natural part of meetings, reviews and one-to-one discussions of all kinds" (p. 184). When this occurs, coaching behaviors begin to permeate an organization well beyond the confines of individual coaching relationships. Rock and Donde (2008a) suggested that integrated coaching solutions in an organization can shift culture "by transforming the

quality of every conversation" (p. 11). This type of transformation occurs in the process of learning through socialization noted above in the definition of culture in Geertz (1973).

Milner et al. (2020) stated that, in a coaching culture, "coaching is not seen as a dyadic interaction but rather as the widespread deployment of a coaching approach to workplace relations and employee engagement" (p. 238). Clutterbuck et al. (2016) stated that a coaching culture is a culture where "The principles, beliefs and mindsets driving people's behavior in the workplace are deeply rooted in the discipline of coaching" (p. 9). Coaching culture changes people's behavior because a coaching approach begins to inform and define how members of an organization relate to one another and interact with one another.

Vesso (2014) explained coaching culture like this:

> In a coaching culture, coaching flows in all directions from all parties, making a networked web across the organization consisting of many connections between people in the same departments, across departments, between teams, and up and down and across the hierarchy. (p. 112)

When coaching "flows in all directions," the qualities discussed above that enrich one-on-one coaching relationships and the individual experience of coaching make those qualities a shared experience throughout an organization.

Clutterbuck & Megginson (2005) described the networked coaching culture web as a place where "Coaching is the predominant style of managing and working together, and where a commitment to grow the organization is embedded in a parallel commitment to grow the people in the organization" (p. 19). This requires commitments from organizational leaders and engagement by people throughout an organization. Coaching

behaviors must affect how leaders lead, how managers manage, and how everyone in an organization works together. Jones & Gorell (2014) argued that a coaching culture is a place "where coaching happens at every level," as "the recognized development tool that touches every part of the employee lifecycle" (p. 16).

For this study, I define coaching culture as a space where a significant number of the individuals in an organization "practice coaching behaviors as a means of relating to, supporting, and influencing one another" (Hart, 2005, p. 7). Formal and informal interactions of this kind foster learning and change throughout an organization (de Haan et al., 2011).

Redshaw (2000) argued that good coaching that is widespread throughout an organization will help the entire organization learn things more quickly and adapt to change more effectively. In a coaching culture, this approach to learning enriches the organization's relationships and leadership practices, and fuels the development of the social fabric within an organization. This goes far beyond the possibility of improved performance and effectiveness in a coachee's organization that is described in Table 9 above.

Along these lines, Stelter (2014) wrote about the author's "special ambition" for the impact of what he called dialogic, third-generation coaching "as a key and possibly novel basis for developing our society on many different levels – in conversations with each other, in small learning situations, in specific work contexts, in developmental and team contexts, in organizations and many other settings." (p. ix) Without using the term "coaching culture," Stelter (2014) described it by explaining how "coaching and coaching-inspired dialogues should help build new social realities that revolve around the

development of our abilities, a desire to engage in reflection and a striving for a better understanding of each other." (p. ix) In Stelter's vision of the future, the new forms of dialogue generated by shared coaching experiences have effects far beyond formal coaching conversations.

This social enrichment is supported by what Schein (2015) called "the dialogic premise that self-organizing wisdom seems to be an inherent quality of well-intentioned people, willing and able to communicate authentically" (loc. 159). In a coaching culture, the coaching experience has taught the members of an organization to communicate more meaningfully and to organize more effectively.

In this context, the emphasis in Swart (2015) on narrative is no longer merely about the narratives of discrete individual coachees, but also about how individuals collaborate in the development of the narrative of the connected individual members of the organization and even of the organization itself. Shared coaching experiences and behaviors enable members of an organization to become "participants in the cocreation of emergence, generativity, and organizational meaning making," as "they invite the unique vocabularies and narratives of their team members to influence the ongoing construction and reconstruction of the social reality of the organization." (p. 369)

Athanasopoulou & Dopson (2018) underscored the same opportunity for "the ongoing construction and reconstruction of social reality" by suggesting that connecting the coaching experiences of individual coachees across and throughout the organizational context can generate outcomes "that cut across contextual levels and connect the micro (individual) with the meso (group/departmental) and macro (organizational) level." (p. 85) In E.H. Schein's telling, this is what happens when dialogic organization

development practices bring people together "with common interests in creating the kinds of learning and change they need" (2015, loc. 168), individually and together.

According to William Isaacs, a key leader among dialogic organization development practitioners, the dialogue and interactions occurring here represent "a sustained collective inquiry into the processes, assumptions, and certainties that structure everyday experience" (Isaacs, 1993, p. 2). Roman (2005) called this type of dialogue "a process that creates more understanding, maintains togetherness, and unites the intelligences and creativity of participants" (p. 18).

Coaching conducted and experienced along the lines discussed above is a process that "dares to ask questions, challenge the thinking and actions sometimes valued in organizations, and believe in the generativity of emergence that allows movement as narratives shift and change through the meaning making of experiences" (Swart, 2015, p. 364). In a coaching culture, the individuals in an organization come together in that generative, meaning-making process.

Shared coaching experiences and behaviors that develop into coaching culture facilitate group development that represents "a journey toward optimal functioning" (Bushe & Coetzer, 2007, p. 185), because the coaching approach is neither a problem-solving technique nor a rush to consensus. On the contrary, dialogic coaching experiences and behaviors encourage organizational members to explore the incoherence in an organization's thinking and acting, using authentic communications to expose and correct the sources of dissonance and problems which are often found in the space between one person's perspective and the perspectives of others.

Pearce & Pearce (2004) explained that the distinctive characteristic of dialogic communication like this is that it is always done in ways that hold one's own position while simultaneously allowing others the space to hold theirs: "When communicating dialogically, participants often have important agendas and purposes, but make them inseparable from their relationship in the moment with others who have equally strong but perhaps conflicting agendas and purposes" (p. 6).

Coaching and the Dynamics of Organizational Culture Change

The literature reviewed above suggested that dialogic coaching experiences and behaviors that generate coaching culture reinforce the importance of interpersonal, intersubjective relationships, even as they reinforce the importance of acknowledging the differences members of an organization have with one another. As noted above, coaching in a coaching culture is said to encourage and train individuals across an organization to practice coaching behaviors with one another routinely and to lead the organization collectively, by embracing dialogue as the primary means for relating to, supporting, and influencing one another in increasingly meaningful and productive ways.

Austin & Bartunek (2006) called this sort of change "communicative change" (p. 100), which they associated with Van de Ven & Poole's (1995) dialectical motor of change (Austin & Bartunek, 2006, p. 99). Communicative change results from pluralistic social interactions and is generated by conversation and other communications. In keeping with this understanding of change, it is the interplay of a multiplicity of perspectives that drives organizational development, rather than finely tuned goals and purposeful planning, as depicted by Van de Ven & Poole's (1995) teleological motor of

change, which the authors said was the most common explanation of organization development in the literature at the time.

The communicative, dialectical understanding of change aligns with symbolic interactionism as it describes how human beings partner with one another to create new symbolic worlds of their own, and how those symbolic worlds shape the behaviors of those individuals and of others around them. Swart (2015) described the cultural effects of coaching dynamics in these same terms like this: "[coaching] clients participate in the processes of generativity, especially as they invite the unique vocabularies and narratives of their team members to influence the ongoing construction and reconstruction of the social reality of the organization" (p. 369).

This "reconstruction of the social reality of the organization" changes the ways members of the organization think about themselves and one another, along with the organizational values they share. In accordance with the Hatch (2011a, 2011b) dialectical model for the dynamics of organizational culture and organizational identity, individual coachees and internal coaches in a coaching culture have new kinds of conversations between their "Me's" and their "I's," as first described in Mead (1934), while the collective members of the organization have new kinds of conversations between their "Us'es" and their "We's." These interactions reinforce the group's learning and its members' sense of collaborative, collective leadership.

Hatch built on E.H. Schein's body of work discussed above in developing "a theory of the cultural dynamics of organizations that considers stability and change as dual products of the same cultural processes" (2004, p. 191). Hatch (2004) argued that "the processes of culture are in constant motion" (p. 207), and Hatch (2011a) made the

case that organizational identity – defined as the way organizational members answer the question "Who are we as an organization?" – is a key factor in understanding organizational culture dynamics at all the levels of culture described by Schein & Schein (2017) and shown in Table 7 above.

Hatch is among those scholars who have proposed that organizational identity serves as the foundation for organizational culture (see Cian & Cervi, 2014; Hatch & Schultz, 2002; Hatch, Schultz, & Skov, 2015; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006; Whetten, 2006). Casey (2019) called Albert & Whetten (1985) the seminal work in defining organizational identity, and explained the importance of identity claims in Whetten's work like this: "Identity claims frame 'an organization's self-determined (and 'self' defining) unique social space and [are] reflected in its unique pattern of binding commitments' (Whetten, 2006, p. 220) that endure over time" (p. 62)

Given this understanding of the importance of organizational identity as the foundation for organizational culture, cultural change is construed to occur when many members of an organization embrace a new or modified, truly genuine shared identity that allows them all to feel included and represented. This approach to cultural change aligns with the way that coaching cultures are said to generate a sense of collaborative, collective leadership, as noted above. That collective leadership is characterized by coaching behaviors which produce an organizational identity that makes reciprocal dialogue the primary means by which members of the organization relate to, support, and influence one another.

The dynamics of organizational culture and organizational identity as they relate to coaching culture are further elucidated by the discussion in Ashforth & Schinoff

(2016) about how individual identity becomes situated and socially validated within organizations. Unlike other kinds of organizational cultures, the literature has suggested that coaching cultures include less sense-giving, even less sense-breaking, and more sense-making, which "enables individuals to endure and thrive under conditions of ambiguity, equivocality, and dynamism" (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016, p. 119). This occurs as the individual and corporate sensemaking and identity construction that result from shared coaching experiences and behaviors move the members of an organization to higher levels of individual and collective consciousness.

Research to explore the development of coaching culture has been limited, but it has been increasing in multiple sectors and regions. The next section will examine that research.

Research on Coaching Culture

As literature on systematic empirical research in the coaching field began to accumulate in recent years, it focused on exploring how the quality of the relationship between coach and coachee is key to the results generated at the individual level. Little work was done on the aggregated effects of one-on-one coaching in the workplace (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016), and empirical research addressing coaching culture in the workplace was limited, leaving significant room for further research (Eustice, 2021; Milner et al., 2020; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011).

In its systematic review of outcomes from what the article called executive coaching, Athanasopoulou & Dopson (2018) concluded that, at best, the 110 studies it assessed reported only "indirect positive organizational effects from increased employee satisfaction, productivity, leadership effectiveness and coaching culture" (p. 75); and that

single sentence was the one time the review used the phrase coaching culture. The authors argued that the coaching research they reviewed had failed to explore how and why an organization's social context influences the process and outcomes of coaching, and, even more pointedly, how and why coaching changes the social context in which it occurs.

The systematic review by Blackman et al. (2016) reported organizational findings only slightly more significant than those of Athanasopoulou & Dopson (2018), concluding that three of the 111 studies it assessed identified actual or potential organizational benefits from coaching; but Blackman et al. (2016) never used the phrase coaching culture. Even when Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh (2014) reviewed the literature specifically focused on coaching culture, the authors could list only a handful of peer-reviewed empirical studies.

The few relevant empirical studies of coaching cultures that exist have laid groundwork for this study by exploring how coaching dynamics can inform and shape day-to-day behaviors throughout organizations, and then potentially create and sustain coaching cultures by fueling the development of the social relationships and societal fabric within organizations, as depicted in the conceptual framework in Figure 1 above. In doing so, these studies moved beyond the focus of previous studies on the traits and practices of coaches, in their relationships with individual coachees, and on the isolated outcomes for those individual coachees.

See Table 10 below for the studies examined here which made special reference to coaching culture or which examined coaching from a cultural perspective. All these studies explored how the effects of multiple one-on-one coaching engagements might

amass in ways that facilitate new levels of dialogue and mutual support in the relationships between colleagues, along with new shared productivity. The table is organized chronologically by the dates of the studies.

All the studies listed in Table 10 examined relatively small-scale organizations, but the table depicts the fairly wide array of sectors and regions in which the coaching culture studies noted here have been conducted, to demonstrate that the concept has wide applicability.

Table 10

Sectors and Regions in which Coaching Culture Studies Reviewed Here Have Been Focused

Sector	Region	Study
Leaders and managers in "learning organizations"	Not stated	Ellinger & Bostrom (1999)
Large organizations	Global	Rock & Donde (2008)
Sales in a large, multinational manufacturing company	United States	Agarwal et al. (2009)
Policing	United Kingdom	Evans (2011)
Global outsourced sales and marketing company	Malaysia	Mansor et al. (2012)
Production company	India	Mukherjee (2012)
Law	United Kingdom	Swart & Harcup (2013)
Managers in a small multinational organization	Australia, United States, Asia	Lawrence (2015)
Nurse managers in healthcare	United Kingdom	Westcott (2016)
Education	United Kingdom	Anthony & van Nieuwerburgh (2018)
Healthcare	United Kingdom	Bussu & Marshall (2020)
Managers, largely in the services sector	Australia	Milner et al. (2020)

The studies listed in Table 10 have helpfully begun to explore how coaching dynamics can inform and shape day-to-day behaviors throughout an organization when coaching is embraced for developmental rather than intervention purposes. Collectively,

these studies have made a case for the positive effects of coaching dynamics in organizations, especially when structured one-on-one coaching engagements are combined with coaching skills training for supervisors and managers, and with group coaching, as suggested by the discussion above. This combination expands the shared coaching experiences and behaviors present in an organization. The organization that is the subject of this study uses this combination.

Two of the studies listed in Table 10 focused on coaching for managers, as a means of developing those managers (Mukherjee, 2012; Westcott, 2016); and two other studies in the list examined how managers who learned coaching skills became more focused on developing others (Agarwal et al., 2009; Milner et al., 2020). All the studies linked the dialogic co-creative and collaborative process between coachees and coaches to the subsequent changes they experienced in their relationships with others in their organizations, as they interacted with them dialogically in the same way coaches interact with coachees. Agarwal et al. (2009) related these changes to "the differential effects of coaching behaviors on different dimensions of individual performance" (p. 2127) at different levels of responsibility, an area the authors considered ripe for further research.

One of the studies listed above (Lawrence, 2015) specifically referred to dialogic processes, with a systemic perspective on the implementation of coaching and coaching skills training. The author concluded that creating coaching cultures required focusing on patterns of dialogue throughout organizations. Evans (2011) took a systems thinking perspective "that moves the coaching paradigm from an individual therapeutic linear causal intervention to one where the individual is situated within a dynamic inter-linked system" (p. 72). Another of the studies made direct reference to dialogic organization

development (Bussu & Marshall, 2020) and called organizations "meaning-making systems" (p. 605), wherein concerted coaching initiatives and the creation of coaching cultures can shift organizations toward work that is more collaborative and coordinated.

Related research specifically explored how coaching's impact is enhanced, in accordance with systems thinking, by using internal coach employees, rather than external coach consultants (Bussu & Marshall, 2020; Mukherjee, 2012; Rock & Donde, 2008). Internal coach employees are used in the organization that is the subject of this study. Mukherjee (2012) focused on what the study concluded to be multiple direct and indirect benefits gained by managers who serve as coaches in addition to their normal duties, benefits that would be lost to their organizations if they contracted external coaches. Rock & Donde (2008a) concluded that using internal coaches of this sort was not only more scalable and sustainable than using external coaches, but also more robust in its potential to increase overall performance "through deepening the connections across [a] system" (p. 12).

It should be noted that a contrary perspective was taken by Myers & Bachkirova (2018), a study which challenged conclusions like those described above regarding systemic benefits from coaching, by assessing dialogic or third-generation coaching to be "a more developmental and psychologically challenging form of coaching in which the client might find outcomes that may or may not align with the needs of organizational-system performance" (p. 313). It is, of course, fair to say that coaching can be conducted with this extreme emphasis on an individual's meaning-making as an end in and of it itself; but this concern about misalignment with the needs of organizational-system performance is not present elsewhere in the coaching literature reviewed in this paper,

presumably because that kind of extreme emphasis is generally absent in the coaching generally done in the workplace.

Swart & Harcup (2013) advanced the research on coaching by linking it to organizational learning in seeking to answer this question: "If I learn, do we learn?" The authors provided empirical evidence regarding how individual learning facilitated by coaching is converted into organizational learning, with the help of a coaching approach that enables new ways of thinking.

The definition for organizational learning in Swart & Harcup (2013) describes how the accumulation of individual-level coaching outcomes happens as "individual learning is shared at an organizational level and results in change within the organization which achieves organizational goals" (p. 338). The authors admitted that their study provided only a snapshot in a very particular sector, i.e., the coaching of new partners and business unit leads in law firms in the United Kingdom with international practices and overseas offices; but the authors converted the interview responses they received into an instructive "3E-model" of the mechanisms that help to transform individual development into organizational development, as those mechanisms transform individual learning into "the dynamic collectivization of learning" (Swart & Harcup, 2013, p. 351).

This learning occurs when coaching generates shared coaching experiences and behaviors that improve the social and professional relationships throughout an organization in ways that affect how the organization routinely does business outside the formal coaching context. The three Es in the model are 1) enacting new behaviors, (a new way of behaving), 2) enacting a coaching approach (a new way of thinking), and 3)

embedding processes that result from learning, all of which are crucial in this multi-layered, collectivized learning process (Swart & Harcup, 2013, p. 347-350).

The ways in which coaching and coaching cultures are connected to learning are also specifically addressed in Ellinger & Bostrom (1999), Agarwal et al. (2009), Mansor et al. (2012), Bussu & Marshall (2020), and Milner et al. (2020). Ellinger & Bostrom (1999) concluded that coaching behaviors by managers can make them more successful as facilitators of learning in ways that supercharge those organizations. Agarwal et al. (2009) discussed how coaching focused more on how to face certain kinds of situations than on specific actions that should be taken by coachees, allowing coachees to learn and develop while reflecting with their coaches on the ways in which they typically confront challenges and problems in their day-to-day job activities. Mansor et al. (2012) discussed how the multiplication of learning and development opportunities correlated to the creation of coaching cultures, which supported further learning. Bussu & Marshall (2020) discussed how coaching skills taught to multidisciplinary teams in order to develop coaching culture facilitated partnership and collaboration which supported a continuous learning cycle. Milner et al. (2020) discussed how learning is a key value of organizations that develop coaching cultures, along with empowerment, inclusiveness, ownership, collaboration, and innovation.

This research study focuses on a knowledge-intensive organization because it is a space where learning that supports the active creation, acquisition, and use of knowledge is a mainstay of the majority's daily routines, routines which require teamwork and collaboration across functional lines, and sometimes across great distances. Proponents of coaching culture contend that the benefits of coaching cultures can be highly significant

in spaces just like that (Blackman, et al., 2016; Hawkins, 2012; Myers & Bachkirova, 2018).

Summary of the Literature on Coaching Culture

One-on-one coaching starts with individuals, but its proponents argue that one-on-one coaching can create cultural change when it facilitates the collective inquiry and creative unity described by Isaacs (1993) and Roman (2005) across the groups to which individual coachees belong (Swart, 2015). This happens when coaching dynamics inform how an organization routinely does business outside the formal one-on-one coaching context, with the development of coaching culture (Hart, 2005).

Key theoretical underpinnings of coaching culture development related to this study come from the work of E.H. Schein on organizational culture theory. Schein & Schein (2017) explained that the accumulated shared learning that they called the culture of a group is "a pattern or system of beliefs, values, and behavioral norms that come to be taken for granted as basic assumptions and eventually drop out of awareness" (p. 6). An organization's culture exists and can be studied at three different levels: its artifacts; its espoused beliefs and values; and its basic underlying assumptions (Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 24).

Culture can be shaped by leader charisma and by 12 other embedding mechanisms (Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 183). Six of those embedding mechanisms are primary, representing the most influential things leaders can do personally on a daily basis. The six secondary mechanisms support and reinforce the primary mechanisms more formally but less powerfully.

The significance of all 12 mechanisms in the process of changing organizational

culture comes with their role in introducing new values, and then facilitating their acceptance and their ultimate absorption into the unconscious assumptions held by members of an organization. In the mix of embedding mechanisms, a coaching program is a secondary embedding mechanism in the form of an organizational system and procedure, which will link to other secondary mechanisms, as well as to primary mechanisms, in the course of coaching culture development.

As with the term coaching itself, no universally accepted definition has emerged for coaching culture (Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh, 2014). This study defines coaching culture as a space where a significant number of the individuals in an organization "practice coaching behaviors as a means of relating to, supporting, and influencing one another" (Hart, 2005, p. 7). Formal and informal interactions of this kind foster learning and change throughout an organization (de Haan et al., 2011), and enrich the organization's relationships and leadership practices, fueling the development of the social fabric within the organization. This goes far beyond the possibility of improved performance and effectiveness in a coachee's organization that is described in Table 9 above.

While literature on systematic empirical research in the coaching field has been accumulating in recent years, research on the aggregated effects of one-on-one coaching in the workplace has been very limited (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016), leaving significant room for further research (Eustice, 2021; Milner et al., 2020; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011), especially when it comes to coaching culture.

The few relevant empirical studies of coaching cultures that exist have laid groundwork for this study by exploring how coaching dynamics can inform and shape

day-to-day coaching behaviors throughout organizations, potentially leading to the development of coaching cultures which transform the social relationships and societal fabric within organizations. In exploring these dynamics, these studies moved beyond the focus of previous studies on the traits and practices of coaches, in their relationships with individual coachees, and on the isolated outcomes for those individual coachees.

