

Survey of Washington State Early Childhood Coaches' Communities of Practice

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Abstract

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The need to improve the quality of early childhood education is urgent. Researchers are diligently studying which forms of professional development will yield positive changes in teacher practices. Communities of practice (COPs) and coaching have both been shown to be potentially effective and efficient means of professional development in early childhood education. Teachers who receive coaching, along with conventional training, implement the target practice for longer, with more fidelity. Teachers who participate in COPs benefit from reduced feelings of isolation, increased empowerment, and feelings of inclusion in the learning community. Despite these benefits, there is limited literature on training and professional development for the individuals tasked with

facilitation of such experiences: coaches. This includes the use of COPs by coaches. COPs are complementary methods that, when used in parallel processes by coaches, could improve coaching techniques and thus lead to more effective coaching practices. The aim of this study was to gain understanding of coaches' perceptions and experiences with COPs by conducting a survey among Early Achievers' coaches in Washington State. This is a descriptive study with some limited exploratory correlation analyses. The research questions included: What are the demographics of coaches participating in communities of practice? What are the structural and content characteristics of the communities of practice? Finally, what benefits do coaches report as a result of participating in communities of practice? This study constitutes a first step in understanding coaches' COPs in relation to the Washington state quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) and Early Achievers.

Keywords: communities of practice, coaching, early childhood special education, professional development, QRIS

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Dedication

To Cora, my reason to finish

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Chapter I: Introduction

Problem

It is a societal imperative to improve the overall quality of early childhood education and development for the nation. Childcare is a contemporary necessity for the American family. Many low- and moderate-income families cannot afford to have one parent stay at home to care for their children. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that 70% of women with children under the age of 18 participate in the American workforce (Labor Statistics/Women's Bureau, 2015). High quality early childhood education results in profoundly positive developmental outcomes for children, with and without disabilities, that last throughout their lives (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2003; Division for Early Childhood, 2007). Schachter (2015) reports that powerful professional development “might be the most impactful way of improving children’s learning above and beyond teachers’ degree attainment or specific curriculum selection” (p. 1057).

Early childcare is a significant enterprise in Washington State. According to a survey by Childcare Aware of Washington (2015), over 89,000 children are enrolled in licensed, center-based, and family childcare facilities in the state. The quality rating and improvements system (QRIS) rates these childcares on a 1 (lowest) – 5 (highest) rating system. Of the 2,485 programs in 2016, only one center received a score of five, indicating optimal quality. Children from families that lack resources for costly childcare are especially at risk. The achievement gap for children with fewer resources such as income, educated parents, and social opportunities begins very early in their lives.

Meaningful differences are being detected as early as 9 and 24 months; this speaks to the need to intervene early in children’s lives to address the gaps in development. In particular,

research suggests that interventions should be high-quality, comprehensive and continuous for children ages 0 to 3 as well as ages 3 to 5.” (Halle et al., 2009, p. 22).

What is a QRIS?

The implementation of quality rating and improvement systems (QRS) has increased in recent years, with the creation of at least 30 state and local government QRIS programs across the United States (Boller et al., 2015). QRIS programs will, theoretically, improve childhood outcomes and teacher practices by providing professional development and awarding grants to participating childcare centers. Organizations strive to earn a high quality rating, which validates their work and make their center sought after by families in the community.

It is evident that professional development for early childhood education teachers and providers is important to the development and improved outcomes of children (Snyder et al., 2012). Many QRIS include coaching as a critical means to this PD. Logically, professional development for coaches would also be important, and communities of practice (COPs) are a promising and efficient means of professional development for them. In this dissertation study I have surveyed coaches regarding their perceptions and experiences in COPs. Through an online survey, I explored coaches’ evaluation of COPs as a means of professional development with a view to improving coaching strategies. In the following paragraphs I will discuss and define coaching and COPs.

Coaching

There are several modalities of professional development for early childhood education providers. Coaching has demonstrated potential as an effective and enduring method of professional development that yields positive results and long-lasting effects (Boyd, 2013; Joyce & Showers, 2002). It is a complex process that improves several key competencies and skills. To coach well, coaches themselves also need professional development opportunities to consistently hone their practice to help childcare providers improve. In a literature review on coaching by the U.S.

Department of Education (2010), it was noted that coaching has yet to be studied in isolation from other professional development methods, such as training and conferences. Moreover, the exact elements of coaching that lead to lasting changes have not been studied in isolation. Some researchers have described coaching as a “black box” (OPRE, 2014, p.4). The coaching “black box” contains inputs such as reflection, feedback, observations and goals, along with other features, such as conventional training. Theoretically, improved outcomes exit the coaching box at the end of evaluations. Yet “how” and “why” teacher practice has changed has not been detailed. The essential elements of inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts are valuable knowledge.

Early childhood education literature offers promising evidence that coaching is an effective means of professional development for teachers. It has been shown to improve the length and quality of knowledge retention and implementation when coupled with more standard forms of professional development, such as teacher training, whether the format of the training is a lecture or an interactive informational session (NAEYC, 2011). Practice-based coaching is a relationship-based mentorship cycle that guides the coach and teacher. Practice-based coaching has three parts to a cycle: 1) shared goals and action planning; 2) focused observation; and 3) reflection and feedback (see Appendix A). There are many forms of coaching, but the coaching literature generally includes some of the aforementioned aspects. In some models, the three parts are further broken down into five steps. For example, reflection and feedback might be treated as distinct processes (Fox, Hemmeter, Snyder, Binder, & Clarke, 2011). I will elaborate further on the current consensus in the literature on coaching in the literature review, Chapter 2.

Communities of Practice

COPs are another professional development strategy that shows great potential as an effective form of professional development for early childcare providers and coaches alike. Studies have shown benefits for teachers who participate in them, COPs including reduced feelings of isolation (Bradley, 2004; Brody & Friedman, 2012; Gebbie, Ceglowski, Taylor, & Miels, 2012;

Puig & Recchia, 2008), and increased feelings of empowerment (Hoffman, Dahlman, & Zierdt, 2009). Buysse, Sparkman, and Wesley, (2003) posit an additional COP benefit, namely that “every community of practice has a reproduction cycle, or an ability to regenerate itself as ‘old timers’ leave and new members enter the community and move closer to peers who serve as exemplars of mature practice” (p. 267). Bradley (2004) and Puig and Recchia (2008) agree that COPs are one of the professional development mechanisms that welcome and integrate novice teachers to become full members of their learning communities.