Inferences for the Current Study

Based on the literature review presented above, there are three major inferences for this study. First, because the literature has generally stayed focused on factors for success for coachees and for coaches, either individually or in dyads (e.g., Baron & Morin, 2009; Bickerich et al., 2018; Bozer et al., 2014; de Haan et al., 2011; Gaddis & Foster, 2015; Grant & Cavanagh, 2007; Grant et al., 2009; Nieminen et al., 2013; Olivero et al., 1997; Smither et al., 2003), there is significant opportunity to add to the understanding of the possibility of aggregated effects from one-on-one coaching beyond the individual level (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016). Second, exploring the possibility of aggregated effects from one-on-one coaching beyond the individual level should be informed by an understanding of the individual experience of coaching as it has become increasingly oriented toward the development by coachees of their own personal strengths and solution-construction capabilities, rather than the delivery by coaches of problem analysis and correction, or directive consulting (Blackman et al., 2016; Kilburg, 1996; Myers & Bachkirova, 2018; Stelter, 2014). Finally, exploring how the aggregated effects of one-on-one coaching beyond the individual level can generate coaching culture must involve examining how coaching dynamics can inform and shape day-to-day behaviors throughout organizations (Gormley

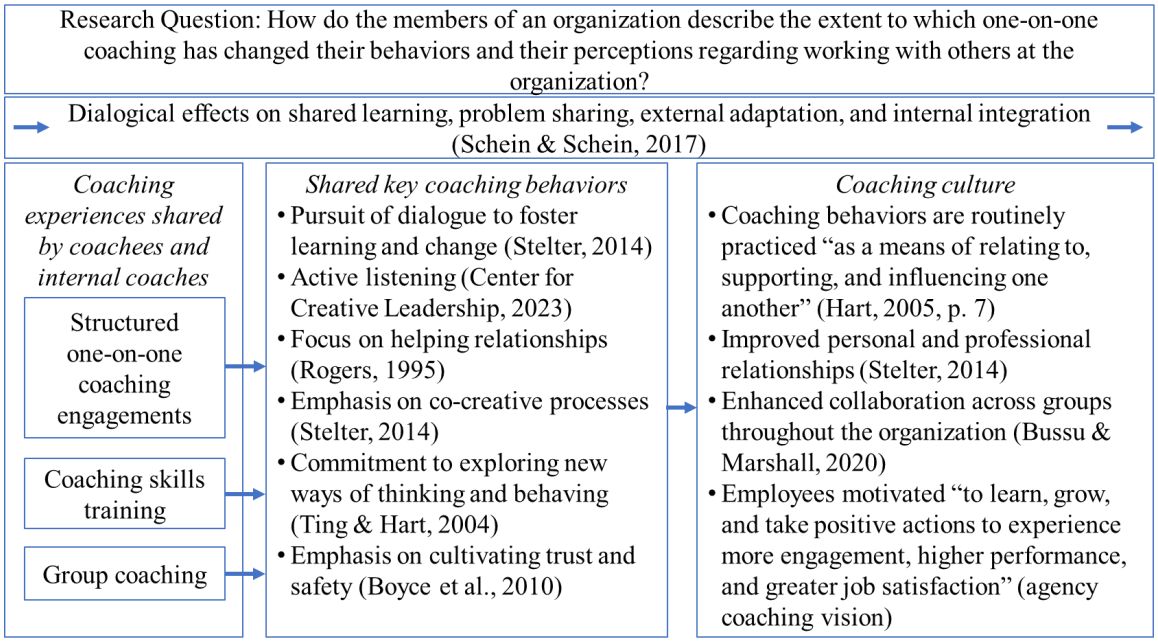
& van Nieuwerburgh, 2014; Hardingham, et al., 2004; Hart, 2005; Hawkins, 2012; Stewart et al., 2008).

Conceptual Framework

Given the literature review conducted and the inferences drawn from that review, this study is focused on examining how the experiences that come with coaching in the workplace may change behaviors, in order to explore the nexus between one-on-one coaching and coaching culture. This study's conceptual framework depicts dialogical change resulting from coaching wherein the effects of coaching experiences and behaviors accumulate and produce a coaching culture, which engenders and advances continued learning and collaboration, a strengthened sense of shared identity, and enhanced shared productivity (Hawkins, 2012). See Figure 2 below.

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework: Study of the Connections Between Coaching Experiences, Coaching Behaviors, and Coaching Culture



In this framework, multiple structured one-on-one coaching engagements within an organization are shown generating shared coaching behaviors, in combination with coaching skills training for supervisors, managers, and others (including non-supervisors trained to use coaching skills and behaviors in their interactions with other employees), and with group coaching. Those shared coaching behaviors are then shown generating coaching culture, which is characterized by improved personal and professional relationships and enhanced collaboration throughout the organization, even among those who are not directly involved in coaching as coachees or coaches.

Given this framework, isolated coaching for just a few executives would not be expected to have the same effects, because that coaching would not produce widely shared coaching experiences and behaviors. Coaching culture develops as shared coaching experiences and behaviors foster a sense of collective leadership at all levels. In that type of culture, the members of an organization value "collaboration, interacting with one another, sharing information, understanding each other's networks and roles, and understanding that a formal leader may not always be the highest level of authority within a team" (Friedrich, et al., 2009, p. 953).

Isaacs (1993) insisted that, "All organizations, even dysfunctional organizations, are full of a rich store of meaning"; but he argued that multiple subcultural constituencies with conflicting agendas often render that meaning incoherent, via "fragmented interpretations that guide behavior, yet go untested and unexplored" (p. 25). The dialogue that results from shared coaching experiences and behaviors is said to change that incoherence, as organizations reach higher levels of collective consciousness by "confronting, engaging, or otherwise raising consciousness about alternative perspectives

(paradigms, schemas, mindsets, social realities, etc.) leading to new syntheses, perspectives, or outcomes" (Bushe & Marshak, 2009, p. 356).

One of the things that makes the coaching culture depicted in Figure 2 especially resilient is that the alternative perspectives that come into play in this consciousness raising are found primarily within an organization, among the organization's members themselves, rather than outside the organization, among external experts and consultants (especially when an organization's coaches are internal coaches). Dialogic development in a coaching culture happens from the inside out, rather than from the outside in, via the collective effort and leadership of an organization's own members to imagine and create new shared meaning, and to fashion more fully developed senses of self and group.

This kind of dialogic change process is built not on distrust and the perceived need to identify and correct deficiencies, nor even on agreement regarding goals for collective improvement, but rather on trust and the collaborative work of authentically exploring the promise of shared opportunities. Development in these terms is not about the improvement of specific outcomes, but about the increased likelihood of group effectiveness, i.e., that "more developed" groups will have greater capability and capacity than "less developed" groups to function effectively across tasks and environmental contexts.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature covering the development of coaching in the workplace, the individual experience of coaching, and coaching culture, to include discussions of theoretical underpinnings of coaching and coaching culture development. The chapter then presented three inferences for the current study drawn from that

literature review. Those inferences include a) that there is significant opportunity to add to the understanding of the possibility of aggregated effects from one-on-one coaching beyond the individual level (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016); b) that exploring the possibility of those aggregated effects should be informed by an understanding of the individual experience of coaching (Blackman et al., 2016; Kilburg, 1996; Myers & Bachkirova, 2018; Stelter, 2014); and c) that exploring how those aggregated effects can generate coaching culture must involve examining how coaching dynamics can inform and shape day-to-day behaviors throughout organizations (Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh, 2014; Hardingham, et al., 2004; Hart, 2005; Hawkins, 2012; Stewart et al., 2008).

The chapter concluded with a discussion of the study's conceptual framework in Figure 2, as it is informed by the literature review and the inferences for the study. That conceptual framework depicts dialogical change resulting from coaching wherein the effects of coaching experiences and behaviors accumulate and produce a coaching culture, which engenders and advances continued learning and collaboration, a strengthened sense of shared identity, and enhanced shared productivity (Hawkins, 2012).

The next chapter will discuss the methodology for the study. That methodology uses qualitative case study research to add to the understanding of the dynamics of one-on-one coaching in the workplace by examining a relatively new coaching program in an organization with a commitment to fostering a coaching culture.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture. More specifically, the research was intended to answer the following research question: How do the members of an organization describe the extent to which one-on-one coaching has changed their behaviors and their perceptions regarding working with others at the organization?

This chapter begins by explaining my positionality and reflexivity, before describing the rationale for selecting a qualitative inquiry paradigm and a basic qualitative research methodology. It then describes the research site, before outlining the procedures for data collection, and for data analysis and integration. The chapter concludes by describing trustworthiness techniques, and human participant and ethics precautions that were applied during the study.

Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

I came to this area of interest as a coach practitioner who was curious about the extent to which the experiences that come with coaching in the workplace change the behaviors of the members of an organization and their relationships with one another. As a coach practitioner, I wanted to explore whether the outcomes from one-on-one coaching can exceed the simple accumulation of individual-level outcomes from the formal, one-on-one, private coaching relationships established within an organization. While keeping my commitment to coaching in mind, I had to remember the challenges inherent in clarifying and understanding complexity, especially because I served as the

primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016): "most of what we study is truly complex, relating to people, events, and situations characterized by more variables than anyone can manage to identify, see in relationship, or operationalize" (Peshkin, 1993, p. 27).

My approach to studying coaching culture aligned with my ontology and my epistemology. In terms of ontology, I am a critical realist. I believe that one reality exists, but that it can never be understood perfectly or even known as a "single, observable reality" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 9). I believe that humans experience the real world, but that our experience of the real world is always only partial and is sometimes deceptive, with perpetual room for improvement.

My epistemology is oriented toward social interactionism on a micro level and toward social constructivism on a macro level. In the first case, I believe that human society forms around the interpretations we give to objects, events, and one another's behaviors, as we interact with one another, i.e., society is socially constructed. In the second, I believe that human beings make meaning as we engage with and interpret the world together, to the extent that what we believe about objective reality is a social construct (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

My ontology and epistemology lead me "to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 24). I prioritize the stories of those who have experienced the phenomena that interest me (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For this reason, my research focused on how members of the organization I studied experienced coaching and what they thought about the effects of the organization's coaching program.

The researcher in a qualitative study plays a unique role while functioning as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Seidman, 2013). My ontology and epistemology informed my research with caution regarding my own imperfect understanding and biases, and those of others, as they are generated by my positionality and theirs. I had to remember that I am invested in coaching, even as I undertook to study it as objectively as possible. I therefore had to be careful neither to look only for what I wanted to see, nor to accept that I was seeing only what I hoped to see. As Kenneth Burke, the American literary theorist and philosopher, explained: "A way of seeing is also a way of not seeing" (Burke, 1935, p. 70).

Inquiry Paradigm and Methodological Approach

This study was conducted as a qualitative study via an interpretive, constructivist lens. This research focused on meaning, understanding, and process, to explore employee coaching experiences and behaviors, and how they related to the possible development of a coaching culture in their organization, "to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 23).

This study applied a qualitative inquiry paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018) due to the study's exploratory nature and its focus on understanding the lived experience of members of an organization said to be developing a coaching culture. The research involved "an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world" with which the researcher "[studied] things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 3).

As Creswell & Poth (2018) explained it, qualitative research fit this study because

it seeks a complex, detailed understanding of an issue involving a group or population, affected by variables that cannot be easily measured (p. 45). A qualitative research methodology was selected in order to develop an understanding of "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6).

According to Creswell & Poth (2018), the five most common qualitative research methodologies are narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. I selected a qualitative case study design for this research, in order to understand employee coaching experiences and behaviors, and how they relate to the possible development of a coaching culture within their organization (the case). Creswell & Poth (2018) defined case study research like this: "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (p. 96). Those sources of information often include reports and other documents, interviews, and observations, and may include other things which help to describe the case, like audiovisual material (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Research Site and Case

The site for this study was a United States federal government agency which established a coaching program in 2019. In the years since, one-on-one coaching and other forms of coaching have been made widely available to employees across the agency.

The coaching program at the agency is the case this study examined. Merriam

(1998) suggested that case studies can be especially useful when a researcher is interested in studying a program, process, or individual in a detailed, holistic way in order to develop a deep understanding of the case in question. The coaching program was examined as an instrumental case (Stake, 1995) in order to help develop an understanding of the dynamics surrounding one-on-one coaching in the workplace and the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and coaching culture. This instrumental case was examined in order to shed light on the kinds of effects coaching might have in multiple types of workplaces.

The organization designed its coaching program with the intention of accelerating career and leadership development and shifting the organization's culture. The vision statement for the coaching program is to foster "a coaching culture to motivate employees to learn, grow and take positive actions to experience more engagement and connection, higher performance and greater job satisfaction" (Personal Communication). In pursuing achievement of that vision, the agency has made one-on-one coaching available to employees at all levels; has taught two courses of coaching skills for leaders (one for supervisors and one for non-supervisors), in addition to incorporating coaching skills training into classes for new supervisors; and has conducted group and team coaching.

It is important to note that the 2019 launch of the coaching program gave it less than a year of development before the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, forcing a shift from in-person to virtual engagements for all program offerings. Burns, the program manager at the time, reported that this slowed down implementation of the program quite a bit, especially the coaching skills courses which are taught to groups. On the other

hand, Burns reported that the isolation resulting from the pandemic generated new interest in coaching offerings from employees across the agency who "were really looking for ways to connect with staff." The coaching team's marketing during the pandemic was met with high responsiveness as a result; but Burns explained in 2024 that, post-COVID, "we're having to go a little bit deeper, just to make sure that folks know about [the coaching program], and that's where we work with our frontline supervisors group trying to get the message out."

From the program's inception until July 2024, 1,185 of the agency's 17,202 employees had received one-on-one coaching, 956 employees had participated in coaching skills training, 254 employees had participated in group coaching, and more than 30 agency teams had participated in team coaching.

In July 2024, the program had 66 coaches, all of whom had completed an ICF-accredited training program. Many of those coaches also held an ICF credential either as an Associate Certified Coach or Professional Certified Coach. Forty-one of those 66 coaches were agency employees who coached other employees in addition to their primary non-coaching responsibilities. Another 12 coaches of the agency's 66 coaches in July 2024 were agency alumni, and 13 others were coaches within the federal employee coaching system.

Data Collection

The data I collected for this study included reports, documents, and interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Observations of coaching were ruled out because of the confidentiality inherent in coaching relationships. Data collection was

rounded out with journaling and memoing documenting my perceptions and reflections during the study. These items were especially important before and after each interview.

Coaching Program Reports and Documents

As stated in Merriam & Tisdell (2016), reports and documents "can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (p. 189). Coaching program reports and documents supported development of a picture of the coaching program's rationale, design, desired outcomes, and processes, to include how the agency has established its coaching cadre, how the agency has provided coaching as an agency-wide benefit, and how the agency has communicated the intent of the program to those employees, with a special emphasis on the ways the program has been designed to produce cultural change.

These records provided me with agency language about the coaching program and helped me understand what the agency values about coaching and how employees in the program have been expected to interact with one another. This assisted me in the final preparation of topics to be explored and questions to be asked during the study's semi-structured interviews. The program reports and documents also provided a picture of the types of employees who have been involved in the coaching program.

Yin (2018) argued that reports and documentation are most important when it comes to corroborating and augmenting other case study evidence sources. This study benefitted from documentary corroboration, especially when it came to conducting and analyzing the study's interviews.

Interviews

Following the development of an understanding of the organization and the coaching program derived from the coaching program reports and documents, I conducted focused, semi-structured sixty-minute audio recorded and transcribed interviews (Yin, 2018) with multiple current and former program managers, and with other coach and coachee participants in the program. The interviews with the program managers provided an opportunity to discuss the information collected as a part of the initial process of developing an understanding of how the program was established and how it operates. Those interviews also gave the program managers the opportunity to share their own thoughts about the impact of the program.

I wrote the Program Manager Interview Guide in Appendix C with a primary focus on the history of the agency coaching program and how it has been managed. However, I was aware that the program managers I interviewed could also have experience as both coaches and coachees. I therefore anticipated hearing from the program managers about those experiences and I welcomed that information.

I wrote the Program Participant Interview Guide in Appendix D for use with coaches and coachees who have never been program managers, with a primary focus on their personal experiences with the coaching program and their understandings of its effects. The interviews with program participants allowed for the direct exploration of employee perceptions regarding coaching experiences and behaviors in the organization and how they relate to the possible development of a coaching culture, in alignment with the study's research question.

Merriam & Tisdell (2016) explained that semi-structured interviews are appropriate to qualitative research of this kind where individual respondents are expected to "define the world in unique ways" (p. 109). This research was seeking some similar information from the interviewees about their common experience with the coaching program, which means the interviews required some basic structure; but I conducted the interviews in a flexible way, in order "to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 109). A critical aspect of gathering rich, contextual data via interviews involves inviting interview participants to explore their meaning-making in relation to the topic (Seidman, 2013).

Semi-structured interviews supported that exploration with a mix of more and less structured questions, and a flow from the beginning to the end of each conversation that could change. This aligns with the stipulation in Weiss (1995) that the most effective interviews rely on cooperation between the interviewer and the respondent, in an open and trusting alliance dedicated to producing specific and honest accounts of both external and internal events. Seidman (2013) addressed this notion of alliance by calling interviewing "both a research methodology and a social relationship that must be nurtured, sustained, and then ended gracefully" (p. 101).

Higher level meaning-making occurs when humans "reflect upon something and arrive at its essence" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 70): "In reflecting on what one has seen and described, one is coming to an understanding of meanings that have been concealed" (p. 70). This is the level of meaning this study was seeking.

I piloted the program participant interviews with two employees who met the study criteria listed below. These pilots were designed to make me familiar with the types of answers my questions would elicit, and to make me comfortable with the protocols (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The pilots also helped me identify revisions needed to the protocols to improve the effectiveness of the interview sessions. I discussed these revisions with my dissertation chair.

Interview Participant Recruitment and Selection

I recruited volunteers for the study's program participant interviews by distributing the study participant recruitment memo (Appendix A) by organizational email to coaching program participants, in order to establish the purposeful sample described below. I then sent the informed consent (Appendix B) to the program managers and to the chief learning officer, and to program participants who indicated they were interested in participating in the study. I also offered to talk by telephone or Zoom to answer any questions potential study participants had.

After giving program participants several weeks to respond to my recruitment memo, I used purposeful, nonrandom sampling to identify a sample from among the 17 coachee and 17 coach volunteers I received. I intended that sample to reflect the "typical, normal, and average" (Patton, 2015, p. 268) perceptions members of the organization would have regarding coaching and its possible effects, given significant personal experience with the coaching program. Purposeful sampling to identify coaches and coachees with experience adequate to make them conversant about the coaching program supported collecting salient responses, to develop a rich description of perceptions from within the agency (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Preferred coach and coachee qualifications for study participation included a) full-time employment with the agency; b) three or more years of service at the agency; c) a minimum of 12 months since beginning participation in the program, as a coach, a coachee, or both; and d) experience working with/familiarity with three or more other agency coaches and/or coachees. The final preferred qualification was difficult to attain, especially for coachees, because the identities of other coachees and of coaches other than the one with whom a coachee is working are not often known to a coachee.

I initially gave interview preference to program participant interview volunteers with greater years of service at the agency and longer participation in the program. I simultaneously considered balance and variety among the volunteers chosen for interviews (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). As a result, I selected interview participants to represent a variety of professional specialties where possible, and I chose multiple participants who were relatively new to the agency and/or the program.

Merriam & Tisdale (2016) called purposeful sampling "the method of choice for most qualitative research" (p. 96). All the other common types of sampling listed by Merriam & Tisdale (2016) – "unique, maximum variation, convenience, and snowball or chain sampling" (p. 97) – could have provided interesting data about the case in question but might have distracted attention from the average situation in the organization. I nevertheless considered using snowball sampling as a result of participant suggestions regarding other employees who might be helpful sources of information (Yin, 2018), but I interviewed only one additional former program manager, based on the suggestions of several other participants.

In the end, I conducted four interviews with four program managers, and 20 additional interviews with other coaching program participants, including nine coachees and 11 coaches (four of whom had previously also been coachees). I settled on the final number of interviews to conduct after an assessment that it delivered a sufficient sample size to provide "reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purpose of the study" (Patton, 2015, p. 314).

This study was not intended to explore gender or any other distinguishing characteristics as factors in coaching program participation rates or quality of experience, but it should be noted that all but two of my volunteers were women. I included both of the men who volunteered in my purposeful sample, for a modicum of gender variety, but this still meant that all the coaches I interviewed except one were women, and all the coachees I interviewed except one were women. This significantly exceeds the ratio of women to men among agency employees and global coaching participants and suggests the value in conducting additional research to hear from more men coaching participants at the agency. See Table 11 below.

Table 11

Percentages by Gender of Agency Employees and Coaching Program Participants through 2023 (Personal Communication) *and of Global Coaching Participants* (International Coaching Federation, 2023c, pp. 7-8)

Categories	Women	Men
Agency Employees	52.0%	48.1%
Coachees		
• Agency	63.5%	24.9%
• Global	58.0%	41.0%
Coaches		
• Agency	74.0%	26.0%
• Global	72.0%	28.0%

Sampling should continue to the point of saturation, defined as the point "when you begin hearing the same responses to your interview questions or seeing the same behaviors in observations" (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 101). Siedman (2013) called saturation the point at which the researcher is no longer hearing anything new. Yin (2018) referred to the concept of reaching saturation as the process of collecting "confirmatory evidence" (p. 112), while also emphasizing the importance of investigating contradictory evidence. Hennink and Kaiser (2021) suggested that saturation is normally reached by conducting between nine and 17 interviews. In addition to considering saturation when conducting interviews, Seidman (2013) also suggested other practical considerations, such as: the amount of time required to conduct interviews, the amount of time required to collate and analyze the data, and the other resources required to support data collection and analysis.

Interview Data Management

I conducted and recorded the interviews via Zoom on my password-protected laptop. The Zoom software autogenerated transcripts of each session. As soon as feasible after each session, I read through the transcript produced for that session while listening to the playback. During this step, I corrected transcript errors I discovered.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research is an emergent interaction between data collection and data analysis, and this study's data analysis began during data collection, as discussed above, as relevant evidence discovered in agency and coaching program reports and documents sets the stage for the interviews that were conducted.

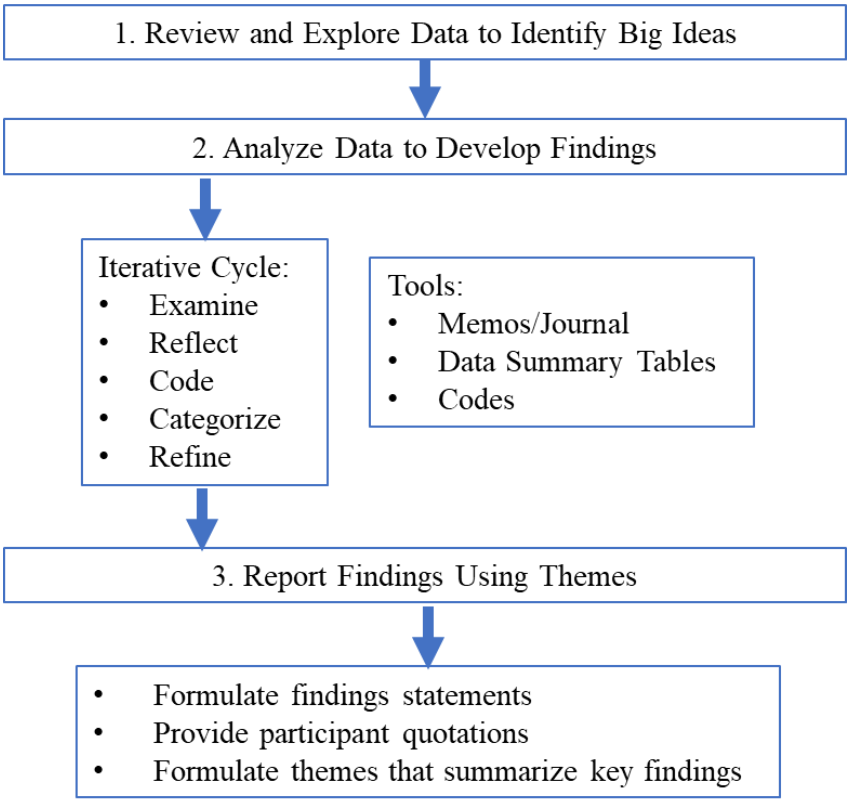
This overlapping data collection and analysis aligns with the discussion in Merriam and Tisdell (2016) regarding how making sense out of data collected during qualitative research "involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read" (p. 202). The researcher must focus on locating relevant data within the bulk of the data collected: "The task is to compare one unit of information with the next, looking for recurring regularities in the data" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 203) that relate to the research question and sub-questions. This process breaks data down into bits of information and then assigns those bits to categories that bring them together, in an iterative process, "gradually building more complex combinations, groups of codes, and higher-order concepts" (Yin, 2018, p. 166).

My data analysis was informed by the factors depicted in the conceptual framework above in Figure 2, as they appear in the coaching and coaching culture literature, and in the related theoretical literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2018). That conceptual framework is intended to depict a nexus between one-on-one coaching and the development of a coaching culture via what Yin (2018) called a "complex chain of occurrences or events over an extended period of time" (p. 186). Multiple analysis passes supported data reduction and data integration, as my conceptual framework was informed by what I learned in the field, rather than deductively tested (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

My data analysis involved a detailed process of meaning-making based on the data collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I conducted my analysis in accordance with the data analysis plan shown below in Figure 3, informed by Bloomberg & Volpe (2016), moving from the data to "big ideas," to findings, and to themes.

Figure 3

Data Analysis Plan (Adapted from Road Map for the Process of Qualitative Analysis: An Outline, in Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 195.)



As a first step, I carefully read all the data in my sources, including the coaching program reports and documents I collected, and the transcriptions of the interviews I conducted. I reviewed and explored the data to get a feeling for the "big ideas" or "storyline" in the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). This initial reading of all the data I collected gave me a sense of the overall whole before I broke it down into its constituent elements. Questions I asked during this step included "What is this about?" and "What appears to be emerging?" I further developed the a priori coding scheme drawn from my conceptual framework and shown in Appendix E, as themes began to emerge from the analysis of the coaching program reports and documents that I collected (Saldaña, 2016).

Themes are broad categories or ideas that emerge from patterns discovered during qualitative data analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

My second step was to analyze the data to develop findings. During this step I used the reports and documents I collected for context while reviewing the interview transcripts in detail. Those reports and documents included the agency Coaching 2023 Annual Review; the agency draft Coaching Program Strategic Plan FY2024-2026; the agency Draft Coaching Policy (3-20-2023); the agency Coaching Strategic Plan FY24-26; the agency March 2024 Coaching Cadre Call presentation; multiple memos produced by the coaching program; and the agency 2023-25 Strategic Learning Plan.

Those reports and documents provided me with a better understanding of the coaching program design and of how the program has been conducted in the years since its initial establishment, which assisted me in my interpretation of the things I heard in my interviews. During my transcript review, I followed an iterative cycle of examining the data and then reflecting on it, in order to continue development of codes and categories for the data, while checking for supporting and contrasting interrelationships (Bazeley, 2020) and relating the categories to those in the literature.

Interviews are where I expected to find the richest answers to the study's research questions. I analyzed the rich description in what employees shared about their perceptions regarding the agency's coaching program and its effects to amplify the coding schemes organized around themes that began to emerge from analysis of the coaching program reports and documents (Saldaña, 2016).

I refined the results by repeating the process multiple times, sorting the data into affinity groups and then identifying themes. This iterative process was supported by my

use of journaling and memoing regarding the data that stimulated my thinking processes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), as well as data summary tables, and coding.

The final step in the process was to report the findings that I present in Chapter 4, using the themes that emerged. This involved formulating findings statements, identifying key participant quotations for evidentiary purposes, and formulating the presentation of refined themes that summarize the study's key findings.

Trustworthiness Techniques

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, I pursued credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) via bracketing; data triangulation with reference to the reports and documents I collected and the interviews I conducted; member checks/respondent validation with reference to the interviews I conducted and my initial findings; chair and peer checking of my pilot interview process and initial transcripts; chair and peer checking of my coding development; and rich, thick description developed with reference to the background information I collected and the interviews I conducted (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Each of the following sections will focus on one of these techniques at a time.

Bracketing

Bracketing is the process whereby a researcher identifies and sets aside their own preconceptions, biases, and assumptions about the phenomenon being studied. This helps to minimize the influence of those preconceptions, biases, and assumptions on the researcher's data collection and analysis, in order to allow for a more objective and nuanced understanding of the case. Tufford & Newman (2012) put this more bluntly by explaining that bracketing mitigates "the potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions

that may taint the research process" (p. 80). This is especially helpful in qualitative research where the researcher is the instrument for analysis (Starks & Trinidad, 2007) and there is a "close relationship between the researcher and the research topic" (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 82), as there was during the course of my research. The credibility of this study was enhanced by bracketing via reflexive journaling and memoing to examine and reflect upon my engagement with the data.

Data Triangulation

Data triangulation is defined by Merriam & Tisdell (2016) as "Using multiple investigators, sources of data, or data collection methods to confirm emerging findings" (p. 258). As discussed above, this study's data sources included coaching program reports and documents, and interviews with coaching program managers and program participants. Analysis of these multiple data sources enhanced this study's credibility by assisting in reaching an understanding about the "complex social phenomena" (p. 5) associated with the agency's coaching program, via inquiry focused on "meaning in context" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 2). A major strength of the research design chosen for this study was the opportunity it provided to use several different sources of evidence in this way (Houghton, et al., 2013).

Member Checks/Respondent Validation

Member checks/respondent validation are defined by Merriam & Tisdell (2016) as "Taking tentative interpretations/findings back to the people from whom they were derived and asking if they are plausible" (p. 258). The credibility of this study was enhanced by using this technique with reference to my observations and initial findings,

to give study participants the opportunity to confirm that my interpretations and findings were credible (Houghton, et al., 2013).

Chair and Peer Checking of Pilot Interviews and Transcripts

I discussed my pilot interviews with my chair and a peer, and I adjusted my interview guides based on their feedback in order to reduce any bias and leading questions I was introducing into the interview process. After making those interview guide refinements, I then shared early interview transcripts with my chair for their review, to confirm that bias and leading questions were reduced.

Chair and Peer Checking of Coding Development

I explored with my chair and a peer how my coding developed from the list of a priori provisional codes shown in Appendix E to the refined, more conceptual and abstract codes shown in the discussion on themes in Chapter 4. This coding refinement facilitated deeper analysis of the rich content present in the interview transcripts, in a movement from codes to categories and toward theory, as suggested by Saldaña (2021): "when you compare major categories to each other and consolidate them in various ways, you transcend the 'particular reality' of your data and progress toward the thematic, conceptual, and theoretical." (p. 17).

Rich, Thick Description

Rich, thick description is defined by Merriam & Tisdell (2016) as "Providing enough description to contextualize the study such that readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situations match the research context, and, hence, whether findings can be transferred" (p. 258). The credibility and transferability of this study was

enhanced by the rich detail provided in extensive interview quotations, but the reports and documents also collected for evidence were also helpful in contextualizing the study.

Human Participant and Ethics Precautions

Given the nature of the research topic, minimal risk to participants was anticipated. All participants were volunteers whom I assured of their confidentiality. As part of protecting participant confidentiality, supervisors and agency leaders will have access only to aggregated and anonymized data.

While questions related to coaching might have evoked emotional responses, I informed interview participants that they had complete control over their participation regarding answering questions and providing any other information. The informed consent form explained all ethical issues, including the methods used for data gathering, handling, and storage, and participants' rights. Informed consent forms were reviewed with each participant in advance of any data collection.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture. More specifically, the research was intended to answer the following research question: How do the members of an organization describe the extent to which one-on-one coaching has changed their behaviors and their perceptions regarding working with others at the organization?

The site for this study was a United States government agency where coaching has been made available to every employee. This study was conducted as qualitative research via an interpretive, constructivist lens. This research focused on meaning,

understanding, and process, to explore employee perceptions of coaching and coaching culture in the organization, "to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 23).

I collected data that included reports, documents, and interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Observations of coaching were ruled out because of the confidentiality inherent in coaching relationships.

Coaching program reports and documents supported development of a picture of the coaching program's desired outcomes, rationale, design, and processes. Interviews with four coaching program managers supported a better understanding of how the program was established and how it operates. Additional interviews with a purposeful, non-random sampling of coach and coachee participants in the program allowed for the direct exploration of employee perceptions regarding coaching experiences and behaviors in the organization and how they relate to the possible development of a coaching culture, in alignment with the study's research question.

Preferred coach and coachee qualifications for study participation included a) full-time employment with the agency; b) three or more years of service at the agency; c) a minimum of 12 months since beginning participation in the program, as a coach, a coachee, or both; and d) experience working with/familiarity with three or more other agency coaches and/or coachees. I initially gave preference to program participants with greater years of service and longer participation in the program. I simultaneously considered balance and variety among the volunteers chosen for interviews (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). As a result, I selected interview participants to represent a variety of

professional specialties where possible, and I chose multiple participants who were relatively new to the agency and/or the program.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, I pursued credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) via bracketing; data triangulation with reference to the reports and documents I collected and the interviews I conducted; member checks/respondent validation with reference to the interviews I conducted and my initial findings; chair and peer checking of my pilot interview process and initial transcripts; chair and peer checking of my coding development; and rich, thick description developed with reference to the background information I collected and the interviews I conducted (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The next chapter will discuss the study findings I developed as a result of my data analysis. I present those findings using themes I formulated to summarize my findings, in accordance with Bloomberg & Volpe (2016).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter presents the findings of this qualitative case study to explore the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture, by answering the following research question: How do the members of an organization describe the extent to which one-on-one coaching has changed their behaviors and their perceptions regarding working with others at the organization? I developed my findings following the analysis of data I collected over the course of five months.

This chapter begins with a description of the study's 24 interview participants, program managers, coaches, and coachees in a coaching program established at a United States government agency in 2019. The chapter then describes that program, which is the case this study examined. In describing the case, I report on: 1) the purpose of the program; 2) the history of the program's development; and 3) the elements of the program.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the themes I identified in the data regarding study interview participant perceptions about their coaching experiences and coaching behaviors in the organization: 1) coachees and coaches decided to participate in one-on-one coaching to achieve changes in professional and personal behaviors and perceptions; 2) coaching behaviors reported in the one-on-one coaching experience created a special kind of positive relationship between coachee and coach; 3) the one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees to think bigger and differently; 4) the one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees and coaches to interact differently with others; and 5) coachees and coaches generally expected moderate broader effects from

increasingly shared and normalized coaching experiences and coaching behaviors.

Description of the Study Interview Participants

I conducted interviews with 24 volunteers drawn from the agency coaching program I examined. These interview participants represented various roles in the coaching program and in the organization. With regard to their roles in the coaching program, I conducted interviews with four coaching program managers, 11 coaches, and nine coachees. These categories of interview participants provided a rich variety of perspectives on the coaching program and the coaching experience. They ranged in experience with coaching from less than one year to 18 years. Their time at the agency ranged from two to 37 years; and their grades in the federal civil service ranged from GS-13 to members of the Senior Executive Service. The job specialties of those I interviewed also covered a wide range, including, for example, emergency management and public affairs.

See Table 12 below for descriptions of the federal civil service employee grades to which this case study refers.

Table 12

Descriptions of the Federal Civil Service Employee Grades to which this Case Study Refers (Partnership for Public Service, 2024)

Grade	Descriptions
Senior Executive Service (SES)	Members of the SES lead the federal workforce and serve in the key positions just below the top presidential appointees; managers of managers and supervisors
General Schedule (GS) 15	Top-level technical positions; managers/supervisors
GS 14	Top-level technical positions; supervisors/team leads
GS 11-13	Mid-level technical positions; team leads
GS 7 & 9	Entry-level and administrative positions

See Table 13 below for the full profiles of all interview participants. To comply with Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements for anonymity, I used randomly generated pseudonyms for interview participants as shown in Table 13, with no attempt to correlate pseudonyms to any identifying characteristics, despite what the IRB and I agreed to be relatively low risk to study participants from choosing to allow me to interview them. As discussed in Lahman et al. (2015), I nevertheless understand that additional methods for identifying research participants may be appropriate for this and other types of research, including the following: a) researcher-assigned pseudonyms based on characteristics; b) participant-selected pseudonyms based on characteristics or otherwise; c) the use of generic identifiers like numbers or epithets; and d) the use of actual names. Factors that play into identification methodologies should include the research context, participant preferences, power dynamics and the vulnerability of participants, and cultural responsiveness (Lahman et al., 2023).

Table 13

Profiles of Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Agency Coaching Roles			Coaching Experience			Job Specialty	Supervisor	
	PM	Coach	Coachee	Years	GC	CSL		Current	Previous
Program Managers									
Smith	X	X		7	X	X	Director Founding PM	N/A	X
Burns*	X	X	X	5	X	X	Continuous improvement PM Acting PM		X
Johnson*	X	X		6	X	X	Coaching officer Current PM		X
Walsh*	X			15			Chief learning officer Supervises current PM	X	X
Coaches									
Foster		X		18			Policy liaison		
Clark*		X		16	X	X	Program manager		X
Alvarez		X	X	7	X	X	Human resources		X
Kim		X	X	4	X	X	Emergency management	X	X
Tanaka		X		4			Policy analyst		
Hughes		X		3		X	Organizational development		X
White		X		3		X	Public affairs	X	X
Collins		X		3	X	X	Training officer		
Watson		X		1	X		Attorney	X	X
Aziz		X	X	1	X		Life scientist	X	X
Elliott		X	X	1	X		Policy analyst		
Coachees									
Gardner			X	9	X	X	Site remediation	X	X
Schultz			X	7	X	X	Policy analyst		
Gerster			X	6			Policy analyst		X
Nelson			X	5	X	X	Policy analyst		X
Murphy			X	3			Chemist		X
Baker			X	2			Physical scientist		X
Knox			X	2			Risk management		
Simon			X	2	X	X	Environmental engineer		X
Martin			X	2			Policy analyst		

KEY:

PM – Program manager
GC – Group coaching participant
CSL – Coaching Skills for Leaders participant
* – Coach Management Team member
GS – General Scale civil service grade
SES – Senior Executive Service

NOTES:

1. The Coaching Experience columns show the number of years of experience as either a one-on-one coach or coachee, at the time of the interviews, along with whether they have participated in agency GC sessions and the CSL courses as a coach or coachee, indicated by an X.
2. Years at agency, federal civil service grade, and gender were collected, but are masked in the interest of anonymity.
3. PMs: No further PM details are provided here in the interest of anonymity, given the small sample size.
4. Coaches:
    a. Years at agency ranged from 5 to 37.
    b. Three coaches interviewed were GS-13s, two were GS-14s, five were GS-15s,

and one was in the SES.
    c. All coaches interviewed except one were women.
5. Coachees:
    a. Years at agency ranged from 4 to 33.
    b. Four coachees interviewed were GS-13s, four were GS-14s, and one was a GS-15.
    c. All coachees interviewed except one were women.

Description of the Coaching Program in the Organization

In this section, I describe the coaching program I studied, by reporting on data I collected in coaching program reports and documents, and in other sources, as well as in the interviews I conducted, especially those with program managers. The section on the program's purpose lays out how the agency designed the program with the intention of accelerating career and leadership development and shifting the organization's culture. The section on the history of the program's development briefly describes its place within the larger context of the development of coaching across the federal government since the early 2000s. The section on the elements of the program describes how the program incorporates a combination of one-on-one coaching, coaching skills courses, group coaching, and team coaching.

The Purpose of the Coaching Program

As noted above, this study defines coaching using the current International Coaching Federation (ICF) definition: "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential" (International Coaching Federation, 2023b). The ICF definition is the definition of coaching used by the organization examined by this study.

As also noted above, this study defines coaching culture as "a space where a significant number of the individuals in an organization 'practice coaching behaviors as a

means of relating to, supporting, and influencing one another'" (Hart, 2005, p. 7). The organization examined in this study has not formally defined "coaching culture," but its use of the term aligns with this study's definition.

Smith, the founding program manager; Burns, a key member of Smith's initial coach cadre, and the acting program manager after Smith retired and before a permanent program manager was hired; Walsh, the chief learning officer; and Johnson, the first and current permanent program manager, all explained that the organization designed its coaching program with the intention of accelerating career and leadership development and shifting the organization's culture. This common understanding aligns with the current vision statement for the program, published in 2024 in the new Coaching Program Strategic Plan during the ongoing tenures of Walsh and Johnson, i.e., to foster "a coaching culture to motivate employees to learn, grow and take positive actions to experience more engagement and connection, higher performance and greater job satisfaction" (Personal Communication).

As the program managers' remarks below show, the vision statement for the coaching program makes coaching experiences and ensuing coaching behaviors that extend beyond formal coaching activities a combination of means to an end, rather than an end in themselves. In that sense, coaching culture is not about coaching per se, but rather about how the environment enriched by widespread coaching experiences and behaviors will better support agency employees in their collaborative work of accomplishing the agency mission, in alignment with the organization's larger cultural context and also in recognition of the subcultures within that context.

Burns, who began supporting the program in 2019, explained the initial vision for the program like this: “The goal was to create a coaching culture, and it really was aimed at the time at our supervisors, and giving them the tools to really excel and make the agency a place 1) where people really want to work, and 2) where we’re being productive and accomplishing those tasks that are set before us.” Coaching was intended to be “another tool for professional development.” Burns went on to say that “The first program manager [i.e., Smith] really had a vision for embedding that culture within the agency.”

Johnson stated the program’s purpose in their own words in this way:

> The desired outcomes are to leverage our employees to the fullest, so that they can meet the mission - so that they’re completely engaged and have all the skills and abilities that they need, so that we can meet our mission.

Walsh linked the coaching program purpose to the mission of the part of the organization which they lead, the Professional Development and Performance Excellence Branch (formerly the Learning and Development Branch). The agency’s Strategic Learning Plan defines the branch’s mission as follows: “Our mission is to empower all [agency] employees to achieve their professional goals by learning the skills and mindsets needed to accomplish [the agency’s] mission both now and for the future” (Personal Communication).

The Strategic Learning Plan explains that the coaching program is a key part of Walsh’s team’s overarching work to develop a learning organization and a culture of learning while supporting and facilitating personal growth and development. The branch defines a learning organization in its Strategic Learning Plan following Garvin (1993): “a

learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge, and modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights."

The coaching culture the coaching program is intended to foster is nested squarely within the agency's plan to embed a culture of learning in the organization, in which employees are empowered "to take charge of their own learning to help them become who they want to be, aligning their passions and talents with the activities to perform at work to create an engaging experience driving them forward as they support the mission" (Personal Communication). The Strategic Learning Plan further explains (Personal Communication) that the coaching program and the other plan elements are designed to integrate with one another to support development of the agency as an organization where:

- Learning is encouraged, supported, inclusive, and part of daily organizational life
- People are mindful, curious, and empathetic
- People learn together through collaborative, creative team problem solving
- People work across boundaries, regions, jobs, and hierarchies
- People share knowledge and resources
- New ideas are valued and supported
- People strive together to achieve the powerful mission "to protect human health and the environment"

History of the Development of the Coaching Program

Interest in coaching began to expand across the federal government in the early 2000s, ten years or so after the private sector had begun to adopt coaching to a significant degree, as documented above in chapter two. Most coaching services used by federal agencies at the time were acquired via contracts with external coaches; but, as interest in coaching increased across the government, federal employees began to get trained as coaches, typically adding coaching responsibilities to their existing roles. Smith, the

founding program manager, did this in 2017.

After starting to coach others within the agency part-time, in addition to their other routine job responsibilities, Smith discovered there were other coaches within the agency independently doing the same thing . Smith became convinced that the agency would benefit from an internal coaching program that would coordinate coaching training for agency employees and provide coaching services to agency leaders. After engaging with senior agency leaders to explain the coaching program concept, Smith received approval to step out of their director role to become the agency's founding coaching program manager, while transitioning into retirement when they could hand off the program to a successor.

Smith saw value in coaching for everyone at the agency, but Smith rolled out the program in phases to ensure sustainable growth. The availability of 15-20 internal part-time coaches, in addition to other Federal and contract coaches allowed Smith to offer coaching to employees across the agency in top-level technical positions and higher (GS-14s and above), beginning in 2019.