The Early Achievers (EA’s) coaching component is intended to improve the educational outcomes of children in childcare settings across Washington State. EA Coach Framework trainers encourage coaches to engage in an ongoing COP. This is, firstly, so that coaches can teach and learn from each other about topics related to coaching and collaborate with peers, both regionally and distally via virtual groups. Secondly, coaches can then encourage providers to engage in COPs on the basis of their firsthand experience of their benefits and function.

COPs can occur in any professional or social group. Lave and Wenger (1991) coined the terms *legitimate peripheral participation* and *situated learning* while conducting ethnographic research into textile workers and others groups. These terms refer to the process of integrating novices into the larger community. Masters of their trade invite novices into the community by sharing practice and experiences in order to improve the knowledge of all members. Legitimate peripheral participation might seem familiar to those acquainted with apprenticeships, where the journey tradesman works under the master electrician or carpenter, learning the craft on the job. Lave and Wenger (1991) imply that these communities are pervasive, occurring in almost any group of individual actors that practice similar skills, such as parents, teachers, engineers, and coaches.

Adherents to this theoretical lens promote COPs as a vital and important source of professional development. I define COPs as any group of professionals who are connected by

shared practice and a mission to improve their skills in a focus area by regularly interacting with each other to share experiences, challenges, and resources. Current research on COPs in early childhood education relies largely on qualitative methodologies, commonly employing interviews and observations that result in more descriptive analyses than interventions, or experimental designs. Despite the relatively large group of studies on this topic in relation to professional development, there are still many questions to explore, such as how COPs improve early childhood teaching practice, and whether teachers who participate in COPs produce improved outcomes for the children in their care.

The concept of creating COPs for teacher and childcare providers is emerging in the research, and was integrated into EA's QRIS standards. The EA program awards relate to an overall quality rating score for childcare programs whose staff participate in COPs as a form of professional development. However, the configuration, intensity, purpose, and other defining features of COPs are not well defined in the current early childhood education literature with respect to professional development. For this reason, a systematic literature review of the state of COPs in early childhood education can be found in Chapter 2. Moreover, although neither the use of coaching nor COPs, as professional development methods, is fully understood, both are part of the Washington State QRIS. In the following section I will describe the EA system in more depth and also elaborate on why it is necessary to better understand the intersection of these practices within the system.

Early Achievers

The goal of the Early Achievers (EA) model is to improve the overall quality of early learning in childcare environments in Washington, and to connect families to quality care by creating a common sense rating system for childcare centers and family childcare. Quality in the EA system is determined through a comprehensive rating process guided by the "House" framework of quality, the Guiding Principles and the practice-based coaching model (Appendix A,

B, and C). I will briefly discuss each of these integral structures of EA in the following subsections. The “House” framework can be considered the figurative destination at which providers want to arrive. The goal is to support childcare providers by strengthening their centers and practice in the various areas of the “House”. The Guiding Principles comprise the roadmap or “GPS” that helps coaches to navigate path that they travel with providers to the “House” (i.e. quality). Practice-based coaching is EA’s chosen coach model—a three-step cycle in the context of a collaborative partnership between the coach and provider. The University of Washington Cultivate Learning center provides support and training through a Professional Development and Coaching team. It offers initial training, consultation, webinars, and support in engaging in COPs. I will review each of these dimensions further and how they relate to the following subsections.

“House” Framework

The EA “House” contains the elements of a quality early learning environment adopted from the National Center for Quality Teaching and Learning (Sandall & Joseph, 2010). The “House” has six integral structures: 1) individualized learning and teaching; 2) engaging interactions and environments; 3) family engagement and partnership; 4) screening and ongoing assessment; 5) curriculum and learning opportunities; and 6) professional development and training including COPs and coaching. EA strives to support childcare facilities to improve practice by strengthening the aspects of their care included in the “House” framework (Sandall & Joseph, 2010; Joseph, Feldman, Naslund, Phillips, & Petras, 2011). Next I explain how our Guiding Principles help us to navigate to the “House”.

Guiding Principles: Parallel Process

EA’s Guiding Principles consist of three tenets: culturally responsive coaching, parallel process, and adult resilience. These principles guide the work of the EA coach training and support team, and we weave these tenets throughout all interactions and products. I will focus mainly on

parallel process in this study as it relates to coaches' use of communities of practice. Infant mental health leader Jeree Pawl (1998) coined the *Platinum Rule*: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto others." This phrase embodies the spirit of parallel process. The EA coach support team members operate under the assumption that relationships in one part of a system influence and reinforce similar patterns of interaction in other parts of the system. Therefore the way the coaching team interacts with coaches invariably influences the way that coaches interact with providers, who in turn interact with children, and so on including families and communities. We EA coach support team members transmit positive, caring interactions to coaches, who then show the same respect to all members of the system. The coach team does not expect coaches to do anything that the team members would not do. The coaching team shoulders the same responsibilities as the coaches and providers. The coaching team engages in communities of practice (COPs) and we expect that coaches will form their own COPs. Coaches' experiences—being involved in COPs interactions—are valuable to all involved. As a result, coaches are better able to promote and foster COPs among providers if they themselves have had that experience and understand firsthand their benefits and mechanics.