Employees in the federal civil service grades of GS-14 and above are generally supervisors and managers, and Smith was convinced they could especially benefit from coaching services due to their responsibilities for coordinating agency actions while leading other people. Smith believed coaching would help the agency's supervisors and managers process specific challenges they were facing, but also believed that these leaders would learn coaching skills of their own while they were being coached, skills they could use with good effects while supervising and managing others.

See Table 14 below for a depiction of the development of the agency coaching

program since its establishment in 2019.

Table 14

The Development of the Agency Coaching Program since its Establishment in 2019

Date	Development	Participation through July 2024 of 17,202 employees
2019	Establishment of one-on-one coaching	1,185 individuals (6.9%)
2019	- Program includes only supervisors and managers (GS-14s and above)	
2019	Establishment of coaching skills courses	956 individuals (5.6%)
2019	- Program includes employees in mid-level technical positions (GS-13s and above)	
2020	Establishment of group coaching	254 individuals (1.5%)
2021	- Program includes all full-time, permanent agency employees regardless of position/civil service grade	
2022	Placement of first permanent coaching officer program manager	
2022	Establishment of team coaching	34 teams
2024	Completion of agency's first Coaching Program Strategic Plan	

Smith was able to expand the provision of agency coaching services to GS-13s in mid-level technical positions in late 2019, because other federal coaches were continuing to make themselves available to the agency, while increasing numbers of agency employees continued to apply for and complete coach training. Smith further expanded the program in 2021, making coaching services available to any full-time, permanent agency employee.

Data reported in December 2023 seems to support Smith's intuition about the special benefit from coaching for GS-14s and above, who are generally supervisors and managers, in combination with coaching's applicability to others, but especially GS-13s who are on the path to becoming supervisors and managers. That data breaks out agency employee requests for one-on-one coaching sorted by federal civil service grade. See

Table 15 below.

Table 15

Agency Employee Requests for One-On-One Coaching Sorted by Civil Service Grade

Grade	Percentage of Requests
GS 15	18.98%
GS 14	22.85%
GS 13	39.66%
GS 12	8.69%
All other	< 10%

The Elements of the Coaching Program

The organization that is the subject of this study uses a combination of structured one-on-one coaching engagements, along with coaching skills training, group coaching, and team coaching, to expand the shared coaching experiences and behaviors present in the organization and to foster a coaching culture. In the sections that follow, I describe how the organization uses each of the elements of this combination.

One-on-one Coaching

A 2023 coaching program memo released to the agency explained one-on-one coaching like this:

> Coaching is a thought-provoking and creative process to inspire employees to maximize their full potential by helping them:
> - Assess their current situation and define meaningful goals.
> - Understand and overcome barriers inhibiting success.
> - Embrace accountability to implement changes and make progress toward goals.

One-on-one coaching relationships at the agency are initiated with the expectation that they will generally include 6-10 one-hour sessions. But Johnson reported that coaches discuss these guidelines with new clients, to explain that the number of sessions

actually conducted in each case will be linked to the goal or goals each coachee is pursuing, so that there could be fewer than six sessions or more than 10.

When Smith established the agency coaching program in 2019, an initial cadre 10 internal coaches made themselves available to provide one-on-one coaching to four to five coachees at a time. On average, the 66 coaches in the current cadre now make themselves available to provide coaching to at least eight coachees at a time, and, in the past three years, the program has averaged between 250 and 300 total coachees per year.

Burns reported that each one-on-one coachee is asked to provide a coach evaluation at the end of each coaching engagement. Johnson and Burns both review those evaluations, and Johnson does follow-up anytime an evaluation raises concerns. Burns said this happens very infrequently: "Generally we are getting very high marks that [coachees] are accomplishing what they want to accomplish, that the coaching was productive and a good use of their time, and that they would recommend it to somebody else."

Burns said the agency takes pride in the quality of its coaches, and that the coach management team to which they belong takes the time to get to know all coaches and to conduct practice sessions with them. In the two or three instances when coaches were not meeting agency coach standards, they were removed from the list of available agency coaches.

The coaching experience and behaviors instilled by one-on-one coaching sessions are fundamental key elements in the combination of ways in which the agency is working to foster a coaching culture.

Coaching Skills for Leaders Courses

The agency coaching program offers two optional coaching skills courses that encourage and train agency employees to use coaching skills and behaviors in their jobs across all the specialty areas represented in the agency. The first course, fielded in 2019, enables supervisors and managers to use coaching approaches with their staffs. The second course was introduced about a year later, to provide coaching skills training to non-supervisors, making coaching skills training available to all agency employees. Participation in these courses by those I interviewed is shown in Table 13 above.

The coaching experience and behaviors instilled by the two coaching skills courses are additional key elements in the combination of ways in which the agency is working to foster a coaching culture. Clark reported that these courses in particular have become models for other federal agencies.

Coaching Skills Training for Supervisors and Managers. A 2024 coaching program memo released to the agency explained that the coaching skills training for supervisors and managers is for leaders who "are interested in maximizing the value of conversations with employees and want to enhance the performance of others." The memo explained that the topics covered would help participants:

- Increase their understanding of coaching
- Discover when to coach
- Learn essential coaching skills
- Experience firsthand a coaching conversation with an employee
- Practice real coaching conversations in a safe environment
- Receive just-in-time feedback on their conversations
- Understand how to create a culture of accountability in the workplace

The standalone coaching skills training for supervisors and managers is a seven-hour workshop led by agency coaches and conducted as a live, virtual, participatory

learning opportunity over three consecutive days. The first day of the course includes a demonstration of how a coach-like supervisor might engage an employee on a real topic. The second day includes training in essential coaching skills, like listening and asking powerful questions. On the final day, participants practice coaching skills while getting real-time feedback from their agency coach facilitators.

It was important to Smith to field the coaching skills training for supervisors and managers in the early days of the coaching program, along with one-on-one coaching. Smith was convinced, as noted above, that those leaders would especially benefit from coaching and from learning coaching skills of their own due to their responsibilities for coordinating agency actions while leading other people. Smith believed that one-on-one coaching and coaching skills training fill a gap in the leadership development opportunities otherwise available to agency employees. Burns, Walsh, and Johnson echoed this sentiment.

Burns was one of the primary developers of the agency's two coaching skills training courses. Together, Smith and Burns concluded that a key component in filling the gap they noted in the agency's leadership development initiatives needed to be training to improve supervisor and manager communication skills, specifically with regard to ways in which to have conversations with staff that are both productive and empowering. They believed that the combination of experiencing supportive one-on-one conversations with coaches with training to facilitate the same kinds of conversations with others would be a game changer. Ratings from participants in the coaching skills training for supervisors and managers have been consistently high since the course was started.

Smith and Burns told agency supervisors and managers that coaching skills were "not a magic bullet" that would solve all their problems, but they made the case that getting better at listening to their people and asking them powerful questions, with a coaching mindset, would enhance their understanding of their teams and the challenges their teams faced. Non-supervisors who were on the receiving end of the coaching skills their supervisors and managers brought back to their teams after completing coaching skills training began asking for a coaching skills course for non-supervisors, and Smith and Burns designed that course to be a condensed version of the first course. See below for more details.

Coaching Skills Training for Non-Supervisors. The coaching skills training for non-supervisors is a three-hour workshop led by agency coaches and conducted as a one-day live virtual participatory learning opportunity. Johnson explained that this training has consistently been "sold out" and "waitlisted forever" ever since it was introduced. Johnson believes the course's popularity is due in good measure to the fact that it is a live, virtual, participatory learning opportunity for a very large pool of eligible people.

Johnson reported that the coaching program's offerings in general, and the coaching skills course in particular, are helping the agency "to prepare the next generation of supervisors in a lot of ways." Smith, Burns, Walsh, and Johnson all reported that agency leadership believes that coaching skills make leading and supervising others easier. "But even if someone doesn't become a supervisor," Johnson said, "being a little bit more curious and really listening to other people is just good for the organization, because it can help people understand each other better and collaborate

more successfully. So those [coaching] skills are just useful for people in the very team-oriented environment in which we work."

Smith was particularly pleased about the program's success with its coaching skills courses. Smith said, "I feel like I could have been a better manager and leader if I had had coaching skills in my tool kit."

Group Coaching

Live, virtual group coaching opportunities are organized for employees by topics, e.g., work-life balance, becoming a leader, developing a team strategy, deciding when to retire, etc. Each group is run by one or two coaches who facilitate the group's conversations during multiple sessions which typically number between six and eight. Participation in group coaching by those I interviewed is shown in Table 13 above.

A 2024 coaching program memo released to the agency explained group coaching like this: "Group coaching harnesses the combined energy and wisdom of the group to allow employees to overcome challenges, take advantage of opportunities and deepen their awareness. These highly participatory group discussions allow the sharing of ideas and building of a supportive environment."

Johnson said, "I think the power that we see from [group coaching] is that some people don't make a lot of progress in one-on-one coaching, and [group sessions allow them to] share in what others in the organization are experiencing." Having the group coaching experience, Johnson said, "can really break things open and help people to see new perspectives and get wisdom from others on issues and challenges they have in common."

Johnson explained that "a really cool element of group coaching" is that "we ask [the participants] to be coachlike in the setting. So, we ask them to be curious about each other, to ask each other questions, and then, when they're speaking, to speak from their own experience, rather than putting their experience with somebody else, or providing advice."

The coaching experience and behaviors instilled by group coaching sessions are additional key elements in the combination of ways in which the agency is working to foster a coaching culture.

Team Coaching

ICF's Advanced Certification in Team Coaching (ACTC) helps coaches to develop the specialized skills required for effective team coaching (International Coaching Federation, 2024), including:

- Supporting teams in the development of effective communication and collaboration skills
- Partnering with teams to develop a sense of common identity and purpose
- Collaborating with teams to support conflict resolution
- Promoting a team's autonomy and long-term sustainability

In 2022 and 2023, the agency coaching program leadership partnered with the external Global Team Coaching Institute (GTCI) to provide team coaching to 22 agency teams, while internal agency coaches were being trained to conduct team coaching, which was not part of the original coaching program. In addition to the team coaching provided by GTCI practitioners, eight members of the agency coach cadre who received training as team coaches supported 12 agency teams in 2023.

Team coaching is an additional element in the combination of ways in which the agency is working to foster a coaching culture.

Summary Description of the Study Interview Participants and the Case

In the opening section of this chapter, I described the study interview participants, who represent a sampling with good variety in multiple ways. I interviewed four coaching program managers, 11 current coaches, and nine coachees. They ranged in experience with coaching from less than one year to 18 years. Their time at the agency ranged from two to 37 years; and their grades in the federal civil service ranged from GS-13 (mid-level technical positions) up to the Senior Executive Service level (top-level management). The job specialties of those I interviewed also covered a wide range, including, for example, emergency management and public affairs. See Table 13 above.

In the next section of this chapter above, I described the coaching program which was established at the agency in 2019 to accelerate career and leadership development and shift the organization's culture. The current vision statement for the program, published in the new Coaching Program Strategic Plan, is to foster "a coaching culture to motivate employees to learn, grow and take positive actions to experience more engagement and connection, higher performance and greater job satisfaction" (Personal Communication). The program was initially rolled out with only one-on-one coaching for employees across the agency with supervisory and managerial responsibility (in the federal civil service grades of GS-14 and above). The program now includes one-on-one coaching, coaching skills courses, group coaching, and also team coaching which are available to any full-time, permanent agency employee.

In the next section below, I present my findings resulting from the interviews I conducted with 24 volunteers drawn from participants in the agency coaching program I just described.

Interview Findings

In this section, I present the themes I identified in the data regarding study interview participant perceptions about their coaching experiences and coaching behaviors in the organization. These themes highlight some distinctions I noted between the coachees and coaches I interviewed, and between those program participants I interviewed who are team leads, supervisors, and managers, and those who are not.

The themes I identified are as follows:

1) Coachees and coaches decided to participate in one-on-one coaching to achieve changes in professional and personal behaviors and perceptions.

2) Coaching behaviors reported in the one-on-one coaching experience created a special kind of positive relationship between coachee and coach.

3) The one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees to think bigger and differently.

4) The one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees and coaches to interact differently with others.

5) Coachees and coaches generally expected moderate broader effects from increasingly shared and normalized coaching experiences and coaching behaviors.

Theme 1: Coachees and coaches decided to participate in one-on-one coaching to achieve changes in professional and personal behaviors and perceptions.

Theme 1 highlights the variety of reasons coachees and coaches have for deciding to participate in one-on-one coaching. In the sections below, I first describe coachee reasons for participating in one-on-one coaching, and then I describe coach reasons for participating in one-on-one coaching. These reasons link to the extent of the impact

coachees and coaches expected from the coaching experience. See Table 16 below on interview data categories and codes supporting Theme 1.

Table 16

Interview Data Categories and Codes Supporting Theme 1: **Coachees and coaches decided to participate in one-on-one coaching to achieve changes in professional and personal behaviors and perceptions.**

Participant Categories	Categories Related to Behavioral and Perceptual Change	Codes for Experiences Related to Behavioral and Perceptual Change
Coachees	1. Professional development reasons for participating	a. Coachee seeks help with career advancement b. Coachee seeks help with adjusting to workplace change c. Coachee seeks help with difficult work relationship(s) d. Coachee seeks help enhancing professional performance e. Coachee seeks help in transitioning into higher levels of leadership responsibilities
	2. Personal development reasons for participating	a. Coachee seeks help with personal challenge(s) in workplace b. Coachee seeks improved work-life balance
	3. Encouragement to participate	a. Coachee is encouraged by others to participate in coaching
Coaches	1. Support to coachee professional development	a. Coach supports coachee's work in considering options for career advancement b. Coach supports coachee's work in considering options for adjustment to workplace change c. Coach supports coachee in considering options for improving difficult work relationship(s) d. Coach supports coachee's work in considering options for enhancing professional performance e. Coach supports coachee's work in considering options for transitioning

		into higher levels of leadership responsibilities
	2. Support to coachee personal development	a. Coach supports coachee's work in considering options for addressing personal challenge(s) in workplace b. Coach supports coachee's work in considering options for improved work-life balance c. Coach supports coachee's work in considering options for achieving greater wellbeing
	3. Encouragement to participate	a. Coach is encouraged by others to participate in coaching
	4. Coach professional self-development	a. Coaching is a good fit with duties and skills coach already had b. Coaching enhances coach's support to colleagues and organization

Coachee Reasons for Participating in One-on-One Coaching

Coachees decided to participate in one-on-one coaching due to a variety of reasons, primarily focused on professional development. These reasons were tied to their expectations regarding the support they would get from receiving one-on-one coaching, ranging from support for specific workplace challenges to support for overall job performance and leadership responsibilities.

Martin believed coaching could help them with a very particular workplace challenge. They discovered that coaching "was very much tailored to my specific work situation and life situation. And it was really helpful at a time in my life where I was coming back [to the work force] from maternity leave."

Baker expected that coaching support would be "fairly open ended": to help with job performance and challenges, including interpersonal issues; to "learn about how the agency could better function for me, or how I could better function in the agency"; and to learn "how to improve my own performance and how to interact better with others."

Simon expressed a sense that coaching was intended to help them develop "a bigger picture" and better understand how to be productive in the agency. This would happen as Simon learned to see things in the same way coworkers see them, and as they pursued "aligning my views with the views of other people" "in a common vision."

Murphy explained their expectation that coaching helps to build leadership capability "by helping people to think about things differently." Gardner expected that coaching would "help me in my job as a manager, so I could do better helping my branch of 10 people."

Multiple coachees among those I interviewed indicated that their interest in participating in the coaching program was enhanced by personal contact with others already involved in the program. They also reported being encouraged to participate by supervisors, training officers, and human resource officers who discussed the opportunities with them. This encouragement to receive coaching aligns with how coachees generally reported their understanding that one-on-one coaching would support them primarily in their individual professional development. To that end, several coachees explained that they signed up for coaching for general help with thinking about career advancement and work-life balance. Other coachees reported that they signed up for coaching for help with unique challenging personal situations (e.g., returning from maternity leave, returning to the agency after extended employment elsewhere, working with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) or specific difficult work relationships.

Four of the nine coachees I interviewed specifically indicated that they signed up for coaching in order to talk with a coach about transitioning into higher levels of leadership responsibilities. These coachees saw value in coaching for help in creating and

sustaining positive work relationships, especially with subordinates. This aligns with the emphasis given by each of the program managers to the value of coaching for supervisors and managers, due to their responsibilities for coordinating agency actions while leading other people.

In summary, this section on Theme 1 highlights the variety of reasons coachees have for deciding to participate in one-on-one coaching. Coachees decided to participate in one-on-one coaching, often after encouragement from others, for help developing professional capabilities, thinking about career advancement, managing personal challenges, enhancing their performance and fit, managing difficult work relationships, creating and sustaining positive work relationships, and developing leadership capabilities.

Coach Reasons for Participating in One-on-One Coaching

Like coachees, coaches decided to participate in one-on-one coaching due to a variety of reasons, with an extended focus beyond coachee professional development to include coachee personal development, and coach self-development. These reasons were tied to their expectations regarding the support they would provide with one-on-one coaching, ranging from support for enhanced individual job productivity and performance to support for employee wellbeing. This support for employee wellbeing went beyond the expectations shared by the coachees I interviewed who generally reported expecting that one-on-one coaching would support them primarily in their individual professional development.

Foster expressed the belief that "Coaching can enhance employee productivity by helping employees to resolve issues that would interfere with their performance." Elliott

said that coaching can "help with professional and personal development."

Aziz explained that coaching provides support for work-life balance and enhanced performance. Coaching, Aziz suggested, is meant to support everyone, however they need to be supported. It is not only for people facing crisis or difficult issues. Kim nevertheless emphasized that coaching can "help individual employees work through challenges and remove obstacles to the achievement of their goals." Hughes explained that "People have struggles and they need ways to talk that out"; and that coaching helps with that.

Alvarez went a bit deeper, explaining that "Coaching is supposed to help you first understand yourself and your own experiences, and then to help you understand how to use that understanding to pursue something, to protect yourself, to prevent things, to make progress…to understand the purpose of it all." Watson said coaching "help[s] individuals realize their potential and grow." Foster became a coach because they were attracted by the opportunity to encourage fellow employees "to make positive changes in their lives," by supporting them as they set their own agendas for change and develop their own goals.

Collins and White went the farthest in describing their roles as coaches. Collins said they considered coaching services to be "a part of supporting employee wellbeing." White called coaching services "an investment in employee wellbeing."

As with coachees, multiple coaches I interviewed indicated that their interest in participating in the coaching program was enhanced by personal contact with others already involved in the program. Four coaches were already working in the learning and development space, to include as training officers or human resource officers, and

coaching seemed like a good fit with duties and skills they already had. Ten of the 11 coaches I interviewed are current or previous supervisors, and as a group, these coaches emphasized how becoming coaches was a way to enhance and add to their contributions as agency leaders. Two others talked about deciding to become coaches because they wanted to contribute more to their fellow employees and the organization, even though they were not interested in becoming supervisors or managers.

In summary, this section on Theme 1 highlights the variety of reasons coaches have for deciding to participate in one-on-one coaching. Coaches decided to participate in one-on-one coaching, often after encouragement from others, to help coachees resolve issues, enhance their performance, advance their professional and personal development, and improve their wellbeing. Coaches also decided to participate to enhance their own contributions to others and the organization.

Theme 2: Coaching behaviors reported in the one-on-one coaching experience created a special kind of positive relationship between coachee and coach.

Theme 2 highlights the positive nature of the one-on-one coaching relationship. In the sections below, I first describe coachee observations regarding the one-on-one coaching relationship, and then I describe coach observations regarding that relationship.

The agency employees I interviewed overwhelmingly reported a positive experience, whether they were coachees or coaches. When it comes to observations by coachees and coaches about the coaching experience, including the nature of the relationship between coach and coachee, and the dynamics of coaching conversations, all those I interviewed consistently reported the importance of the positive interactions between coachee and coach that characterized their coaching experience.

Coachees and coaches alike appreciated having the opportunity that one-on-one coaching gave them to inhabit this type of relational space with agency colleagues. Several of the coachees I interviewed said they became coaches or would like to become coaches, because of the positive experiences they have had while being coached. See Table 17 below on interview data categories and codes supporting Theme 2.

Table 17

Interview Data Categories and Codes Supporting Theme 2: **Coaching behaviors reported in the one-on-one coaching experience created a special kind of positive relationship between coachee and coach.**

Participant Categories	Categories Related to Behavioral and Perceptual Change	Codes for Experiences Related to Behavioral and Perceptual Change
Coachees	1. Behaviors a. Coaching conversations b. Building trust	a. Coachee dialogues with coach b. Coachee engages with coach's active listening c. Coachee engages with coach's probing questions d. Coachee develops trust with coach e. Coachee is disappointed with coach guidance
	2. Perceptions a. Expectations for improvement b. Appreciation for safety and positive relationships	a. Coachee expects to learn and change with coach b. Coachee relies on safe, helping relationship with coach c. Coachee expects co-creativity with coach
Coaches	1. Behaviors a. Coaching conversations b. Building trusting relationships c. Addressing the whole person	a. Coach dialogues with coachee b. Coach actively listens to coachee c. Coach asks coachee probing questions d. Coach develops trust with coachee
	2. Perceptions a. Mission to help coachees and organization	a. Coach is committed to helping others and the organization b. Coach distinguishes between coaching and mentoring

	b. Supportive of coachees c. Positive relationships	c. Coach assumes coachees have answers inside themselves d. Coach supports coachee in pursuing learning and change e. Coach supports coachee in a safe, helping relationship f. Coach supports coachee in pursuing co-creativity

Coachee Observations about the Coaching Relationship and Coaching Behaviors

All the coachees I interviewed reported positive individual experiences as coachees. This positive reporting is supported by coachee survey data collected by the coaching program managers since the program's inception. See Table 18 below. Note that the most recent results show satisfaction levels that exceed the average levels since 2019.