Practice-Based Coaching

Practice-based coaching is the model that coaches use with QRIS participants. However, it is not known if practice-based coaching is an effective mechanism to improve the quality of early childcare sites. There seems to be agreement among current researchers on coaching that it works best when at least these elements are present: shared goals; action plans; reflection; feedback; and focused observations—all within a collaborative partnership (Fox et al., 2011). It is not known in depth how the above process will be conducted or perceived by coaches and their participating providers. Cultivate Learning conducts numerous research projects. It is responsible for training coaches to practice fidelity to the EA coaching framework, as well as data collection during the EA rating process. Regional Childcare Aware and Childcare Resources offices across the state are

contacted by the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to hire coaches in the seven geographic regions of Washington State (see Appendix D)

The Cultivate Learning professional development and coaching team conducts an initial two-day training course, covering the “House” framework, the practice-based coaching model and guiding principles. Of course, a two-day training program could not cover all that a coach would need to know in the course of his or her work. As a follow-up to the initial training, the professional development and coaching team also facilitates monthly coaching webinars, individual consultations, and some coaching training at regional EA Institutes (see Appendix E). COPs are also a part of the EA coach support and professional development plan. In the following section I will explain how the development of this study’s research questions informed the aspects of coaches’ COPs I researched.

Research Questions

COPs have the potential to be a powerful and cost-effective complement to other forms of professional development. Therefore, early childhood researchers ideally want to ensure that coaches’ COPs are high quality and meet the needs of their population. It is important to know whether coaches feel that they are learning valuable skills by participating in COPs that they can translate into practice in the field. Do coaches perceive COPs to be helpful in practice, and aimed toward improving teacher performance? What recommendations do coaches have that they feel would result in improved outcomes for young children? These were the preliminary questions that guided my thinking as this project emerged.

There are many aspects of coaching and COPs that should be explored nationwide and in Washington State in particular. The broad research question was: What is the current state of communities of practice among EA coaches in Washington State? In this study I delimited my focus to the research questions below, the answers to which were expected to reveal coaches’ experiences and attitudes towards the perceived efficacy and structure of the COP groups. After

several iterations of survey questions, and conferences with advisors and colleagues, I established the following guiding research questions:

1. What are a) the structural characteristics, and b) the content characteristics of the coaches' communities of practice?
2. To what extent do coaches perceive benefits (or value) to their coaching due to their participation in COPs?
3. What do Washington State coaches who have engaged in communities of practice report about the experience?
4. What are the demographics of coaches participating in communities of practice?
5. Are coaches' experiences different across varying COP configurations or protocols, and demographics?
6. If coaches do not participate in COPs, how do they meet their professional development needs?
7. What are the similarities and differences between coaches who participate in COPs and those who do not, in terms of perceived improvement of coaching practices and perceived value to coaching work?

The above questions were then used to design the survey methodology, which I will outline in the methods section. The questions also guided me as I created the survey instrument and items therein, which will be discussed in the methods section. In the following subsection I will clarify the principle terms used in this study, such as “communities of practice” and “coaching”, and explain the difference between “teacher” and “provider”.

Defining Communities of Practice

Wenger's (2006) definition of COPs is broad and applicable to a variety of groups and practices, including teaching and learning: “Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact

regularly” and “[...] develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems – in short, a shared practice” (Wenger, 2006, p.1). Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) posit three characteristics of COPs, namely *domain*, *community* and *practice*:

A community of practice is a unique combination of three fundamental elements: a domain of knowledge, which defines a set of issues; a community of people who care about this domain; and the shared practice that they are developing to be effective in their domain. (p. 27)

In their seminal review of early childhood literature on the characteristics of professional development, Snyder et al. (2012) aptly define COPs thusly:

Communities of practice or inquiry groups are specialized peer support groups that typically share a specific focus on a practice or set of practices. These groups share a common interest in a subject or inquiry problem. They collaborate over an extended period to share ideas, develop hypotheses, find solutions, and build innovations. It refers as well to the stable group that is formed from such regular interactions. (p. 194)

Snyder et al. (2012) define COPs in terms of focus, practice, inquiry, and time period. This definition is strong because it also includes the structure and stability, and a focus on problem solving with creative solutions. This is the definition that I use in this study when I refer to COPs.

Definition of Coaching

In their study on coaching parents and colleagues, Rush and Shelden (2005, p. 1) define coaching as “an adult learning strategy that is used to build the capacity of a parent or colleague to improve existing abilities, develop new skills, and gain a deeper understanding of his or her practices for use in current and future situations”. Coaching can take many forms across a broad spectrum of group size, configuration, method, participants, and settings. One commonality across studies is that coaching is an ongoing process meant to nurture new knowledge when it is in a

fragile, nascent stage (Aikers & Akens, 2011, p. 2). I will discuss the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to the studies that were considered in the following literature review chapter. However, the criteria below will be informed by the seminal literature review on early childhood education professional development from Snyder et al. (2012):

Coaching is a broad term used to describe implementation support that is delivered to learners, which is sustained and focused. It involves helping participants to implement newly-acquired skills, strategies, or models on the job. It has four major functions: (a) to provide support, (b) to offer technical or performance feedback, (c) to analyze application, and (d) to adapt the results. Coaching can be guided by experts or fellow learners (peers). As an implementation support activity, coaching or performance feedback can occur alone or after other professional development activities occur. (p. 193)

Most coaching models contain five major components that unify most models and definitions, namely: (1) initiation or joint planning, (2) observation, (3) action or practice, (4) reflection, and (5) evaluation or feedback (Hanft et al., 2004). There are various coaching models. This study focuses on the practice-based coaching model, however many of the models share the same common elements, even if they do not contain the same number of steps in the coaching cycle.

Providers and teachers

Childcare providers who helped to create the EA system with their input requested that they be referred to as “providers” and not teachers, so I will honor this preference. However, much of the research in early childhood education and early childhood special education refers to teachers and interventionists. I use both terms, and it may seem as though I use them interchangeably. While there is, of course, crossover, I attempt to address them as providers when discussing EA participants who receive EA coaching, and teachers when discussing the findings in the literature.

Rationale for Undertaking This Research

Early childhood education is an investment in a student's life that has shown to return positive outcomes for an entire lifespan (Hamre, 2012). The Washington State and University of Washington EA project is a multi-million dollar initiative to improve early education. It involves several educational and governmental organizations, as well as numerous coaches, teachers, data collectors, and many more support personnel. There is an academic need to understand how to best improve and deliver professional development to teachers and coaches so that they can retain and put their skills into practice for maximum impact.

Coaching and COPs are both promising, yet still not fully understood, forms of early childhood education professional development. Academic literature has shown that coaching fits the needs of teachers because it is individualized and ongoing. In-service teacher professional development such as training and conferences can result in temporary improvement in teacher knowledge, but coaching can sustain, and translate that understanding into changes in teachers' instructional and behavioral practices (see Appendix F).

Academic literature on COPs has demonstrated several benefits to teachers, such as reduced isolation, and improved feelings of empowerment. With this study I endeavored to understand the intersection between coaching and COPs. Do all coaches report the same benefits from their own experiences with COPs? This project is a first step to understanding the basic characteristics of a little-researched topic: professional development for early childhood education coaches with an emerging professional development tool, COPs. As a first step, I conducted a survey of coaches to gauge coaches' perceived benefits, differing demographics, and structure/content characteristics of the coach COPs. This is a descriptive study with some exploratory correlational analyses.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

Snell, Forston, Stanton-Chapman, and Walker (2013) found that early childhood professional development and training was often passive, episodic, fragmented and not connected to daily teaching or classroom life. There is one major shortcoming to the one-shot training model (often referred to as “train and pray” because there is often no follow-up after training to check on attendees’ progress in the content area because it would impact classroom practice). The lack of follow-up after a training or conference session highlights the need for forms of professional development that are active, including small group or one-on-one interaction, and related to real classroom occurrences. COPs and coaching seem to meet all of these criteria:

Finally, although several experiential forms of professional development have been described as those holding [the] most promise for supporting [the] application of knowledge, skills, or dispositions in practice contexts (e.g., coaching, communities of practice), descriptive information is needed about whether and how these practices have been implemented systematically and reported in the EC professional development research literature. (Snyder et al., 2012, 189-190)

Snyder et al. (2012) propose that both coaching and COPs hold promise as forms of professional development that could break the mold of the standard workshops and promote teacher knowledge, skills, and dispositions, especially when coaches are in the fragile, nascent stage in need of individualized and intensive support (Aikens & Akers, 2011, p. 2).

There are several bodies of literature on early childhood education that address coaching (Aikens & Akers, 2011; Isner et al., 2011) and COPs (Buysse et al., 2003; Bradley, 2004; Brody & Friedman, 2012; Caudle, Moran, & Hobbs, 2014; Hoffman et al., 2009; Kuh, 2012). However, there are virtually no published studies on the phenomenon of coaches who participate in COPs. It is

common to encourage childcare providers to engage in COPs, in addition to their regular coaching, or professional development repertoire. EA values the guiding principle of the parallel process, which, applied here, would encourage coaches to participate in the same types of professional development experiences they recommend to teachers. It behooves us to understand how, and in what ways, coaching and COPs complement one another, especially among Washington State EA coaches who participate in COPs. Coaches' COPs are worthy of academic study to understand this study's research questions.

It is hoped that the answers to this study's research questions will provide insight into how coach and provider COPs differ and align, and where the study of these forms of professional development should go in the future. The reported benefits of teacher COPs (such as reduced feelings of isolation, an improved sense of empowerment, and the instruction of novice teachers) are worthy in their own right, and have important implications for the recruitment and retention of coaches in early childhood systems. The following section provides an organizational frame for the literature review to follow.

Organization of Literature Review

I will begin by discussing COPs, with an overview of my inclusion and exclusion criteria. Next I will discuss the themes that I deduced from the systematic literature review conducted on COPs. I will conclude the section on literature on COPs with my rationale for the analogous nature between coaches and providers that led me to believe that the benefits of COPs could hold true for coaches as well as teachers.

In the next section I will address the role of coaches in early childhood instruction. Coaches aim to support providers to improve their practices and quality rating score, to the benefit of themselves as professionals, and ultimately the children and families that they serve. Next I will hypothesize about the role of coaches in COPs because there is little literature that addresses the

intersection of these early childhood forms of professional development. I will finish this chapter with a reiteration of the justification for why it is important to study this particular phenomenon.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria: COPs

I reviewed articles published from 1991 through the present. This starting year—1991—marks the publication of Etienne and Wenger’s landmark work on communities of practice, *Situated Learning*. Using the University of Washington library system databases, I searched Educational Source and ERIC for peer-reviewed, data-based, academic journal articles. My search terms included “early childhood special education”, “early childhood education”, “preschool”, and “day care”. I combined these terms with: “communities of practice”; “professional learning communities”; “inquiry groups”; and “critical friends groups”, in all possible combinations.

As noted in the introduction, for the purposes of this study COPs is defined as any group of professionals that are connected by shared practice and a mission to improve their skills in a prearranged area of focus by regularly interacting in groups to share stories, challenges, and resources. These groups then set collective and individual goals, and hold each other accountable to monitor progress (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Snyder et al., 2012). In a descriptive systematic literature review of early childhood education professional development, Snyder et al. (2012) posited that both coaching and COPs could be important but untapped sources of effective professional development (pp. 189-190). In keeping with the elements of that definition, I sourced studies that clearly described experiential professional development, had a prearranged area of focus, consisted of at least three people, and met more than once. I excluded studies that included kindergarten within a K-12 sample in which the kindergarten COP group results were not covered in their own section or dataset; that is, studies were excluded if the kindergarten group was indistinguishable from older ages. I planned to exclude any studies in which the COP met only once; however there were no such cases.

Results of Literature on COPs

I identified 15 articles in my original 2015 search. Using the same search parameters, I found an additional 21 articles published between 2015 and 2017. Of those 21 articles, only two met the final inclusion criteria discussed above (Sawyer, Manz, Martin, Hammond, & Garrigan, 2016 and Gerdes, & Jefferson, 2015). The most common forms of data collection noted in the literature were interviews ($n=6$) and observation ($n=4$). Most of the studies were conducted in preschools ($n=5$), Kindergarten ($n=2$) or childcare centers, or family childcare homes ($n=3$). Several studies referred to the participants as working in the “early childhood sector” (Cherrington & Thornton, 2013) or treated the COP as the unit of participation itself (Hoffman et al., 2009). I found three prevalent themes in this body of literature. The first one was that COPs reduced the feelings of isolation that early childhood educators felt by connecting them with peers who had had similar experiences. The second theme was the empowerment that teachers felt when they were able to solve problems, and learn from each other in groups. The last one was the importance of COPs to novice teachers as a means of support and professional development. I will elaborate and provide examples from the articles in the following subsections.