Table 18

Agency Survey Data Showing Coachee Satisfaction Levels with One-on-One Coaching

Survey Item	2019 to July 2024	October 2023 to May 2024
Would work with a coach again	95%	97%
Satisfied with coaching experience	97%	98%
Achieved at least one goal	96%	97%
Would recommend coaching	96%	98%
Number of responses	766	175

All but one of the coachees I interviewed reported they achieved one or more of the goals they brought to coaching, thanks to the nature of the coaching relationship. Examples include the following: Martin received help adjusting after returning from maternity leave; Baker received help with a difficult work relationship; Knox's coach supported them in their decision making about whether to pursue higher-level responsibility in a different role; and Gardner received help improving as a manager.

Simon was somewhat disappointed with the results of their experience, because of

their expectation that coaching would be more directive, like mentoring often tends to be. Simon wanted their coach to give them career guidance. Even Simon nevertheless valued the coaching experience because of the nature of the coaching relationship.

Multiple coachees told me they understood there to be a distinction between coaching and mentoring, which was reinforced by their agency coaches. These coachees explained that mentors often share from their own experience and provide advice, while coaches work at keeping the focus on their coachees' experience and giving their coachees space to develop their own thoughts and solutions.

Coachees consistently found the coaching relationship significantly supportive of their personal and professional development, and generally reported that program managers and their coaches provided good explanations of the coaching process, as they began their coaching experiences. In describing their coaching relationships, individual coachees described the relationships and conversations they have had with their one-on-one coaches with examples of coaching behaviors that ranged from basic support given by active listening to support provided in exploring vulnerable topics that can make coachees uncomfortable.

Gerster reported that their coach was a good, calm, present listener. Simon's coach listened attentively and "tried to understand my situation." Simon reported that their coaching conversations were "like having a cup of coffee with a friend."

Murphy's coach used active listening and restated what they heard to ensure they understood what Murphy said. Then the coach "posed questions to get me to go a little bit deeper to get to the root of whatever it was we were talking about, instead of staying on the surface of things."

Schultz' coach "did a lot of listening and reflecting." Nelson's coach let Nelson do most of the talking while listening carefully and occasionally asking probing questions. Nelson's coach helped them to "stay on track."

Baker said, "My coach started our first session by asking me, 'What did I want to get out of the coaching? What was my objective, and what was I looking for?' The focus was on me." Baker's coach "asked really good questions." Their conversations were "like talking to a colleague" who understood the agency and its culture better than Baker did.

Coaching gave Martin a place to verbalize and process and organize their "thoughts and feelings and concerns." Martin said, "It kind of felt like you could clear whatever's going on in your mind, distracting you from work, by having that time with the coach." Martin's coach asked "surprising, helpful, and somewhat uncomfortable questions": "I would really have to kind of like work through the questions my coach would ask."

The support Schultz got from their coach was more intensive and personal than what Schultz would expect from a supervisor. "I could be vulnerable, and I could share weaknesses." The coach created a "safe space," and Schultz trusted the coach.

Martin quickly got to high levels of trust, transparency, and feeling safe with their coach, and having a sense of making progress, even on vulnerable topics. Nelson reported feeling very supported and understood by their coach right away, quickly making Nelson confident that their coach would help them reach their goals. Nelson said, "I trusted my coach more than I've trusted anyone else in my life!"

In summary, this section on Theme 2 highlights the positive nature of the one-on-one coaching relationship as experienced by coachees. Coachees reported that their

coaches were active listeners who asked probing questions, as encouraging conversation partners. Coaches provided coachees with a safe space to think and feel, and cultivated trust and transparency.

Coach Observations about the Coaching Relationship and Coaching Behaviors

All the coaches I interviewed reported significant positive individual experiences as coaches, while providing supportive behavior to their coachees in alignment with the coachee observations presented above. Many of the coaches I interviewed expressed a sense of mission in the way they have embraced the opportunity to support their agency colleagues by practicing the relational dynamics associated with coaching.

Multiple coaches reinforced the same distinction between coaching and mentoring noted above in the section on coachee observations about the coaching relationship. Those coaches placed special emphasis on how they coach to support the developmental work coachees must do for themselves, as opposed to giving advice or providing solutions they have to offer.

Individual coaches described the relationships and conversations they have had with their one-on-one coachees with examples that ranged from basic support given by assuming that clients have the answers they need within themselves and then by supporting them in discovering those answers, to building safe spaces for trust, vulnerability, and honesty.

Walsh explained that "Coachees have all the answers they need." "As a coach," Tanaka said, "you assume that the person you're talking to has the answers inside of them." Elliott said, "I'm not there to tell anybody what they need to do about something, because the answers are within them," and the coach's job is to ask lots of questions to

support coachees in developing their own solutions.

Clark supports the client's own work, rather than giving advice or providing solutions like a mentor. Walsh agreed that the key dynamics of coaching include active listening and "asking the right questions," rather than offering answers to questions. Collins explained that coaches provide space for discovery, rather than answers and ready-made solutions.

Alvarez said, "The client sets the agenda, so active listening allows you to stay with the client." They explained that, as a coach, you work at deciding "when to just listen, and when to ask more questions, when to be inquisitive, and when to bottom line some things." Burns said, "I'm a good listener. I give plenty of space for them to think, and then I just ask a couple of questions, and point out a couple of things that I see or that I hear."

Kim said, "I'm really focusing and listening to what's being said and to what isn't being said." Kim repeats back what they're hearing, follows up on what coachees are sharing with probing questions, notices changes in their body language or tone, and shares observations. Watson enjoys seeing the power of curiosity and probing questions at work in conversation with people, a nice contrast to the bureaucratic challenges of their normal job.

Alvarez said that coaching addresses the whole person: "There's no real separation between your professional and personal being when it comes to coaching." Clark draws no line between work issues and personal issues, and is open to discussing whatever clients need to discuss, and said the agency supports that. In coming alongside their coachees, Clark wants them to feel like they can say everything that's on their minds

– and even “vent.”

Collins suggested that coaching allows space for emotions to come up and that coachees appreciate that kind of safety. Elliott explained that, as a coach, “I leave the door open to anything, because we’re humans in the workplace and we bring all of ourselves to work with us.” Elliott’s most impactful sessions with coachees have been wide-ranging.

Elliott explained that “It’s important that [coaching is] an environment where there’s trust and where we both feel comfortable with each other.” Elliott suggested that the coaching process requires commitment from clients, and curiosity and support from coaches. Collins explained that coaching provides clients a safe space “infused with trust and confidentiality.”

Kim said, “My goal in developing a relationship with my coachees is to foster trust and to offer support in a non-judgmental way.” Kim supports the coachee’s discovery of the answers and solutions they have within themselves, by building trust that allows for vulnerability and honesty.” Foster suggested that coaches build trust with coachees by providing space for “safe vulnerability.”

Aziz suggested that coaching relationships are safe spaces for trust and honesty. Aziz said, “There’s a lot of a sense of being seen and being understood [in coaching] in a way that [coachees] don’t tend to get from their peers or others.” This comes along with “a sense of challenge [from the coach] that is offered in the form of observations, or in the form of powerful or kind of hard questions that the safe environment allows to be spoken.”

Burns said, “The dynamics in my coaching sessions are based on how I really do

partner with the other person, and get them comfortable and build that trust right off the bat, but really just partner with them in what it is they want to do, and whatever the goal is that they're working toward or whatever the issue is."

In summary, this section on Theme 2 highlights the positive nature of the one-on-one coaching relationship as experienced by coaches. Coaches reported their commitment to being good conversation partners for coachees, by assuming that coachees have their own answers, and by supporting discovery of those answers with active listening and probing questions. Coaches reported giving their coachees safe space to discuss any issues of concern or interest to them, provided coachees with a safe space to think and feel, and cultivated trust and transparency. Coaches reported cultivating trust with their coachees and partnering with them in the work they wanted to do.

Theme 3: The one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees to think bigger and differently.

Theme 3 highlights individual effects from coaching on coachees. In the sections below, I first describe coachee observations about how the coaching experience encouraged them develop new ways of thinking with regard to self and others, and then I describe coach observations regarding how that happened. See Table 19 below on interview data categories and codes supporting Theme 3. (Note that I present specific examples of thinking bigger and differently with regard to others in the discussion on Theme 4 below.)

Table 19

Interview Data Categories and Codes Supporting Theme 3: **The one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees to think bigger and differently.**

Participant Categories	Categories Related to Behavioral and Perceptual Change	Codes for Experiences Related to Behavioral and Perceptual Change
Coachees	1. With regard to self	a. Coachee understands they are responsible for their own progress b. Coachee explores possibilities for personal development c. Coachee works at developing solutions of their own
	2. With regard to others	a. Coachee explored options for working with others
Coaches	1. With regard to coachee self-improvement a. Challenges coachee b. Provides coachee with space to think c. Helps coachee move forward, get "unstuck" d. Helps coachee discover and explore options	a. Coach supports coachee in taking responsibility for their own progress b. Coach supports coachee in exploring possibilities for personal development c. Coach supports coachee in working at developing solutions of their own
	2. With regard to coachee working with others	a. Coach supports coachee in exploring options for working with others

Coachee Observations about How the One-On-One Coaching Experience Encouraged Them to Think Bigger and Differently

Several of the coachees I interviewed made a special point of explaining how their one-on-one coaching experiences encouraged them to explore new ways of thinking for themselves. Coachees understood that coaches would partner with them in helping them explore possibilities for development, but that they would remain ultimately responsible for their progress.

Simon said coaching conversations "helped me to think in different ways."

Murphy said, “My coach helped me to think differently about things and develop solutions for myself.” Martin said they felt like their coach had the skill to help them think in new ways about their options. Schultz’ coach “help[ed] me think about options.”

Nelson’s coach helped them understand that coaching was not intended to solve their problems for them, but to help them explore options for addressing their own problems and challenges. Baker’s coach “asked really good questions and challenged me to clarify [my thinking].” Gerster said their coach “helped me focus my priorities professionally and personally.”

Knox’s coach explained that coaches help coachees arrive at answers for themselves. Knox’s coach was “helping me help myself,” by supporting them in their decision making about whether to pursue higher-level responsibility in a different role.

Gardner said their coach “asked questions that helped me to think bigger”: “I thought of our coaching conversations as very much helping me with improving communication, but also expanding my thinking, basically.” Gardner’s coach helped them as a team lead to help team members “think about how to think bigger and how to put things together [and] move forward together.”

In summary, this section on Theme 3 highlights how coachees felt encouraged by coaching to think bigger and differently with regard to self and others. Coachees reported that their coaches helped them to explore possibilities, think about options, and develop solutions, while coachees remained responsible for their own progress.

Coach Observations about How the One-On-One Coaching Experience Encouraged Coachees to Think Bigger and Differently

Many of the coaches I interviewed made a special point of explaining how one-

on-one coaching experiences supported their coachees in exploring new ways of thinking with regard to self and others.

Collins explained how coaching dynamics give coachees "space to sit with something or process something or think for themselves about it from a different perspective." Collins said that working as a coach means "helping others think through some places where they might be stuck and asking questions to help get them thinking about things differently." This allows coachees to develop their own solutions and then have those problem-solving capabilities in the future. Clark said that this process is about supporting coachees "in their own work."

Walsh explained that helping coachees get to new answers of their own involves active listening and "asking the right questions to help coachees challenge their own thinking." Alvarez said they work to help their clients "get to areas that you think might be blocking them from getting to an Aha moment." Coaches "want to help the client discover themself, discover things about why, what, when, and how."

Watson explained that coaching conversations are "organic," and help people to explore the boundaries of their thinking, sometimes in uncomfortable ways. Tanaka said, "What's really cool about coaching is being able to be the guide to help coachees have self-discovery, and seeing the Aha moment or hearing the Aha moment." Hearing from their clients about their progress has convinced Tanaka that "Coaching is much more powerful than I first thought it would be."

Foster said coaches support coachees by helping them explore their options, and providing "kind of an architecture of accountability" for the agendas that clients set for themselves. Coachees seek coaching, Foster suggested, because "they want to make a

change, but something's holding them back possibly, and they want to explore that with someone's help." A coach is "someone to go on that journey with [coachees] as they work through whatever it is that's holding them back." Kim said they support coachees by "helping coachees to grow in self-awareness."

Collins says that "coaching flips the advice culture on its head," and gives coachees space for discovery. They really enjoy seeing coachees "inspire themselves." Watson called coaching conversations "magical": "I just never cease to be amazed at the synergy that happens in coaching conversations and the immediacy in the growth of insight people have." Aziz said coaching can make people become "unstoppable." One of the things Aziz likes best about coaching is "just the ability to watch people grow."

In summary, this section on Theme 3 highlights how coaches reported being committed to supporting their coachees in thinking bigger and differently with regard to self and others. Coaches reported giving their coachees space in their conversations to process situations and challenges and to develop their own solutions, while pursuing self-discovery and increased self-awareness.

Theme 4: The one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees and coaches to interact differently with others.

Whereas Theme 3 emphasized intrapersonal effects, Theme 4 highlights interpersonal effects from coaching. In the sections below, I first describe coachee observations about these effects, and then I describe coach observations about these effects. See Table 20 below on interview data categories and codes supporting Theme 4.

Table 20

Interview Data Categories and Codes Supporting Theme 4: **The one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees and coaches to interact differently with others.**

Participant Categories	Categories Related to Behavioral and Perceptual Change	Codes for Experiences Related to Behavioral and Perceptual Change
Coachees	1. Behaviors a. Developed more open-mindedness for interacting with others b. Improved sensitivity and skill for positive interpersonal relations c. Using "coach-like" behaviors as supervisor/leader d. Having better conversations with others	a. Coachee dialogues with others b. Coachee actively listens to others c. Coachee asks others probing questions d. Coachee develops trust with others
	2. Perceptions a. Readiness for assuming new responsibilities for leading and supporting others b. New ways of thinking/behaving in work relationships	a. Coachee sees opportunities for learning and change with others b. Coachee sees opportunities for developing safe, helping relationships with others c. Coachee sees opportunities for co-creativity with others
Coaches	1. Behaviors a. Bringing coaching behaviors into interactions with others b. Being more collaborative than directive c. Being more attuned to and supportive of others	a. Coach dialogues with others b. Coach actively listens to others c. Coach asks others probing questions d. Coach develops trust with others
	2. Perceptions	a. Coach has confidence in pursuing learning and change with others

	a. Coaching can change people's lives b. People can use learned coaching behaviors with others c. Coaching behaviors build an environment of trust and safety d. Being a coach is who I am	b. Coach has confidence in pursuing safe, helping relationships with others c. Coach has confidence in pursuing co-creativity with others

Coachee Observations about the Effects of Coaching on Other Work Relationships

The coachees I interviewed who were not team leads, supervisors, or managers, or transitioning into those roles, generally reported less direct impact from coaching on their interactions and relationships with others in the agency in a broad sense, than those coachees I interviewed who were team leads, supervisors, or managers, or transitioning into those roles. This often seemed to be the case because that first group of coachees signed up for coaching for limited help in thinking about career options or for support in working through how to handle specific frustrating situations.

All the coachees I interviewed nevertheless reported that the coaching experience produced open-mindedness in their interactions with others, at a minimum, while supporting their exploration of new ways of thinking and behaving and the development in their experience of sensitivities and skills that could, at least potentially, improve the interpersonal dynamics in their work relationships. Baker, for example, explained that coaching helped them to improve how they interact with others, which included "being transparent in my dealings with other people."

Four of the nine coachees I interviewed signed up for coaching for support in transitioning to higher levels of leadership responsibility. All four of these coachees reported significant positive individual experiences, with a sense that the coaching

relationship assisted them in assuming new responsibilities for coordinating agency actions while leading other people. These coachees directly attributed success they have had in leading and supporting others to the one-on-one coaching they have received and to coaching skills training that many of them have attended in addition to their one-on-one coaching. See the examples below.

Schultz explained that their coach "did a lot of listening and reflecting and helping me think about options and talk about different approaches for working with people." Coaching behaviors within the coaching relationship provided coachees with this opportunity to explore new ways of thinking and behaving in relationships with others.

Schultz was coached after taking on a project that put them in a leadership position and "feeling a bit overwhelmed" with those responsibilities. Schultz' coaching experience helped them "working on a team with personality conflicts on it and things like that, and just listening and trying not to alienate either party, and trying to get them to listen to each other."

Murphy was coached while they were becoming a team lead and reported seeing the value in bringing the "soft skills" of coaching into their technical work with their team. Murphy called coaching "a great experience, especially for people who are trying to figure out what they want to do next." But Murphy went beyond that and explained how coaching has also helped them to be more open-minded in their interactions with others: "Coaching has been transformative. It's helped me see the value that others are bringing, even if, and especially if, they're seeing things differently than me."

Knox, who is now serving in a higher-level role since being coached, reported

that they have not incorporated a coach-like style in their leadership, but said that they appreciated how their coach had demonstrated good listening skills which they would like to apply as a supervisor. “There have been some instances,” Knox said, “where I would reflect on my coaching experience and use some of those skills that I remember my coach using.” But Knox reported not yet attending coaching skills training and wanting “a refresher on some of those skills.”

The positive interpersonal effects from one-on-one coaching on work relationships seemed to be accentuated for the coachees who took coaching skills training. This included Nelson, Gardner, and Schultz, whom I quote below.

While being coached, Nelson understood that coaching could help improve their professional and personal relationships by helping them to have more thoughtful conversations with others. After being promoted into a team lead position and taking coaching skills training, Nelson now consciously uses coachlike behaviors in their conversations with their team members and others, as a way of supporting others and encouraging them to be confident and independent while collaborating with others. Nelson reported that they transformed a relationship with a team member who felt misunderstood by them and who “was completely taken aback” when they engaged that person with supportive, curious, coachlike questions. Nelson asked their team member, “What is one thing I can do to support your growth, and what is one thing I should stop doing?”

Gardner, who has been a supervisor for several years, explained that coaching skills training showed them how coaching skills can help supervisors and managers experience “a whole better way of having conversations,” by asking the kinds of

questions that will encourage people to share their ideas and collaborate better. Coaching skills "feel to me like a very powerful way of expanding the conversation, so that you get the input of people who may not always think their inputs are welcome." Schultz echoed these sentiments by saying that coaching can help people connect with others by being more open to others and their ideas, and by learning "to kind of dig a little for what other people can contribute, in ways that maybe they haven't been asked to contribute before."

In summary, this section on Theme 4 highlights how coachees reported being encouraged by their coaching experience to interact differently with others, especially if they were team leads, supervisors, and managers, and/or they took coaching skills training. Coachees reported developing new open-mindedness in their interactions with others, along with new skills for conducting those interactions conversationally and otherwise.

Coach Observations about the Effects of Coaching on Other Work Relationships

All the coaches I interviewed, except Watson, reported significant impact from bringing coaching behaviors into their own interactions and relationships with others in the agency in a broad sense, due to their development of improved relational skills, as a result of their coaching training and their coaching experiences. They also expressed confidence that coachees could experience the same kind of results. Even Watson plans to be more intentional about incorporating coaching behaviors into their normal job.

White expressed the expectation that individual effects from coaching will naturally "bleed into interpersonal encounters." Hughes said, "I think coaching can change people's lives, and then change the relationships they have with everyone around them."

Foster reported believing that many people struggle with how transitioning into supervisory roles changes their relationship with their colleagues. Every coachee Foster has had who has been transitioning into higher levels of leadership has wanted to be "the kind of manager that people will come to and talk to, to work things out." For that reason, Foster encourages new leaders to use coachlike behaviors "to get the most out of the people on their teams in a supportive way, rather than a directive, hierarchical way." Hughes suggested that coaching can be especially impactful for leaders because their success and struggles can have big effects on their teams and the organization.

Kim, who is a coach and a supervisor, explained that taking a coaching approach as a new supervisor "was incredibly transformational" for them and for their subordinates, "because it relieved so much of the pressure to be the one who guides the organization and has all the answers." Instead, Kim has practiced curiosity and active listening, and has asked questions so that others could resolve issues for themselves. This has allowed Kim to shift away from feeling responsible for everything to "relying on my team to be their best and supporting them in any way that I could." Kim facilitates coaching skills training so that others can have this same kind of transformational experience in their relationships with others at the agency, as supervisors and as developing leaders.

Hughes suggested that the coaching experience helps people at all levels of leadership to move away from needing "to have the answers for everything" and give them to others, to wanting to work with others to develop answers, with maximum input from everyone else, while "listening to what they're saying and to what they're not saying." According to Hughes, "These fundamental skills make a world of difference."

Hughes suggested that coaching experience can be especially useful for leaders in technical fields where communication can be challenging, but said that coaching can help everybody be more intentional about shaping the impact they have on those around them, no matter what their level of formal leadership or area of expertise. This involves "getting people out of the space that you have to tell everybody what to do, and how to do it."

Hughes has had multiple coachees tell them how one-on-one coaching experience and especially coaching skills training has improved the ways they've been able to interact with others, by increasing how they value the input of others, and by asking more questions, listening more, and really hearing other people without being distracted. This may seem to slow things down, but Hughes said that "slower is faster" when it gets more people involved, because "people are smarter than we give them credit for." Hughes has heard special emphasis on this kind of positive impact from their supervisor and manager coachees who have received coaching skills training.

Aziz, who is a coach and a supervisor, explained that their experience taking a coaching approach and slowing things down does not always involve asking more questions. Instead, it can sometimes be as simple as creating space to give people more time for reflection and deliberation: "Sometimes it's not even asking questions. It's creating processes that slow down the decision process… [And] slowing down the decision process even by 25 minutes makes a huge deal." Aziz said this allows more people to be involved more thoughtfully.

Several coaches described being fundamentally changed by becoming coaches. Engaging in coaching relationships has made the coaches more attuned to the needs of others and has given them tools with which they can assist others with challenges and

opportunities. Alvarez said, "[Being a coach is] who I am. That's what I am. No matter where I am or what I'm doing, it's going to come out." Even outside coaching conversations, Alvarez explained that it would now be unnatural for them not to listen to others carefully and ask questions to support them in their own inquiry and self-development.

Like Alvarez, Clark also explained that coaching has become "who they are," so that the coaching mindset is a part of everything they do. Based on feedback from their own coachees and from other coaches, Clark is convinced that coaching creates "fundamental shifts" in coachees and coaches which will "have positive repercussions across the agency."

Collins reported that, even outside coaching engagements, their coaching skills help them support others as they "move to inquiry and curiosity to help others unpack their challenges for themselves." Collins has heard from other coaches that the coaching experience "really does change a lot for them in how they see things, and how they interact with others, even when they're not formally coaching." Collins has also heard from coachees that they see the impact from the coaching experience in how it helps them to give themselves and others "space to sit with something or process something or think for themselves about it from a different perspective." Coaching "helps people be a bit gentler with and more curious about themselves, and then potentially take that into other relationships as well."

Burns said that coaching spills out into their other work and their relationships all the time, and that all the coaches in the agency "tend to ask a lot more questions in all the conversations they have," in order to support others with curiosity and non-judgment.

From their perspective as a program manager involved in the early days of the coaching program, Burns explained that a large part of the motivation in expanding the coaching program to include all employees was to provide a means to include everyone in those supportive dynamics that come with the coaching experience, in order "to start embedding those dynamics into everything we do."

Kim is convinced that the coaching experience helps people to come closer together in their work as they build stronger connections with others. A key part of this process, according to Kim, is how coaching behaviors help to build a "basic foundation of trust" between people: "I think that is a great foundation for success in an organization, because it creates that psychological safety that allows really productive, effective teams to work incredibly well."

In summary, this section on Theme 4 highlights how coaches reported being encouraged by their coaching experience to interact differently with others, due to their development of improved relational skills, as a result of their coaching training and their coaching experiences. Coaches also expressed confidence that coachees could experience the same kind of results.

Theme 5: Coachees and coaches generally expected moderate broader effects from increasingly shared and normalized coaching experiences and coaching behaviors.

Theme 5 highlights the potential for broader effects from coaching experience, assuming that participation in the program increases. Theme 5 also highlights how coaches had stronger feelings about these potential effects than coachees. In the sections below, I first describe coachee beliefs about these effects, and then I describe coach beliefs about these effects. See Table 21 below on interview data categories and codes

supporting Theme 5.

Table 21

Interview Data Categories and Codes Supporting Theme 5: **Coachees and coaches generally expected moderate broader effects from increasingly shared and normalized coaching experiences and coaching behaviors.**

Participant Categories	Categories Related to Behavioral and Perceptual Change	Codes for Experiences Related to Behavioral and Perceptual Change
Coachees	1. Expectations for enhanced work relationships	a. Coachee anticipates some improved personal and professional relationships b. Coachee anticipates some enhanced collaboration and conversations
	2. Expectations for improved work performance	a. Coachee anticipates some expanding use of coaching behaviors to relate to, support, and influence others, even beyond direct participants in the coaching program b. Coachee anticipates some improvements to work conditions
	3. Little sense that the organization's culture was changing	a. Coachee reports no expectation that agency was developing a coaching culture, despite positive results from coaching
	4. Coaching not helpful for everyone	a. Coachee says coaching experience is not a good fit for everyone
Coaches	1. Expectations for enhanced work relationships	a. Coach has confidence in improved personal and professional relationships b. Coach anticipates enhanced collaboration c. Coach is skeptical of positive effects from coaching on relationships
	2. Expectations for improved work performance	a. Coach has confidence in expanding use of coaching behaviors to relate to, support, and influence others even beyond direct participants in the coaching program b. Coach anticipates improved work products

		c. Coach is skeptical of positive effects from coaching on performance
	3. Little expectation that coaching culture would develop	a. Coach reports only limited confidence that the cumulative effects from coaching would produce coaching culture change given an extended period of time, despite positive results from coaching
	4. Coaching not helpful for everyone	a. Coach says coaching experience is not a good fit for everyone

Coachee Beliefs about the Effects from Increasingly Shared Coaching Experiences and Coaching Behaviors

Many coachees reported that the coaching program aligned with their belief that agency leaders enthusiastically support their individual development and success. Despite the program vision statement, however, i.e., to foster "a coaching culture to motivate employees to learn, grow and take positive actions to experience more engagement and connection, higher performance and greater job satisfaction" (Personal Communication), very few coachees reported a sense that the coaching program or one-on-one coaching in particular was intended to create a coaching culture or to change the organizational culture in other ways; and no coachees reported a sense that the agency was developing a coaching culture.

The coachees I interviewed nevertheless had many significant things to say about the positive impact of coaching in the agency. Their observations ranged from effects they have noted to date to effects they believe to be possible in the future.

Several of the coachees I interviewed did make the point that one-on-one coaching is not a "good fit" for everyone and that individual results will vary; but they all reported believing that most people would benefit from it. They also generally expressed confidence that more one-on-one coaching across the agency could help to develop a

greater sense of partnership and collaboration among agency employees at every level.

When I asked Baker if they had a sense that the accumulation of one-on-one coaching experiences throughout the agency was supposed to facilitate change across the agency, they said, “Only in the sense that, if coaching is available, people will be better people,” which will improve the relationships employees have with one another. Nelson also did not see a direct connection between individual coaching experiences and change across the agency, except that “Everyone could benefit from coaching by becoming more thoughtful and more respectful of others, and more inclusive.”

Murphy uses coaching behaviors in their relationships with others at work, and believes that more coaching for more people at the agency would lead others to do the same thing, while helping the agency generate better work products and better results: “It’s just going to bring a better work product, if you’re mindfully thinking about what you’re doing.” Murphy has experienced how coaching behaviors have helped them “get the most of relationships” in interactions with others in the agency, and also with partners and stakeholders outside the agency.

Murphy explained the effects of coaching behaviors on results like this: “You might be thinking something that I haven’t thought of. And, at the end of the day, having more information will lead to better decision making.” Gardner reported that the coaching experience showed them that “more open, more welcoming, more expansive types of questions get a better result.” Gardner reported learning how to ask the right questions in conversations to enhance communication and collaboration.

Nelson believes that more coaching experience across the agency would create “a more thoughtful workforce,” within “a culture of respect for one another,” especially if

more supervisors and managers received coaching skills training like they did and then introduced coaching behaviors to their teams. Nelson said that more coaching would make the agency "more inclusive, because we would be speaking the same language, so to speak… We would know where others are coming from."

Gardner said that coaching skills "feel to me like a very powerful way of expanding the conversation, so that you get the input of people who may not always think their inputs are welcome." Schultz echoed these sentiments by saying that coaching can help people connect with others by being more open to others and their ideas, and by learning "to kind of dig a little for what other people can contribute, in ways that maybe they haven't been asked to contribute before."

In summary, this section on Theme 5 highlights how coachees expressed their beliefs about the potential effects from increasingly shared and normalized coaching experience and coaching behaviors. No coachees reported a sense that the agency was developing a coaching culture, but they generally expressed confidence that more one-on-one coaching across the agency could help to develop a greater sense of partnership and collaboration among agency employees. This would be due in large part to an increase in the thoughtfulness, respect, understanding, and openness that employees would practice in their interactions with one another.

Coach Beliefs about the Effects from Increasingly Shared Coaching Experiences and Coaching Behaviors

Among the eleven coaches I interviewed, only the four program managers and two others reported that they understood the coaching program to be designed to foster a coaching culture via cumulative effects from one-on-one coaching and other elements of

the coaching program on program participants and non-participants alike. All the coaches I interviewed nevertheless had many significant things to say about the positive impact of coaching in the agency on relational skills and interpersonal behaviors, short of producing a coaching culture; and all the coaches I interviewed except one reported that they felt strongly about the potential for cumulative effects from coaching within the agency to have cultural impact, even if those effects may still be a long way off. Even Watson, the coach who reported being dubious of cumulative effects from coaching, called coaching conversations "magical," with impressive effects in helping people to explore the boundaries of their thinking.

Hughes said, "Even small wins add up, especially when people pick up skills they can use moving forward." Collins said they believe this is especially true when coaching helps support supervisors in being their most effective selves, which "obviously impacts their teams as well."

Alvarez reported believing that more one-on-one coaching experiences at the agency would make all kinds of conversations in the workplace different, not just those between supervisors and subordinates. The difference, according to Alvarez, is that "people would be talking to one another, instead of at one another," while "thinking from other people's perspectives." Tanaka also talked about how coaching experiences can change conversations and then improve "clarity and cohesion and performance."

Foster described this as "a culture with a free flow of information and ideas and creativity," where everyone can ask powerful questions of others like a coach would, rather than simply pitching their own answers or solutions. Foster said that being coached, or getting coaching skills training, or being trained to be a coach can provide

employees of all kinds with coaching skills and behaviors "that will help the people around them to flourish." Elliott explained how this happens because a coaching mentality respectfully supports others in being creative and taking risks.

Several of the coaches I interviewed also indicated believing that one-on-one coaching is not a "good fit" for everyone and that individual results will vary; but, like all the coachees, all the coaches reported believing that most people would benefit from coaching, and all the coaches suggested that the positive relational dynamics associated with coaching could have broader effects. This would occur as more coaching experiences and behaviors help to improve more relationships throughout the agency in the ways that coachees and coaches had experienced improvements to their own relationships, as described above. This would start with additional coachee and coach participants in the coaching program, but could extend to those not directly involved in coaching as coachees or coaches, as they experience coaching behaviors that program participants practice with them.

The coaches also agreed with the coachees that more one-on-one coaching across the agency could help to develop a greater sense of partnership and collaboration among agency employees at every level. Smith said the effects of coaching add up to a "better work environment."

Foster said that people can become more collaborative as a result of widespread coaching experience, because they are "listening more than talking, and feeling comfortable asking questions," because their questions do not make others feel defensive or reactive. Coaching, Foster explained, can help the members of the agency understand that inquisitive collaboration is all part of "a growth process."

In summary, this section on Theme 5 highlights how coaches expressed their beliefs about the potential effects from increasingly shared and normalized coaching experiences and coaching behaviors. Only the program managers and two other coaches reported that they understood the coaching program to be designed to foster a coaching culture, but all coaches except one reported they felt strongly that more one-on-one coaching across the agency could help to develop a greater sense of partnership and collaboration among agency employees, and a better work environment. As noted above for coachees, coaches reported that this development would be due in large part to an increase in the thoughtfulness, respect, and openness that employees would practice in their interactions with one another.

Synthesis of the Themes

Collectively, the five themes I presented above organize the data regarding study interview participant perceptions about their coaching experiences and coaching behaviors in the organization, regarding 1) reasons coachees and coaches decided to participate in one-on-one coaching; 2) how coaching behaviors reported in the one-on-one coaching experience created a special kind of positive relationship between coachee and coach; 3) how the one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees to think bigger and differently; 4) how the one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees and coaches to interact differently with others; and 5) how coachees and coaches generally expected moderate broader effects from increasingly shared and normalized coaching experiences and coaching behaviors.

When considered in combination, these five themes provide crucial insight for answering this study's research question: How do the members of an organization

describe the extent to which one-on-one coaching has changed their behaviors and their perceptions regarding working with others at the organization?

Regarding their decisions to participate in coaching, the individual coachees I interviewed described seeking support from one-on-one coaching on issues ranging from specific workplace challenges to overall job performance and leadership responsibilities. The individual coaches I interviewed described planning to support coachees ranging from the desire for enhanced individual job productivity and performance to the desire for employee wellbeing.

Despite the wide variety of reasons coachees and coaches had for deciding to participate in coaching, the coaching behaviors that defined the one-on-one coaching relationship created a consistent, special kind of positive interpersonal interaction characterized by key coaching behaviors including: pursuit of dialogue to foster learning and change (Stelter, 2014); active listening (Center for Creative Leadership, 2023); a focus on helping relationships (Rogers, 1995); an emphasis on co-creative processes (Stelter, 2014); a commitment to exploring new ways of thinking and behaving (Ting & Hart, 2004); and an emphasis on cultivating trust and safety (Boyce et al., 2010).

In combination with other forms of coaching, that one-on-one coaching experience led coachees to think bigger and differently with regard to self and others in a variety of ways. Those combined coaching experiences then supported both coachees and coaches in interacting differently with others in a variety of ways. Finally, assuming that participation in the coaching program increases, and even if they did not perceive or expect the development of a distinctive coaching culture as a result, both coachees and coaches generally expected a variety of moderate broader positive relational effects in the

organization around them tied to the key coaching behaviors listed above.

Chapter Summary

This chapter summarized the findings of this qualitative case study to explore the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture. I began the chapter with a description of the study's 24 interview participants, who included four coaching program managers, past and present, 11 current coaches, and nine coachees, past and present.

I then described the case, a coaching program established by a United States federal government agency in 2019. In the years since, one-on-one coaching and other forms of coaching have been made widely available to employees across the agency. The four program managers I interviewed explained that the program was established with the intention of accelerating career and leadership development, and shifting the organization's culture to foster a coaching culture. The elements of the program have included one-on-one coaching; coaching skills courses, both for supervisors and managers, and for others; group coaching; and team coaching.

The chapter concluded with a discussion of the themes I identified in the interview data regarding the experiences that come with coaching in the workplace, including the following: 1) coachees and coaches decided to participate in one-on-one coaching to achieve changes in professional and personal behaviors and perceptions; 2) coaching behaviors reported in the one-on-one coaching experience created a special kind of positive relationship between coachee and coach; 3) the one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees to think bigger and differently; 4) the one-on-one coaching experience encouraged coachees and coaches to interact differently with others;

and 5) coachees and coaches generally expected moderate broader effects from increasingly shared and normalized coaching experiences and coaching behaviors.

The primary focus of my study was the one-on-one coaching experienced in the agency which provided the site for my research. This study has suggested, however, that the effects of one-on-one coaching in the workplace may be enhanced when it is combined in a coaching program with other elements, including coaching skills training, group coaching, and team coaching, as it is in the agency I examined. This combination seems to expand the shared coaching experiences and behaviors present in the organization in ways that may help foster a coaching culture.

The final chapter presents my interpretations and conclusions of the findings of my study. It also presents my recommendations for theory, practice, and future research.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

I conducted this qualitative case study to explore the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture. More specifically, my research was intended to answer the following research question: How do the members of an organization describe the extent to which one-on-one coaching has changed their behaviors and their perceptions regarding working with others at the organization?

Leaders considering deploying widespread coaching in their organizations do not have much information or empirical data to help them understand if and how coaching and the formation of a coaching culture can change the relationships the members of their organizations have with one another. I conducted the case study to further our understanding of the value of coaching beyond the individual level, as it applies more generally to interpersonal dynamics across organizations.

The individual effects of coaching varied among those I interviewed, particularly between the coachees and coaches, and between those program participants who were team leaders, supervisors, and managers, and those who were not. I nevertheless noted a commonality of experience centered around the coaching behaviors practiced by coaches and learned by coachees, in support of building and sustaining a coaching relationship characterized by mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual freedom of expression.

In this chapter, I first present my interpretations of the findings in this study. I then present my conclusions as they are informed by my interpretations. I conclude the chapter with my recommendations related to theory, practice, and further research, and

some final thoughts.

Interpretations

In this section, I discuss my four interpretations of the findings of the study. These interpretations highlight how coaching may have value beyond the individual level, as it has effects upon the interpersonal dynamics across organizations.

My interpretations are as follows:

1) One-on-one coaching's effects beyond the individual level will occur primarily in the interpersonal behaviors and relationships between coaching participants and others, as a result of the development of relational skills in coaching participants.

2) Interpersonal effects from one-on-one coaching will likely occur unevenly, without emphasis on practicing coaching behaviors beyond coaching.

3) Any effects from one-on-one coaching beyond the individual level will likely be enhanced by the use of internal, part-time coaches.

4) Coaching culture development is a phenomenon that is more complex than suggested by some of the literature.

Interpretation 1: One-on-one coaching's effects beyond the individual level will occur primarily in the interpersonal behaviors and relationships between coaching participants and others, as a result of the development of relational skills in coaching participants.

The coachees and coaches I interviewed described participating in coaching conversations that were developmental in nature, "[not] to offer instant, ready-made solutions, but rather to foster learning and change" (De Haan et al., 2011, p. 25), conversations that were supported by a special kind of positive relationship between

coachee and coach. Even those coachees with whom I spoke who signed up for coaching for general help thinking about their individual career advancement and work-life balance affirmed how their coaching experience provided them with a novel space for doing that thinking.

Martin, for example, reported that coaching gave them a place to verbalize and process and organize their "thoughts and feelings and concerns," while their coach asked "surprising, helpful, and somewhat uncomfortable questions." Simon expressed the sense that coaching helped them develop "a bigger picture" and better understand how to be productive in the agency, by seeing things in the same way coworkers see them, and "aligning my views with the views of other people" "in a common vision." This happened as Simon's coach listened attentively and engaged with them "to understand my situation," and encouraged Simon to behave in similar ways.

The coaching relationship gives coaches and coachees the opportunity to practice coaching behaviors that can enhance their relationships with others, by encouraging coachees and coaches to interact differently with others. Key coaching behaviors that can result from coaching experiences include: pursuit of dialogue to foster learning and change (Stelter, 2014); active listening (Center for Creative Leadership, 2023); a focus on helping relationships (Rogers, 1995); an emphasis on co-creative processes (Stelter, 2014); a commitment to exploring new ways of thinking and behaving (Ting & Hart, 2004); and an emphasis on cultivating trust and safety (Boyce et al., 2010).

All the coachees I interviewed reported that, at a minimum, the coaching experience helped them develop a stronger sense of open-mindedness in their interactions with others, while it supported their exploration of new ways of thinking and behaving.

This led to the development in their experience of sensitivities and skills that could, at least potentially, improve the interpersonal dynamics in their work relationships. All the coaches I interviewed, except one, also reported being supported by their coaching experience in interacting differently with others, due to their development of improved relational skills, as a result of their coaching training and their coaching experiences. Those coachees and coaches who brought coaching behaviors into their work relationships with others outside coaching reported beginning to communicate and interact with others more collaboratively, in the same way they communicated and interacted within their coaching relationships.

A few of the individuals I interviewed connected coaching to the possibility of improved performance and effectiveness in their organization. Tanaka, for example, talked about how coaching experience can improve "clarity and cohesion and performance"; and Murphy suggested that more coaching in the agency would produce "better work product" and "better decision making." But both Tanaka and Murphy emphasized that these possible effects would likely follow from changes in the types of conversations and interactions colleagues have with one another.

The overall results of this study suggested that one-on-one coaching will likely support the development of relational skills in coaching participants, which they can use in their interpersonal behaviors and relationships with others beyond coaching. This applies to both coachees and coaches.

Interpretation 2: Interpersonal effects from one-on-one coaching will likely occur unevenly, without emphasis on practicing coaching behaviors beyond coaching.

Coaching relationships give coaches and coachees the opportunity to practice coaching behaviors, in ways that the literature suggests can produce effects beyond the individual level by enhancing their relationships with others. The coachees and coaches I interviewed indicated that there is nevertheless nothing automatic about how coaching participants will carry the relational skills associated with coaching behaviors into their relationships with others. These results suggested the need for an emphasis on the utility of practicing coaching behaviors beyond the coaching relationship, if the positive interpersonal effects described above are an intended outcome of coaching, rather than merely a welcomed possible side effect.

Many of the agency coaching program participants I interviewed reported positive effects from one-on-one coaching on their work relationships outside coaching, due to how they brought coaching behaviors into those relationships. But this was primarily true for coaches who, with one exception, reported naturally bringing coaching behaviors into their other relationships, and for coachees who were team leads, supervisors, and managers, who saw the impact coaching behaviors could have on their leadership performance. The coachees I interviewed who were not team leads, supervisors, or managers, or transitioning into those roles, generally reported less direct impact from coaching on their interactions and relationships with others in the agency in a broad sense, evidently due to their lack of stated responsibility to exert that kind of influence in the organization in a leadership role.

Positive effects from one-on-one coaching on coachee work relationships outside coaching were enhanced by coaching skills training, which explicitly emphasizes the utility of practicing coaching behaviors beyond the coaching relationship, for supervisors and managers, and non-supervisors alike. In Table 22 below, I explain the likelihood of positive effects from one-on-one coaching on other work relationships for all the study's participants, with and without an emphasis on the utility of practicing coaching behaviors beyond the coaching relationship from coaching skills training in particular.

The overall results of this study suggested that interpersonal effects from one-on-one coaching will likely occur unevenly, without emphasis on practicing coaching behaviors beyond coaching, because coaching program participants will not automatically carry the relational skills associated with coaching behaviors into their relationships with others. This applies to both coachees and coaches.

Table 22

Likelihood of Positive Effects from One-on-One Coaching on other Work Relationships

Participants	Coaching Skills Training	Positive Effects	Likelihood of Positive Effects
Coaches	N/A	Strong	High
Coachees who are team leads, supervisors, and managers	Yes	Significant	High
Coachees who are team leads, supervisors, and managers	No	Moderate	Medium
Coachees who are <u>not</u> team leads, supervisors, and managers	Yes	Moderate	Medium
Coachees who are <u>not</u> team leads, supervisors, and managers	No	Minimal	Low

Interpretation 3: Any effects from one-on-one coaching beyond the individual level will likely be enhanced by the use of internal, part-time coaches.

Coaching in the workplace became more commonplace as internal coaches were employed to coach fellow employees, often in combination with other duties, making coaching more cost effective than it is when using external coaching consultants (Ellinger & Kim, 2014); but the value of using internal coaches appears to go beyond cost savings. Because coaching relationships give coaches and coachees the opportunity to practice coaching behaviors that can enhance their relationships with others, using internal part-time coaches who can carry the relational skills associated with coaching behaviors into their work relationships with others will likely multiply coaching's effects across an organization. This was suggested by the collection of coaches I interviewed, who are all internal part-time coaches, and who, with only one exception, reported naturally bringing coaching behaviors into their other work relationships, with the high likelihood of strong positive results shown in Table 22 above.

This aligns with the coaching literature's exploration of how coaching's impact beyond the individual level can be enhanced in accordance with systems thinking, by using internal coach employees, rather than external coach consultants (Bussu & Marshall, 2020; Mukherjee, 2012; Rock & Donde, 2008). This occurs with the expansion of the coaching experiences and behaviors shared within an organization among employees who are colleagues on a daily, routine basis, as employees both receive and provide coaching services, and as internal coaches engage in informal mini-coaching episodes with others outside formal coaching relationships. Internal coaches may also naturally bring more credibility to their roles as coaches, because of their familiarity with

and understanding of the organization and the work done by its members.