Isolation. It is common in early childhood that there are one or two adults in a room at a time. Another common experience is that the early childhood classroom is located in a larger school where there is no other preschool class or teacher with whom to communicate. Brody and Friedman (2012) studied six Israeli Kindergarten and Preschool teachers who were the only early childhood teachers in their schools. These teachers came together to explore how to teach the topic of the Holocaust to very young children. The teachers sought the support of a community “out of fear, frustration, or sense of this topic that is bigger than life (sic), complex, and has no clear happy ending” (Brody & Friedman, 2012, p. 190). Their COP was a means of resilience and self-care in the face of a difficult topic (Brody & Friedman, 2012, p. 186).

Bradley (2004) relays that community and membership is especially important for a workforce in which “abysmal conditions promote a high employee turnover rate for most childcare centers, with the national annual rate as high as 40 percent to 42 percent” (p.351). Bradley (2004) goes on to discuss the trials new teachers face, saying, “Novice Childcare workers do not just experience isolation but doubt, frustration, fear, and anxiety because of a lack of support, direction, and collaboration with others in their community” (p. 356).

Puig and Recchia (2008) describe a scenario in which “the new teachers expressed the value of having a forum for coming together to talk to others who understood their challenges” (p.344). This study found evidence that COPs can reduce feelings of isolation, and create camaraderie in newfound communities in which members can help each other to solve problems by sharing information, vent frustrations, and celebrate victories. Puig and Recchia, (2008) found that novice teachers:

[...] had been experiencing a lack of support in the field. They recognized that informal support networks might be an effective way to compensate for the lack of formal support, but explained that the process of reaching out to colleagues felt time-consuming and difficult, like “an added job” in addition to the usual rigors of teaching young children ‘an added job’ (p. 340)

Gebbie et al., (2012) tell the story of several teachers experiencing feelings of isolation or being alone in their jobs: “It’s hard because most of us are the only preschool teachers at our school. Sometimes you just feel like you have to deal with it and there’s no one else that understands what’s going on at your school” (p. 42). Even if teachers did not report increased efficacy from the COP interventions, their feelings of isolation were alleviated: “I think during this study it was nice to talk to other teachers, just to know that there are other people having (sic) these difficulties, too. Just getting ideas from other teachers was helpful” (Gebbie et al., 2012, p. 42). Teachers found value in the opportunity to meet, discuss and share strategies, as well as relate to one another’s

challenges and frustrations. It was an environment “where they can interact, ask each other questions, give advice and share ideas” (p. 44).

Empowerment. Despite the seemingly positive effect of reducing feelings of isolation, communities of practice do not generally form organically, and they often need some sort of external guidance, at least in the beginning. Cherrington and Thornton (2013) found that COPs often needed support from outside the core community:

To be effective, however, such an approach demands that teacher communities of practice have the necessary structural support (e.g. time and spaces for regular, ongoing meetings) and internal processes that build trust. Such services are likely to require significant support, such as that provided by a skilled external facilitator, if they are to be able to engage in the depth of reflective dialogue with colleagues required to support children’s learning or be open to feedback and critique from others in the wider center community. (p. 128)

COPs might initially need “expert” guidance to build leadership capacity, and to function with regularity and rigor in their reflective and critical thinking about classroom practice. Cherrington and Thornton (2013) noted that expert leaders were able to develop and empower members of the core community, who in turn took ownership of their own COPs. Developing leaders who can facilitate the COP builds empowerment and ownership of the teachers’ own personal professional development that can often be more powerful than conventional methods of training. Christ and Wang (2013) remind us that often teachers are dispossessed of power or autonomy in their own classrooms:

While early childhood teachers possess a wealth of instructional, practical, institutional, and personal knowledge that can (and should) be used to make choices about their practices, top-down organization in programs such as Head Start often make it difficult for teachers to exercise agency in their teaching. (p. 352)

Even when teachers feel empowered in their classrooms, that feeling can end at the classroom door. Often teachers do not feel that they have a voice in the programmatic aspects of their schools or centers, such as curricula and schedules. Christ and Wang (2013) go on to explain how teachers can empower themselves by examining their own strengths and practices in COPs:

The COP model provided a context in which teachers could activate their agency by contributing their personal and professional strengths and local situated knowledge to planning, implementing, reflecting, discussing, and adapting research-based vocabulary practices in their classroom. (p. 367)

Christ and Wang (2013) found that in current systems in which guidelines and standards are handed down to teachers with little opportunity for them to provide input, COPs offers a platform for teachers to meet, share ideas, and take charge of their own learning and development within the context of their situated practice. Caudle, Moran, and Hobbs (2014) compare COPs with a common training experience, saying, “Situating learning helps ensure that teachers grapple with relevant issues and challenges, learning from the inside-out rather than depending on one-shot, outside-in expert knowledge” (p. 57). Kuh (2012) echoes this sentiment, stating that COPs are a form of training “that move[s] from isolated one-shot workshops towards programs that integrate professional learning within the context of on-site teams that have critical reflection on practice at the core of their work” (p. 21).

In traditional training, teachers take time outside of the classroom to sit in a room and listen to an expert lecture on a topic that the teachers have only passively selected, choosing from a list of options at a conference. It is also common that school administrators or center directors select the training. The teachers take what they have learned and they leave with that information, often with little or no follow-up. In COPs, the teachers choose the topic, create the content, and follow-up in ongoing sessions related to the given topic.

Gebbie et al., (2012) found that teachers in COPs felt more confident, and self-efficacious, which resulted in more effective interventions, such as praise and reinforcement (p. 36). One participant noted that “she felt that what helped her most was hearing what methods worked for other people” from the community of learners (Gebbie et al., 2012, p. 40).

In a system in which professional development goals and methods are largely decided at the district or program level, COPs are an opportunity for providers to take charge of their own professional development. Members of COPs collaborate to decide on content and hold each other accountable to goals. They are their own experts. COPs are an ongoing and inside-out rather than “one-shot” form of professional development (Kuh, 2012). Novice teachers found that COPs were an alternate form of support, when other supports were not available.