Rock & Donde (2008a) concluded that using internal coaches was not only more scalable and sustainable than using external coaches, but also more robust in its potential to increase overall performance "through deepening the connections across [a] system" (p. 12). Mukherjee (2012) focused on what that study concluded to be multiple direct and indirect benefits gained by managers who serve as coaches in addition to their normal duties, benefits that would be lost to their organizations if they contracted external coaches.

It has also been suggested that the effectiveness of internal coaches benefits from how "they're already familiar with and better able to model the values of the organization and understand its culture" (American Management Association, 2008, p. 26). The program managers I interviewed provided evidence for this outcome.

When Smith, the founding program manager, began the agency coaching program in 2019 for supervisors and managers (GS-14s and above), they expected that agency employees might prefer to be coached by external coaches, for confidentiality or other reasons. Smith discovered instead that agency coachees generally preferred internal coaches, "because they felt like [internal agency coaches] understood the agency culture better, and I guess it was generally more comfortable." Johnson, the current program manager, confirmed that this preference has continued, as the agency coaching cadre has grown over the years and coaching services have been made available to more employees.

The coaching program maturity model portrayed in Passmore, et al. (2018) assesses program maturity in five areas, known as the five Ms: marketing, menu,

management, measurement, and members. In the menu area, the model suggests that fully mature programs have internal, full-time coaches who do nothing but coach. Johnson, however, reported the impression that using internal, part-time coaches – who coach other employees in addition to conducting other more routine non-coaching duties – "makes coaches real," so that a coachee can feel that their coach is "just like me." Johnson also reported the impression that this seems especially true when coaches are not human resources professionals, so that coaching can be "everywhere" in the organization. For these reasons, in combination with the personnel challenges that would come with establishing internal, full-time coach positions, Johnson does not believe the agency will ever move to internal, full-time coaches.

Burns, who is a coach and who was the acting program manager in 2022, called coaching "the best possible additional duty." Burns confirmed that they and others would enjoy being full-time coaches, but that most of the coaches agree that having coaches throughout the agency who are doing other things is a significant way to distribute coaching behaviors throughout the organization more widely than would be the case if coaches only coached.

Coaches appear more likely than coachees to carry the relational skills associated with coaching behaviors into their relationships with others. The overall results of this study suggested that any effects from one-on-one coaching beyond the individual level, including interpersonal effects on work relationships outside coaching, will be enhanced by the multiplying effects described above that come with the use of internal, part-time coaches, rather than internal, full-time coaches or external coaches.

Interpretation 4: Coaching culture development is a phenomenon that is more complex than suggested by some of the literature.

The expansion of the coaching experiences and behaviors shared within an organization among employees discussed above has been said to support the development of coaching culture, defined as a space where a significant number of the individuals in an organization "practice coaching behaviors as a means of relating to, supporting, and influencing one another" (Hart, 2005, p. 7). This aligns especially with the "internal integration" side of the definition of culture in Schein & Schein (2017): "The culture of a group can be defined as the accumulated shared learning of that group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration; which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel and behave in relation to those problems" (p. 6)

Redshaw (2000) argued that good coaching that is widespread throughout an organization will help the entire organization learn things more quickly and adapt to change more effectively. In a coaching culture, this approach to learning is said to enrich the organization's relationships and leadership practices, and fuel the development of the social fabric within an organization. But the results of this study indicate that coaching culture development is a phenomenon that is more complex and difficult to attain than some of the literature suggests., as discussed below.

Despite the fact that the coachees I interviewed had many significant things to say about the positive impact of coaching in the agency, including the reporting noted above about positive effects from one-on-one coaching on coachee work relationships outside coaching, none of the coachees I interviewed reported a sense that the agency was

developing a coaching culture. In fact, coaching culture was an alien concept to almost all the coachees, and only a few of them had considered the opportunity to practice coaching behaviors outside their coaching relationships prior to their conversations with me. Even among the coaches I interviewed, all of whom also had many significant things to say about the positive impact of coaching in the agency, there was no consistent sense that the agency was developing a coaching culture, and only the program managers and two coaches reported that they understood the coaching program to be designed to foster a coaching culture. This is the case five years after the program was founded, even though the vision statement for the program is to foster "a coaching culture to motivate employees to learn, grow and take positive actions to experience more engagement and connection, higher performance and greater job satisfaction" (Personal Communication).

I consider these findings to represent an indication of the difficulty of culture change in general and of the complexity of coaching culture development in particular. Moving from coaching program establishment to coaching culture is clearly not a simple process, especially in large organizations whose members are geographically widely scattered like the agency this study examined.

The overall results of this study suggested that my original conceptual framework illustrated a reasonable potential pathway to coaching culture development, but one which comes with no certainty related to timing or success, or the participation levels required to facilitate movement from left to right. These are significant missing pieces in the literature.

Coaching experiences shared by coachees and coaches in the agency I examined did lead to shared key coaching behaviors taken beyond the confines of coaching

relationships, as discussed above; but it appears more difficult to proceed from there to a situation where a significant number of the individuals in an organization "practice coaching behaviors as a means of relating to, supporting, and influencing one another" (Hart, 2005, p. 7), including individuals who have not been directly involved in coaching as coachees or coaches.

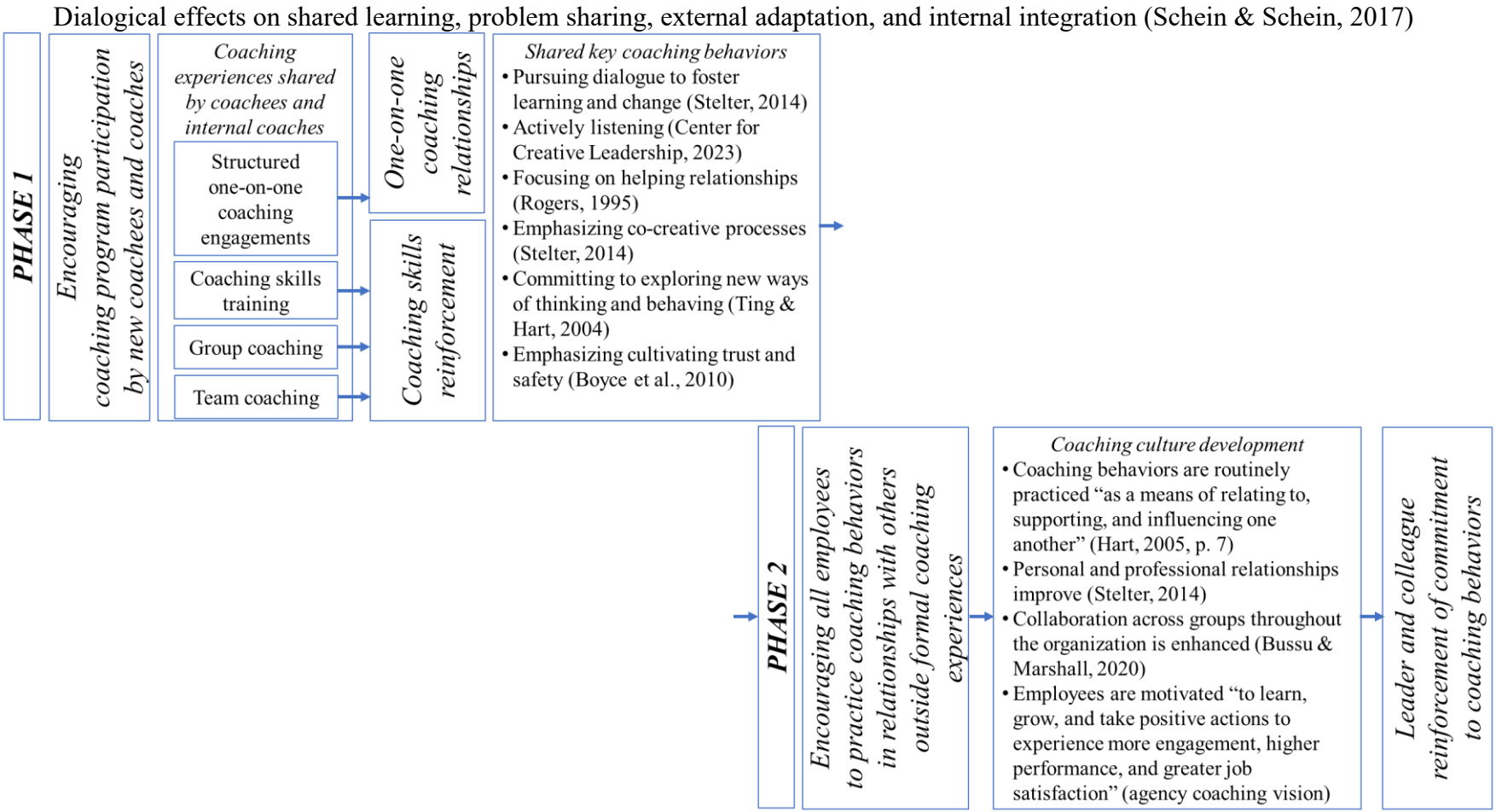
Significant reinforcement of the priority on developing and routinely practicing coaching behaviors appears to be required. I have therefore modified my conceptual framework as shown in Figure 4 below.

This revised framework is broken into two phases. Phase 1 is focused on fielding and encouraging new participation in formal coaching experiences, including one-on-one coaching, coaching skills training, group coaching, and team coaching. These elements of coaching experience give participants exposure to and opportunity to develop coaching behaviors, and that appears to happen most effectively when these elements are combined. Phase 2 is focused on encouraging all employees to practice coaching behaviors in relationships with others outside formal coaching experiences, and then on leader and colleague reinforcement of the commitment to the practice of coaching behaviors throughout the organization.

Phases 1 and 2 are sequential when viewed as a pathway to coaching culture development from beginning to end; but Phase 1 never stops as new coachees and coaches are continually encouraged to participate in the coaching program, in order to include more and more participants in shared coaching experiences.

Figure 4

Revised Conceptual Framework: Study of the Connections Between Coaching Experiences, Coaching Behaviors, and Coaching Culture



The movement depicted in the revised conceptual framework above, from shared key coaching behaviors to coaching culture development, clearly requires more than dedicated program managers and coaches, and satisfied coachees. I will discuss those additional required elements in the conclusions section below.

Conclusions

This section presents three conclusions I have reached as a result of this study, given the limitations and delimitations explained in Chapter 1. The first conclusion is related to the effects of one-on-one coaching on individuals in organizations; the second conclusion is related to the effects of one-on-one coaching on relationships in organizations; and the third conclusion is related to the development of coaching culture in organizations.

My conclusions are as follows:

1) One-on-one coaching supports individual personal and professional development, including the development of relational skills.

2) One-on-one coaching can improve organizational interpersonal behaviors and collaboration.

3) Leaders deploying coaching to change their organizational cultures must do so with key interventions that reinforce the effects of coaching.

Conclusion 1: One-on-one coaching supports individual personal and professional development, including the development of relational skills.

The results of this study suggested that leaders considering deploying widespread one-on-one coaching in their organizations to support the personal and professional development of the individual members of their organizations can do so expecting

positive results. This development can be expected to include the development of relational skills which carry the potential for improving the interpersonal behaviors in the organization's work relationships.

The data reviewed in this study show that one-on-one coaching conducted in accordance with the ICF definition and in alignment with the ICF Core Competencies for coaches (see Table 5 above), as it is in the organization I examined, can have significant positive effects on individuals throughout organizations. This is because coaching defined and conducted in this way creates opportunities for individual learning and development that can be powerful, especially for coachees who are considering how to step into roles with more leadership responsibility (De Haan et al., 2011; Dingman, 2006).

Conclusion 2: One-on-one coaching can improve organizational interpersonal behaviors and collaboration.

The results of this study suggested that leaders considering deploying widespread one-on-one coaching in their organizations to improve the interpersonal behaviors and collaboration among the individual members of their organizations can do so expecting positive results especially when using internal part-time coaches who provide coaching to their colleagues in addition to fulfilling other responsibilities as members of the organization (Bussu & Marshall, 2020; Mukherjee, 2012; Rock & Donde, 2008), because of the multiplying effects from using those coaches, as discussed above.

The data reviewed in this study show that one-on-one coaching can have significant positive effects on relationships throughout organizations. This is because coaching experiences give coachees and internal coaches the opportunity to develop the

skills needed to improve their work relationships by communicating and interacting with others dialogically and collaboratively, as they do in the coaching context. This opportunity appears to be enhanced for coachees when they combine one-on-one coaching with coaching skills training, especially if they are considering how to step into roles with more leadership responsibility or if they are serving in leadership roles.

Conclusion 3: Leaders deploying coaching to change their organizational cultures must do so with key interventions that reinforce the effects of coaching.

The results of this study suggested that leaders deploying widespread coaching in their organizations to change their organizational cultures must explicitly support that culture change and intentionally reinforce the effects of coaching with key organizational change interventions, along with other leadership and communication initiatives that go beyond coaching. This is especially critical with large, dynamic, and dispersed organizations, which will require the accumulation of effects well beyond just a few relationships.

As noted above, leaders can expect positive results when deploying coaching to support the personal and professional development of the individual members of their organizations, including the development of relational skills which can improve the interpersonal behaviors and collaboration among those individuals, and even the performance of portions of the organization and organizational outcomes. Leaders should not, however, expect that the mere accumulation of individual effects from one-on-one coaching and other elements of a coaching program will eventually and ineluctably permeate an organization with coaching behaviors, automatically creating organizational culture change, as a result of coaching's effects on relationships within the organization,

no matter how powerful or transformational individual coaching experiences in that organization may be. This is especially true for one-on-one coaching in particular, which is optimized to help coachees at the individual level.

The data reviewed in this study show that the development of coaching culture, or of any culture change intended to be facilitated by coaching, represents a difficult leadership challenge, and takes a significant amount of time and coaching program participation. That culture change will also never happen as a simple side effect of one-on-one coaching or any other form of coaching experience. Clutterbuck & Megginson (2005) described coaching culture as a place where "Coaching is the predominant style of managing and working together, and where a commitment to grow the organization is embedded in a parallel commitment to grow the people in the organization" (p. 19). It appears clear that this kind of reality occurs only with resolute commitments from organizational leaders and engagement by many people throughout an organization, as suggested by the cultural change theory reviewed above.

Schein & Schein (2017) discuss how leaders embed their beliefs, values, and assumptions with a combination of primary and secondary embedding mechanisms applied to overcome resistance to change and produce cultural transformation. This will be true for the development of coaching culture, as much as for any other significant cultural change; and it applies to workgroups as building blocks toward broader organizational change.

The primary embedding mechanisms discussed in Schein & Schein (2017) include things like what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis; how leaders allocate resources; and deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching by

leaders. The secondary mechanisms include things like organizational design and structure, and organizational systems and procedures. In accordance with that discussion, a coaching program is a secondary embedding mechanism in the form of an organizational system and procedure, which must link to other secondary mechanisms, as well as to primary mechanisms.

Further intensifying the challenge of deploying widespread coaching in organizations to change organizational cultures is the fact that any large organization will have not just its own unique, sometimes shallow and sometimes profound, overall organizational culture, but also many subcultures which may be quite a lot stronger than the overall culture and which can either support or conflict with that overall culture. These subcultures can emerge from shared locations, job functions, and experiences, including seniority levels across locations, job functions, and experiences, and they will influence employee behavior and attitudes. While some subcultures may align with the overall culture in fundamental and significant ways, others may deviate in fundamental and significant ways, leading to inconsistencies in both values and practices; but even those subcultural inconsistencies "can increase organizational agility by providing a source of creativity and flexibility" (Boisnier & Chatman, 2014, p. 89.)

Leaders who want to establish and sustain strong cultural integration across the subcultures in large organizations must understand, acknowledge, and leverage the benefits from cultural differences across their organizations while mitigating the risks. This is true when leaders seek to change their organizational cultures by deploying coaching as a secondary embedding mechanism in accordance with Schein & Schein (2017), as it is when leaders pursue any other complex organizational change initiative.

Moving toward coaching or any other new set of behaviors as a significant feature of the culture of any organization of substantial size therefore requires a heavy investment of time and leadership focus, conducted in alignment with the organization's larger cultural context and in recognition of the subcultures within that context.

Recommendations

This section offers my suggestions for future action reflecting the integration of the insights and understanding I gained from the study and the applicable literature, while acknowledging the limitations of both. I present two recommendations related to theory, three recommendations related to practice, and three recommendations related to future research.

Recommendations Related to Theory

My two recommendations related to theory are as follows:

1) Scholars and practitioners should develop theoretical models for organizational cultural development that include forms of coaching as key elements of the models.

2) Theoretical modeling of coaching culture development should address how the phenomenon does or does not unfold in different contexts and situations.

Recommendation 1 Related to Theory: Scholars and practitioners should develop theoretical models for organizational cultural development that include forms of coaching as key elements of the models.

The coaching culture literature includes no unifying theoretical perspective or model regarding how to plan and execute coaching culture development. Instead, the literature provides an assortment of atheoretical descriptions of how coaching initiatives

have been executed at a variety of institutions, many of which represent fairly small populations. Given the increase in the past decade in interest among leaders in using coaching as a tool for individual and organizational development, including in large organizations whose members are geographically widely scattered like the agency this study examined, it would be helpful for scholars to develop theoretical models for organizational cultural development that include one-on-one coaching and other types of coaching as key elements of those models.

Such models could be informed by the theoretical framework provided by dialogic organization development, which focuses on the transformative power of dialogue and communication in facilitating change in individuals and within organizations (Bushe & Marshak, 2015). The results of this study show exactly those types of forces at work in individual coaching program participants, and on the interpersonal behaviors between coaching participants and others that result from the coaching experience. That experience gives coachees and coaches the opportunity to practice active listening and curiosity in the pursuit of learning and change, while experiencing the trust and safety needed to explore new ways of thinking and behaving.

Dialogic organization development emphasizes the importance of open and inclusive conversations, and collaborative decision-making processes. It suggests that by engaging in meaningful dialogue, individuals and groups can develop a deeper appreciation for and understanding of diverse perspectives, effectively challenge their own and one another's assumptions, co-create new knowledge, and foster positive change. It views dialogue as a catalyst for personal and organizational transformation, leading to improved relationships, increased creativity, enhanced learning, and more

effective problem-solving. Bushe & Marshak (2009) described dialogic forms of organization development as "change processes [that] involve confronting, engaging, or otherwise raising consciousness about alternative perspectives (paradigms, schemas, mindsets, social realities, etc.) leading to new syntheses, perspectives, or outcomes" (p. 356).

This study's revised conceptual framework in Figure 4 above depicts dialogic forces at work in the movement from shared coaching experiences to shared coaching behaviors and then to coaching culture development, in a process that is consistent with the theoretical framework provided by dialogic organization development. However, even though one-on-one coaching is a dialogic practice shown by this study to have dialogic effects, one-on-one coaching falls outside what Bushe & Marshak (2015) called "the world of more structured Dialogic [Organization Development]" (p. 7). The authors explained that typical dialogic organization development activities involve work with groups, while coaching involves "the facilitation of dialogic processes in one-on-one, in-the-moment encounters" (p. 7).

Bushe & Marshak (2015) emphasized the relational nature of one-on-one coaching which goes beyond typical dialogic organization development group facilitation. This study's results likewise highlight the relational aspect of one-on-one coaching, and the relational effects coaching behaviors can have outside the coaching relationships between individual coachees and their coaches. The coaching culture literature will be richer with the addition of theoretical models which highlight the dialogic, relational nature of one-on-one coaching and coaching behaviors as the starting point for coaching culture development, while portraying how dialogic forces can move

from that starting point to reach beyond the individual level.

Recommendation 2 Related to Theory: Theoretical modeling of coaching culture development should address how the phenomenon does or does not unfold in different contexts and situations.

The coaching culture literature is consistent in how it explains how coaching behaviors can contribute to coaching culture development. The literature also includes studies that have examined a fairly wide array of sectors and regions. See Table 10 above. Those sectors have included learning organizations, multinational manufacturing, policing, sales and marketing, education, healthcare, and services, in regions that have included the United States, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, India, Asia, and Australia.

Given the increase in the past decade in interest among leaders in using coaching as a tool for individual and organizational development, it would be helpful for scholars and practitioners to develop theoretical modeling of coaching culture development that addresses how the phenomenon does or does not unfold in different contexts and situations. A better understanding of how the phenomenon does or does not unfold in different contexts and situations will further the understanding of the phenomenon itself, and assist in efforts to adjust contexts and situations in order to support better chances for coaching culture development.

Recommendations Related to Practice

My three recommendations related to practice are as follows:

1) Coaching programs intended to produce effects beyond the individual level should use internal, part-time coaches to the maximum extent practical.

2) Coaching programs intended to produce effects beyond the individual level

should explicitly emphasize the utility of practicing coaching behaviors in relationships with others outside the coaching relationship.

3) Coaching programs intended to produce effects beyond the individual level must be supported by consistent, prioritized messaging and actions from organizational leaders.

Recommendation 1 Related to Practice: Coaching programs intended to produce effects beyond the individual level should use internal, part-time coaches to the maximum extent practical.

My interpretations of my findings included the observation that any effects from one-on-one coaching will likely be enhanced by the use of internal, part-time coaches, rather than internal, full-time coaches, or external coaches. Using internal, part-time coaches comes with logistical challenges associated with training those coaches, monitoring their work, and coordinating their utilization as coaches with their supervisors, who will want each coach to continue being focused on and successful in performing their primary duties. This requires close coordination between program managers, supervisors, and coaches. But the findings of this study and the coaching literature strongly suggest that the payoff from using internal, part-time coaches is worth the investment, when a coaching program is intended to produce effects beyond the individual level.

As shown in Table 22 above, which depicts the likelihood of positive effects from one-on-one coaching on other work relationships, coaches appear more likely than coachees to carry the relational skills associated with coaching behaviors into their relationships with others. Coaching programs intended to produce effects beyond the

individual level should therefore use internal, part-time coaches to the maximum extent practical, in order to take advantage of the multiplying effects that come with their use, as discussed above.