Support for novice teachers. Novice teachers found that COPs were an alternate form of support, where other supports were not available. Bradley (2004) documented the cases of five inexperienced, novice childcare teachers who were isolated, or “sequestered,” from the experience and knowledge of veteran teachers, and thus needed to rely on their own personal resources for knowledge and professional improvement. Bradley (2004) added the caveat that “collaborating with experienced members of the community through talk can be part of the learning process, but cannot replace learning by observing them” (pp. 349-350). Outside-of-class COPs are beneficial but they should be supplemented with in-class interactions between community members, such as modeling, teaming, or co-teaching. Novice teachers do not just need to see and work with experienced instructors to learn new skills with fluency; these childcare providers formed their identities and membership in their COP by observing and working alongside older members of their communities (p. 349).

Gebbie et al. (2012) found that COPs were especially useful for novice special education teachers:

Because the special education teachers often felt somewhat isolated as the only preschool teachers at their school, they benefited from the forum of the online learning community. This was especially beneficial for the first-year beginning teachers who had not yet developed contacts with other preschool teachers (p. 44)

Thus COPs seem like the perfect fit for early childhood educators and special educators because they connect often detached groups of teachers who are subject to high rates of job dissatisfaction, turnover and feelings of isolation.

Discussion of literature review on COPs

Communities of practice show promise as a professional development tool in early childhood education. COPs are especially useful for childcare providers who are often isolated from other professional adults, and feel disempowered. The literature here shows that COPs reduce feelings of isolation, which is especially helpful for early childhood teachers and novice teachers who often feel alone and unsupported. COPs give participating teachers the opportunity to take responsibility for their own professional learning. The research in this area is still at a nascent stage, and there is much room for further research on the benefits of COPs. For example, I found no research articles that address on the effects of COPs on early childhood coaches. Early childhood coaches might have the same issues that affect early childhood teachers: they might have transitioned to a new career role and found themselves novices; they might feel isolated by the structural challenges of their jobs; and they could experience self-doubt as they straddle coaching and administrative roles.

Early childhood coaches, who often drive relatively long distances to coaching facilities, also work in relative isolation. Washington State early childhood coaches are based in regional offices throughout the state. They have limited contact with the cohort of other coaches who have varying levels of experience and seniority, because most coaching occurs in the field, separating

coaches by time and distance. Anecdotally, coaches report having extremely full schedules and caseloads that do not allow much time for reflective sessions with peers.

Very few articles provided much or any information on the structure, process or dosage of COPs. No articles provided clear examples of protocols, or schedules of how COP meetings should proceed. There was also almost no information on how long meetings should be or how often groups should meet. It would be valuable in the future to find a “sweet spot” of COP dosage. Researchers would also want to know the common structural and content characteristics of successful COPs, such as group size and leadership, among others.

In the Brody and Friedman (2012) study, the community of teachers decided to increase the size of the group from six members to 10, in order to gain more variety of experience and opinion. The teachers indicated that leadership was important to encouraging deep questioning, trust, feedback, and a sense of equality among veteran and novice teachers. Brody and Friedman (2012) found that strong leadership resulted in COPs that were focused, goal oriented, and “not a waste of time” (pp. 192-193). However, further research is needed into best practices in terms of the size of the group, intensity, dosage, and the structure of COPs.

Most of the articles concerned research into small numbers of participants and listed small sample sizes as a limitation even for qualitative studies. This survey of coaches’ COPs will add more descriptive data to the existing literature base and provide some quantitative data for analysis, among a larger population of Washington state coaches (approximately 300). Obviously, literature on teacher COPs is not perfectly analogous to coaches. However it is the closest body of research that exists and is a good starting point for analysis. There are several strong logical links: 1) coaches and providers share similar goals to improve teaching practice in childcare; 2) coaches are often hired because of their experience as childcare providers.

Coaching literature

There is an abundance of research on early childhood coaching. This includes several systematic literature reviews of early childhood professional development that contain data on coaching in early childhood education (Schachter, 2015; Snell et al., 2012; Snyder et al., 2012). Due to the multitude of existing collections of coaching and professional development literature, I did not conduct a systematic and comprehensive review of this literature. As an alternative, I searched for articles that closely met a “goodness of fit” for the current study. Goodness of fit would entail, firstly, relatively recent studies. Secondly, I looked for studies in which coaching is investigated as a means of professional development in early childhood education. Thirdly, the setting of the study would ideally be within the context of a QRIS or Head Start program (Howard et al., 2014; Tout, Isner, & Zaslow, 2011; Zaslow, Tout, Halle, Vick, & Lavelle, 2010). I did not need to understand coaching as a whole. I wanted to focus on the practice-based coaching model that EA adopted from Head Start, and how practice-based coaching functions within the greater structure of QRIS and/or Head Start programs.

Coaching in QRIS settings is different from what is described more broadly in the early childhood education literature. QRIS coaching has several advantages, such as a model or framework that defines success, as well as ratings that can be used as a baseline from which to operate (Tout et al., 2011, p. 5). EA provides a quality rating structure that is the “House” framework, as well as the practice-based coaching model to provide consistent coaching support to providers. While not all coaching models are exactly alike, they share many key characteristics that make them useful for analysis in this group of literature. Lloyd and Modline (2012) describe these similarities as follows:

Despite the variation in coaching models, common features exist. Program-level models that focus on changing teachers’ behavior include the following steps: (1) building relationships with teachers; (2) observing, modeling, and advising in the classroom; (3) meeting with

teachers to discuss classroom practices, provide support and feedback, and assist with problem solving for classroom challenges; and (4) monitoring progress toward identified goals. This form of professional development differs from typical early childhood education professional development, which generally consists of “one-shot” activities — such as workshops — that do not allow for breadth or depth of exploration on a particular topic. (p. 3)

There are several early childhood coaching models that studies have linked to positive outcomes. Many of these models share key characteristics, such as those present in the EA practice-based coaching model. How and what effect these characteristics have on improved teacher practices and skills is still largely unknown.