Recommendation 2 Related to Practice: Coaching programs intended to produce effects beyond the individual level should explicitly emphasize the utility of practicing coaching behaviors in relationships with others outside the coaching relationship.

This research highlights the potential for effects from one-on-one coaching on the interpersonal behaviors between coaching participants and others. It also highlights how program managers and leaders should not assume that coaches and coachees will automatically carry the relational skills associated with coaching behaviors into their relationships with others, in order to create those effects. Coaching programs intended to produce effects beyond the individual level should therefore explicitly emphasize the utility of practicing coaching behaviors in relationships with others outside the coaching relationship. This can be accomplished for coaches in coaching training, for coachees during their coaching conversations with their individual coaches, and for anyone who attends coaching skills training, which should be offered as a fundamental component of any coaching program where interpersonal effects are a desired outcome.

All coachees do not come to coaching for assistance with their relationships with others, at work or otherwise. Coachees also own the coaching agenda (Bachkirova et al., 2014). This was emphasized by many of the coaches I interviewed and by several coachees. Because this is true, coaches conducting themselves in accordance with the International Coaching Federation Core Competencies for coaches, defined above in Table 5, should not arbitrarily emphasize the utility of practicing coaching behaviors in

relationships with others.

Coaching conversations are not intended to be training sessions on coaching skills or any other topic. They are intended to be opportunities facilitated by coaches for coachee self-reflection and self-discovery. However, when it is appropriate for coaches to discuss the utility of practicing coaching behaviors in relationships with others, this will support the expansion of effects from one-on-one coaching on the interpersonal behaviors between coachees and others, as it did for those coachees I interviewed who came to coaching to talk with a coach about transitioning into higher levels of leadership responsibilities.

Coaching skills training also supports this expansion of effects from one-on-one coaching on the interpersonal behaviors between coachees and others. This study confirmed that this can occur both with coachees who are team leads, supervisors, and managers, and with those who are not; and, while I did not interview anyone in this category, non-coachees who attend coaching skills training may experience the same kind of positive interpersonal effects from coaching skills training that coachees do.

Recommendation 3 Related to Practice: Coaching programs intended to produce effects beyond the individual level must be supported by consistent, prioritized messaging and actions from organizational leaders.

As a critical element in supporting coaching program effects beyond the individual level via coaching behaviors practiced in relationships with others outside the coaching relationship, coaching program managers and leaders at every level in an organization should support and reinforce that intent with consistent, prioritized messaging and actions which establish and sustain the coaching program as a bonafide,

fundamental organizational system and procedure. This is how the elements of a coaching program garner the legitimacy to function as a secondary embedding mechanism while being linked to other primary and secondary embedding mechanisms, in accordance with the model for cultural development in Schein & Schein (2017). Leaders who want coaching behaviors to become a significant feature of the cultures of their organizations must make it clear in this way that they are committed to supporting and practicing coaching behaviors themselves, and that they value the effects those behaviors can have on the interpersonal behaviors between members of the organization.

A coaching program will function best as a secondary embedding mechanism that will help to make coaching behaviors a significant feature of an organization's culture when senior leaders intentionally and actively manage the evolution of their organizational cultures. Schein & Schein (2017) described how they can do this by using a combination of primary and secondary embedding mechanisms (p. 183) to influence items at the three levels of culture: 1) artifacts, 2) espoused beliefs and values, and 3) basic underlying assumptions (p. 24). Leaders can do this in support of coaching behaviors in the ways shown in Table 23 below.

Table 23

How Leaders Embed Their Beliefs, Values, and Assumptions in Support of Coaching Program Effects beyond the Individual Level (adapted from Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 183)

Primary Embedding Mechanisms
1. By holding senior leader coaching program reviews in which they regularly pay attention to, measure, and control program outcomes
2. By emphasizing the value in coaching behaviors when reacting to critical incidents and organizational crises where coaching behaviors are a relevant element of appropriate solution sets
3. By making intended coaching program outcomes a key portion of organizational strategic planning and then consistently allocating adequate resources to support coaching program elements in a sustained way
4. By publicly reinforcing the value in coaching behaviors with role modeling, teaching, and coaching of their own that emphasizes the utility of practicing coaching behaviors in relationships with others outside formal coaching relationships and the potential salubrious effects of widespread coaching behaviors on organizational health and performance
5. By allocating rewards and status linked to coaching program support and participation, especially the participation of volunteer, internal, part-time coaches who must commit to coaching hours in addition to the time required to perform their routine day-to-day duties
6. By reinforcing the priority of the coaching program and the importance of the effects it is intended to produce with the ways they recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate supporters and detractors of the coaching program and coaching behaviors
Secondary Embedding Mechanisms
1. By reinforcing their commitment to the coaching program and its intended effects by securing and sustaining the program at the highest appropriate level within the organization's design and structure
2. By emphasizing the critical linkage between coaching program elements and other fundamental organizational systems and procedures
3. By incorporating recognition of the importance of the coaching program and its intended effects into organizational rites and rituals
4. By incorporating recognition of the importance of the coaching program and its intended effects into the design of the organization's physical space, facades, and buildings
5. By incorporating recognition of the importance of the coaching program and its intended effects into the stories told about the organization
6. By incorporating recognition of the importance of the coaching program and its

intended effects into the organization's formal statements of philosophy, creeds, and charters

Recommendations Related to Future Research

My three recommendations related to future research are as follows:

1) Scholars conducting future research into coaching culture development should consider using dialogic organization development as a theoretical lens.

2) Future research into coaching culture development should include observations and assessments of coaching skills training.

3) Future research into coaching culture development should include the collection of longitudinal data on coaching programs.

Recommendation 1 Related to Future Research: Scholars conducting future research into coaching culture development should consider using dialogic organization development as a theoretical lens.

In the course of conducting this research, I encountered no other empirical studies on coaching culture which used dialogic organization development as a theoretical lens. As noted above, dialogic organization development focuses on the transformative power of dialogue and communication in facilitating change in individuals and within organizations (Bushe & Marshak, 2015). The results of this study show exactly those types of forces at work in individual coaching program participants, and on the interpersonal behaviors between coaching participants and others. This suggests that dialogic organization development holds significant promise as a theoretical lens for future research into coaching culture development.

Recommendation 2 Related to Future Research: Future research into coaching culture development should include observations and assessments of coaching skills training.

In the course of conducting this research, I collected data that included reports, documents, and interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I ruled out observations of one-on-one coaching because of the confidentiality inherent in coaching relationships, and future research into coaching culture development should rule out observations of one-on-one coaching for the same reason; but observations and assessments of coaching skills training will be important as coaching culture research progresses.

The conclusions derived from this study suggest that coaching skills training is an important way of emphasizing the utility of practicing coaching behaviors in relationships with others outside the coaching relationship. This was reported to be true in the coaching program I examined by those coachees I interviewed who were team leads, supervisors, and managers, and by those who were not. I did not, however, have the opportunity to observe or to assess coaching skills training, and I did not interview any participants in coaching skills training who were not also coaches or coachees.

Because of the value of coaching skills training, future research into coaching culture development should include direct observations and assessments of coaching skills training. It should also include interviews with participants in coaching skills training who are not also coaches or coachees, to explore the value of coaching skills training in isolation from one-on-one coaching.

Recommendation 3 Related to Future Research: Future research into coaching culture development should include the collection of longitudinal data on coaching programs.

The conclusions derived from this study suggest the value in following up with the collection of longitudinal data on coaching programs, to assess how effects from

coaching accumulate over time, including in the organization examined with this research. This will be especially valuable if the organization's leaders follow the recommendations related to practice noted above.

One-on-one coaching has been made widely available to employees across the agency I examined, but only 1,185 of the agency's 17,202 employees, or less than 7% had received one-on-one coaching between the program's inception in 2019 and 2024, when this study's data analysis was conducted. Conducting subsequent study of the program at a later date will allow for more of the agency's employees to participate, and for more effects from coaching to accumulate across the organization. As that happens, it would be helpful to hear from a larger sample of employees, including participants in the coaching program and non-participants alike, perhaps using a survey instrument in addition to interviews.

It would also be helpful to hear from more men, considering that my sample of volunteers included only two. As a result, all the coaches I interviewed except one were women, and all the coachees I interviewed except one were women.

Final Thoughts

Proponents of the one-on-one coaching experience have argued that the accumulation of individual coaching experiences can lead to the development of coaching culture as the "accumulated shared learning of [a] group" (Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 6), when coaching conversations and interactions are introduced into an organization as a model for how to engage in conversations and interactions of all kinds. This case study has made it clear that there is no direct automatic pathway from one-on-one coaching to coaching culture, and that moving in that direction in an organization of

any significant size will require a heavy investment of time and leadership focus. As noted above, many of the coaching program participants I interviewed nevertheless made it clear that one-on-one coaching has been a profound experience for them, one with potential for even greater impact in their organization.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all those who participated in my study by talking with me about their very personal coaching experiences. Their willingness to trust me with what they shared enriched my research and has enriched the literature devoted to coaching culture.

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APPENDIX A: Study Participant Recruitment Memo

Title of Study: Exploring the Nexus between One-on-One Coaching and Coaching Culture
IRB #: NCR235503
Principal Investigator Name: Eric Jorgensen
Version Date: January 22, 2024

Dear [Agency] Employees,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Education program at The George Washington University Graduate School of Education & Human Development. I am reaching out to this esteemed group to invite you to participate in my doctoral research exploring the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture. This invitation is being sent to all agency coaching program participants (coachees and coaches).

I define coaching culture as a space where a significant number of the individuals in an organization "practice coaching behaviors as a means of relating to, supporting, and influencing one another" (Hart, 2005, p. 7) Coaching behaviors can include pursuit of dialogue to foster learning and change; active listening; a focus on helping relationships; an emphasis on co-creative processes; a commitment to exploring new ways of thinking and behaving; and an emphasis on cultivating trust and safety.

PREFERRED CRITERIA TO QUALIFY:

- Full-time employment with the agency
- Three or more years of service at the agency
- A minimum of twelve months since beginning participation in the [agency] Coaching Program, as a coachee, a coach, or both
- Working with/familiar with other [agency] coachees and/or coaches

OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPATION:

- Engage in a one-hour virtual or in-person one-on-one interview with me to discuss your experience participating in the [agency] Coaching Program

If you are interested in participating in my doctoral research, please contact me at ericjorgensen@gwmail.gwu.edu or at 919-394-2878. I will gladly answer any questions you have before I ask you to commit to participating.

Thank you for considering supporting me in this research study.

Sincerely,

Eric A. Jorgensen
Doctoral Candidate
Graduate School of Education & Human Development
The George Washington University

APPENDIX B: Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study

Title of Study: Exploring the Nexus between One-on-One Coaching and Coaching Culture
IRB #: NCR235503
Principal Investigator Name: Eric Jorgensen
Version Date: December 21, 2023

You are invited to participate in a research study under the direction of Dr. Russell Korte of the Department of Human and Organizational Learning, in The George Washington University Graduate School of Education & Human Development.

The purpose of this study is to explore the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture

If you choose to accept this invitation, you will be asked to discuss your experience participating in or administering the [agency] Coaching Program. This will occur during a one-hour individual interview with the doctoral candidate researcher (Eric Jorgensen). Your participation is completely voluntary.

The benefits of this research may include a better understanding of the coaching dynamics within the organization at the individual, group, and organizational levels, and the opportunity to consider ways to enhance coaching's effects.

Further information regarding this study may be obtained by contacting Eric Jorgensen, at ericjorgensen@gwmail.gwu.edu or at 919-394-2878.

What are the reasons you might choose to volunteer to participate in this study?

As a study participant, you may:

- Gain a better understanding of coaching and coaching culture, which could be helpful information in your professional life
- Add to your practical toolbox regarding how the experiences that come with coaching in the workplace can change the behaviors of members of an organization and their relationships with one another
- Add to the scholarly conversation about coaching and coaching culture

What are the reasons you might choose not to volunteer to participate in this study?

Although the risks are minimal should you choose to participate in this study, reflecting on your experience with coaching/supporting coaching:

- May expose details about your personal development and/or the personal development of others
- Could evoke emotional responses

Every effort will be made to minimize any risks to you as a participant in this research. You will have complete control over your participation regarding answering questions and providing any other information.

Every effort will also be made to preserve your confidentiality and to ensure that all information provided by you will be kept private. Your individual participation in the

study will not be divulged to anyone other than the research team, and your name will not be used during the study.

Any personally identifiable information collected about you will be coded using a unique identification number. The coded list of participants in the study will be accessible only to the researcher, and the information that identifies you will be kept separate from the rest of the data you provide. The only time you will be directly linked to your responses is when the research team emails you a copy of the de-identified interview transcript for your review of its accuracy.

Your research data may be provided to authorized representatives of The George Washington University Office of Human Research and/or Committee on Human Research. However, you will not be identified by name in any reports or publications related to this study. If results of this research study are reported in journals or at scientific meetings, the people who participated in this study will not be named or identified. Two years following the conclusion of this study, the recordings of the interviews will be destroyed.

You can obtain further information about your rights as a research participant by contacting The George Washington University Office of Human Research at 202-994-2715.

To ensure your anonymity, your signature is not required. Your willingness to participate in this research study is implied if you proceed.

*Please keep a copy of this document for your records.

APPENDIX C: Program Manager Interview Guide for Coaching Research Study

Title of Study: Exploring the Nexus between One-on-One Coaching and Coaching Culture
IRB #: NCR235503
Principal Investigator Name: Eric Jorgensen
Version Date: December 21, 2023

The purpose of this study is to explore the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture.

The questions I ask may not exactly follow the sequence described below due to the semi-structured interview format. I will aim to facilitate personalized conversations with each interviewee, and I expect to adapt my questions accordingly as each conversation unfolds.

Welcome and Introductions	Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is Eric Jorgensen and I'm a doctoral candidate student researcher at The George Washington University. *Explain the study, uses of the findings, purpose of the interview, participant selection process, and interview format.*
Consent and Questions	*Confirm verbal consent and review assurance of privacy/confidentiality/anonymity, and data management procedures. Answer any questions.*
Recording	I would like to record our conversation to make sure we capture everything you say correctly. Only I will have access to the recordings. What you say will not be used for any purposes beyond informing the study. I will not identify you by name in any reports I produce. Do I have your permission to record? *Interviewer obtains permission for recording.* *Recording device(s) turned on.* This is Eric Jorgensen, conducting interview # *[number of interview]* with *[participant number]*. I am recording the interview with the permission of the participant.
Opening Sequence *(Establishing rapport by asking about background and experience at agency)*	**1. Please tell me about your experience supporting the coaching program at your agency.** Probes: Number of years of experience. Level of involvement in design and execution. Other roles at the agency, Experience with other coaching programs.

Content Sequence *(Exploring origins of the agency coaching program)*	**2. Please describe the purpose of the agency coaching program.** Probes: Outcomes anticipated from the program.
Content Sequence *(Exploring understanding of the agency coaching program)*	**3. Please describe what prompted agency leadership to establish the coaching program when it did.** Probes: What made coaching a good fit for the agency.
Content Sequence *(Exploring understanding of agency leadership support of coaching program)*	**4. Please describe how agency leadership has communicated with members of the agency about the coaching program.** Probes: Kinds and frequency of communication from agency leadership regarding the program. Sense of importance/priority of program.
Content Sequence *(Exploring program manager communication with agency regarding coaching program)*	**5. Please describe how information about the program has been shared with members of the agency.** Probes: Kinds and frequency of communication from program manager regarding the program. Sense of importance/priority of program. How the purpose of the program has been explained and where.
Content Sequence *(Exploring perception of program acceptance)*	**6. Please describe your perception of how the coaching program has been received across the agency.** Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.
Content Sequence *(Exploring measures of program success)*	**7. Please describe what you think about the benefits, if any, that have been derived from the coaching program.** Probes: Tell me more. Please explain. Successful or not.
	8. Please describe any challenges you have seen with the coaching program. Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.
Content Sequence *(Exploring perception of effects from coaching program)*	**9. Has the coaching program had any effect on behaviors across the agency? If so, what? Can you share an example?** Probes: Tell me more. Please explain. Any surprises?
Content Sequence *(Exploring perception of cultural effects from coaching program)*	**10. Has the coaching program had any effect on the agency culture? If so, what? Can you share an example?** Probes: Has culture changed because of coaching? Shared values. Nature of professional relationships. Sense of partnership and collaboration throughout organization.

Reflecting on Experience	**11. Are there ways in which the agency coaching program has been adjusted over time? If so, why? Can you share an example?** Probes: How any changes have affected results.
Concluding Sequence	**12. We are approaching the end of our discussion. Is there anything we haven't covered that you would like to add?** Probes: Thoughts about the future of the coaching program.
Thank You	The information you shared today will be a great asset to my research. I hope you found the discussion interesting. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. I'll share the transcript with you for your review. Will it be okay if I contact you in the future if I need clarification on something we discussed? Thank you for participating! *Recording device(s) turned off.*

APPENDIX D: Program Participant Interview Guide for Coaching Research Study

Title of Study: Exploring the Nexus between One-on-One Coaching and Coaching Culture
IRB #: NCR235503
Principal Investigator Name: Eric Jorgensen
Version Date: December 21, 2023

The purpose of this study is to **explore the possible nexus between one-on-one coaching and the creation of a coaching culture.**

The questions I ask may not exactly follow the sequence described below due to the semi-structured format. I will aim to facilitate personalized conversations with each interviewee, and I expect to adapt my questions accordingly as each conversation unfolds. I will pilot test this protocol with two program participants who meet the study participant criteria, and I may adjust the protocol for clarity as a result of that test.

Welcome and Introductions	Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is Eric Jorgensen and I'm a doctoral candidate student researcher at The George Washington University. *Explain the study, uses of the findings, purpose of the interview, participant selection process, and interview format.*
Consent and Questions	*Confirm verbal consent and review assurance of privacy/confidentiality/anonymity, and data management procedures. Answer any questions.*
Recording	I would like to record our conversation to make sure we capture everything you say correctly. Only I will have access to the recordings. What you say will not be used for any purposes beyond informing the study. I will not identify you by name in any reports I produce. Do I have your permission to record? *Interviewer obtains permission for recording.* *Recording device(s) turned on.* This is Eric Jorgensen, conducting interview # *[number of interview]* with *[participant number]*. I am recording the interview with the permission of the participant.
Opening Sequence *(Establishing rapport by asking about background and experience at agency)*	**1. Please tell me a bit about your work experience at your agency.** Probes: Number of years of experience. Professional specialties. Supervisory levels. Sizes of teams. Types of projects.

Content Sequence *(Exploring understanding of the organization's cultural context)*	**2. Please describe your impression of your agency's culture when you first joined the organization.** Probes: Shared values. Nature of professional relationships. Sense of partnership and collaboration throughout organization.
Content Sequence *(Exploring understanding of the agency coaching program)*	**3. Please describe your understanding of the purpose of the agency coaching program.** Probes: How interviewee learned about program. How program was explained. Outcomes anticipated from the program.
Content Sequence *(Exploring understanding of agency leadership support of coaching program)*	**4. Please describe how agency leadership has communicated with members of the agency about the coaching program.** Probes: Kinds and frequency of communication interviewee has received from agency leadership regarding the program. Sense of importance/priority of program.
Content Sequence *(Establishing individual experience with coaching program)*	**5. Please tell me about your personal experience with the coaching program.** Probes: How interviewee has been involved in the program, at what level(s), and for how long. Individual reactions. Tell me more. Please explain.
Content Sequence *(Exploring perception of personal individual effects from coaching program)*	**6. Has the coaching program had any effects on your behaviors? If so, what? Can you share an example?** Probes: Tell me more. Please explain. Any surprises?
Content Sequence *(Exploring perception of individual effects from coaching program on others)*	**7. Has the coaching program had any effects on the behaviors of others at the agency? If so, what? Can you share an example?** Probes: Tell me more. Please explain. Any surprises?
Content Sequence *(Exploring perception of personal relational effects from coaching program)*	**8. Has the coaching program had any effects on the relationships you have with others at the agency? If so, what? Can you share an example?** Probes: Do you think any effects on your relationships are the result of behavior changes caused by coaching? Tell me more. Please explain. Any surprises?
Content Sequence *(Exploring perception of relational effects from coaching program on others)*	**9. Has the coaching program had any effects on your colleagues' relationships with one another? If so, what? Can you share an example?** Probes: Do you think any effects on their relationships are the result of behavior changes caused by coaching? Tell me more. Please explain. How can you tell? Any surprises?

Content Sequence *(Exploring perception of cultural effects from coaching program)*	**10. Has the coaching program had any effects on the agency culture? If so, what? Can you share an example? What impact does any culture change have on the ways people engage with one another across the organization?** Probes: Has culture changed because of coaching? Coaching language? Shared values. Nature of professional relationships. Sense of partnership and collaboration throughout organization.
Reflecting on Experience	**11. What would you say about the value of the agency coaching program?** Probes: Please say more about your appraisal of the program.
Concluding Sequence	**12. We are approaching the end of our discussion. Is there anything we haven't covered that you would like to add?** Probes: Advice to offer coaching program participants, the program manager, and agency leadership. Thoughts about outcomes from coaching beyond the organization.
Thank You	The information you shared today will be a great asset to my research. I hope you found the discussion interesting. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. I'll share the transcript with you for your review. Will it be okay if I contact you in the future if I need clarification on something we discussed? Thank you for participating! *Recording device(s) turned off.*

APPENDIX E: List of Provisional A Priori Codes

The following list of a priori provisional codes was used as a starting point for data analysis:

Coaching experiences as coachee, coach, or both

- One-on-one coaching
- Coaching skills training
- Group coaching

Coaching behaviors

- Practicing dialogue
- Pursuing learning and change
- Practicing active listening
- Pursuing helping relationships
- Pursuing co-creativity
- Exploring new ways of thinking and behaving
- Practicing trust
- Pursuing safety in relationships

Coaching culture

- Relating to, supporting, and influencing others
- Improved personal and professional relationships
- Enhanced collaboration
- Increased engagement
- Increased connection
- Higher performance
- Greater job satisfaction