Dominant Themes in Coaching Literature

I found two dominant themes in the chosen literature base covering coaching. The first theme was what Howard et al. (2014) describe as the “black box” of coaching, where inputs and outputs are known, but the functioning inside the “black box” is less clear. The second theme was that professional development and training for coaches was either not described in studies, or was not individualized to meet the needs of coaches, as it was for providers. I will elaborate more on these themes in the following sections.

The “Black Box”. Howard et al. (2014) describe coaching as a “black box” in which the inputs are known, and the outputs are generally improved teaching practice. However exact function and interactions of mechanisms in the box are unknown. Coaching is generally introduced in combination with accompanying interventions, usually the standard workshop. The key characteristics of coaching are established, such as feedback, observation, and goal setting. In combination with training, coaching has been linked to positive outcomes. The details beyond these assertions are unclear. Howard et al. (2014) found that coaching was often included in a package of complementary professional development methods (training, in-service), and that the dosage and

efficacy of its individual parts was largely unstudied, and lacking in detail, including how much coaching training is necessary for desired outcomes (p. 3). In the current study on the perceptions and experiences of COPs among coaches, I hope to clarify the professional development picture for coaches. There is a need to study several specific aspects of coaching: dosage, recipient and coaching training/delivery mode (Howard et al., 2014, pp. 3-5)

Tout et al. (2011) report that the “type of training activities, length and frequency of coaching, and how training was joined with different training could not be distinguished on account of absence of detail in announcing of highlights (p. 4). The intricacies of coaching are not readily available in the current literature on coaching. There are structural and logistical characteristics of coaching, such as dosage or caseload size. There is also the matter of which coaching model is used and what training coaches receive on how to provide key elements of coaching, such as feedback, observations, goal setting, and relationship management. Despite this gap in the literature, coaching is still consistently linked to quality outcomes.

In a study by Mattera, Lloyd, Fishman, and Bangser (2013), the coaching model called for a dosage of at least 90 minutes per week (one hour observation, and a 30-minute session) with a lead and assistant teacher. Coaches reported that they often met only three or four times per month and sometimes for only 60 minutes. Finding time to confer was difficult. Even in academic studies, coaching is a highly individualized and susceptible to change at the discretion of practitioners. Coaches had an average caseload of four classrooms, but some as many as 13 (Mattera et al., 2013, p. 28). Snyder, Hemmeter, and Fox (2015) describe how the practice-based coaching model is a promising job-embedded tool for practitioners to implement evidence-based practices.

Coaching is associated with positive outcomes; however, the coaching process has not been broken down into its elemental processes in order to understand which aspects of the coaching cycle are fundamental. The efficacy of coaching in the long-term is in question: do coaches have an impact on teacher instruction that is more durable than other more conventional, and less expensive

or intensive means of professional development, especially when the coaches are no longer present? (Schachter, 2015, p. 1075) “Many studies in the literature do not provide information about the dosage of coaching. Among the studies with information available, coaching visits most commonly happen on a weekly or bi-monthly schedule, and the duration is under one year” (Tout et al., 2011, p. 4). Positive teacher outcomes have been linked to coaching in higher quality early learning environments. Coaching itself is based on a series of complex professional and personal interactions involving multiple stages, steps and factors, all within the context of a collaborative partnership between the coach and provider. Length, duration, frequency and fidelity to the chosen coaching program are all factors that could alter efficacy or have little effect at all. The inner workings and precise mechanisms of coaching are yet to be revealed completely, including how program facilitators train coaches to implement the coaching and training models.

Professional development for coaches. Building an infrastructure that allows for continuous quality assurance and monitoring of the coaching model is essential for high-quality program management (Lloyd & Modline, 2012, p. v). The process involves two factors that have impacts on coaching. Firstly, stakeholders should choose a coaching model that best fits their community, and then hire coaches that are qualified for this role. The second factor is that coaches should receive initial training and orientation to this model, as well as ongoing support and supervision to promote consistency and to give coaches a space to solve coaching problems.

Coaches will often come from various related fields; experience and skill sets are bound to vary among coaches, who might bring practices from previous work with differing coaching models and professional development philosophies (Tout et al., 2011, p. 8). Tout et al. (2011) found that QRIS administrators often hastily assemble coaching staff. Administrators should take time to hire experienced coaches, and maintain their training with involvement in their everyday coaching interactions (Lloyd & Modline, 2012, p. 13).

The manner in which coaches receive initial or ongoing professional learning support and development is not covered in all the articles. Tout et al. (2011) assert that coaches involved in QRIS coaching should have “specialized training to orient them to the coaching model” (p. 6). Mattera et al. (2013) describe how coaches received enhancement (i.e. curricular) support from trainers and administrative support from grantee sites, alongside the providers that they coach. The same study found that providers wanted coaches to have more in-depth knowledge about how to *coach to* a program or curricula (Mattera et al., 2013, p. 32).

While the importance of ongoing professional support and development for teachers is clear, coaches also need a solid support infrastructure that includes supervision, training, and reflective time with peers and colleagues. Initial coach training ensures consistency among coaches in the support they provide. The ongoing coach support and supervision is necessary to ensure quality coaching and a place for coaches and supervisors to solve problems with the coaching model. Tout et al. (2011) discuss the benefits of coaches having supervision and support, saying, “It is important that they have ongoing coaching of their own and supervision to support them in their role. This support may be delivered through individual or group meetings, with opportunities to reflect on experiences in the field” (Tout et al., 2011, p. 8). Another beneficial source of support comes from interactions with fellow coaches. “Both formal and informal meetings are held to share and reflect on experiences. Coaches report that they benefited from sharing their successes and challenges with other coaches” (Tout et al., 2011, p. 6). EA provides initial coaching framework training, as well as ongoing support in the form of webinars and consultation. COPs provide an additional opportunity for coaches to create support for each other in both informal and formal settings that meet their needs in terms of content and schedule.

Conclusion: Where Coaching and COPs meet

Both COPs and coaching have been shown to be beneficial. Teachers report that COPs contribute to positive outcomes with respect to their personal and professional wellbeing. The

purpose of this study is to ascertain whether these benefits are similar for coaches who participate in coaching COPs. Coaching is a promising professional development tool, but the research evidence is still growing. Coaches often get the same training as teachers. Also, what aspects of coaching practice do COPs support, according to coach reports?

EA's Guiding Principle of parallel process suggests that researcher should study and analyze coaching professional development as we would for teachers. COPs offer meaningful experiences to reflect with other coaches who are all looking for support in a complex profession that, like teaching, can be isolating, especially in one's first years as a novice coach.

Research Questions

In review, this study addressed the following seven research questions here for the reader's reference while reading the following chapters:

1. What are a) the structural characteristics and b) the content characteristics of the coaches' communities of practice?
2. To what extent do coaches perceive benefits (or value) to their coaching due to their participation in COPs?
3. What do Washington State coaches who have engaged in communities of practice report about the experience?
4. What are the demographics of coaches participating in communities of practice?
5. Are coaches' experiences different across varying COP configurations or protocols, and differing demographics?
6. If coaches do not participate in COPs, how do they meet their professional development needs?
7. What are the similarities and differences between coaches who participate in COPs and those who do not, in terms of perceived improvement of coaching practices and perceived value to coaching work?

Chapter III: Methods

This is a descriptive study aimed at mapping the landscape of coaches' COPs in the context of Washington State's QRIS system. The primary objective of the study was to understand the demographics, structure and content of coach COPs. In addition, I conducted some exploratory correlational analyses, in SPSS by way of 2-way ANOVA tests. I conducted these tests to understand if reported experiences and benefits that coaches report differ depending on the changing demographics of coaches across the state, and many possible configurations that COPs can take.

Participants

All the EA coaches ($n=285$) were invited to participate in the study. A total of 72 coaches completed the survey. As an incentive, I selected 15 of these participants to receive a \$25 Amazon Gift Card. Various regional organizations partner with EA to employ coaches (ChildCare Aware of Washington, Washington state's Early Childhood Education and Assistance program or ECEAP; and some local agencies such as Community-Minded Enterprises in Spokane and Catholic Community Services in Yakima). Coaches are required to have higher education qualifications in early childhood or a related field, with a bachelor's degree preferred, as well as experience as an early childhood teacher, some computer literacy for data entry, and a valid driver's license. The basic job responsibilities of an EA coach can be seen in the sample job description in Appendix G. Employers provide onboarding and other support to coaches as they are hired.

The coaches work in one of six regional offices in Washington (King County, Pierce County, Olympic, Northwest, Southwest, Eastern or Central; see Appendix D). Within the recruitment and hiring process, there is an attempt to find qualified coaches who share some of the cultural and linguistic characteristics of each region. EA coaches have varied roles and responsibilities. They work with early childhood providers, center directors, and family childcare

owners or proprietors. Coaches might provide technical assistance in addition to coaching, as well as rating readiness consultations with centers and programs that are preparing to enter EA.

Coach Training. During this study, I was a doctoral candidate and research assistant at the University of Washington. I work at Cultivate Learning on the professional development and coaching team. Cultivate Learning (formerly Childcare Quality and Early Learning) is a University of Washington-affiliated research agent, conducting numerous research projects. Cultivate Learning is responsible for training coaches on the EA coaching framework, as well as data collection during the EA rating process. Regional Childcare Aware and Childcare Resources offices across the state are contacted by the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to hire coaches in the seven geographic regions of Washington State (see Appendix D). EA coaches have access to a number of training and support services provided by the Department of Early Learning (DEL) through a contract with Cultivate Learning at the University of Washington.

The initial Coach Framework Training is a two-day, in-person training. Topics covered include: in-depth presentation of the practice-based coaching model, discussion of three guiding principles (cultural responsiveness, parallel process, and resilience), and opportunities to learn about and practice coaching skills. The participants are introduced to the ongoing support services for coaches, including COPs.

Coaches are required to be proficient in the two observation measures used in the Early Achievers QRIS. These are the *Environmental Rating Scale (ERS)* and the *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)*. Cultivate Learning provides training in these measures. Coaches must participate in initial training in the measures, obtain proficiency by achieving reliability status, and maintain their certification each year.

Cultivate Learning provides additional ongoing support to EA coaches. Participation is encouraged but is not specifically required. Monthly webinars are interactive and include informational multimedia presentations on topics that coaches are facing in the field. Haring Center

internships are three-day internships provided on-site at the Haring Center at the University of Washington in their inclusive early childhood program. The focus of these internships is on individualizing the curriculum for young learners and addressing challenging behavior. Coaches might receive up to one hour of individual consultation with a member of the Cultivate Learning coach support team. These sessions are customized to the needs of the individual coach.

Consultations can occur in-person, or via phone or teleconferencing. Coaches learn about COPs from webinars, consultation, and the initial coach training. Several webinars have been modeled on the Professional Learning Community Protocol, including one procedure for conducting a COP, which was produced by Cultivate Learning. Research basics and theory on COPs are introduced in the initial Coach Framework Training. Further help in developing COPs for coaches or the providers that they support can be received in one-on-one consultations with the Cultivate Learning support team on demand (see Appendix K). There is also an online Coaching Companion that coaches can use to post and comment on videos, download resources, and otherwise collaborate distally.

Human subject procedures

I submitted an Exempt IRB application to the University of Washington's Human Subjects Division. The College of Education IRB liaison recommended that I submit the application because the participants were protected in that they would not be identified by name. Analysis was done on an aggregate level, and could not affect their job performance or security. Even though Cultivate Learning is in charge of evaluating the coaching framework, we are not responsible for the hiring or the evaluation of coaches on their job performance. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary, which I made explicitly clear in the survey invitation (see Appendix J).

Apparatus and Materials

Survey Development. The initial survey draft was based on my review of the literature and my experience as a member of the Cultivate Learning coach support team. After drafting a first

edition of the survey, I elicited feedback on the survey from members of the coach and professional development team, academic advisors and doctoral reading committee members, former professors from survey methods class, coaches, and writing group members from a variety of fields in and outside of education.

For the first round of revisions I shared the survey tool with members of the immediate coaching and professional development team at the UW's Cultivate Learning. Team members helped me to clarify my research questions and rewrite some survey items so that they would be clearer to the participants. My team leader also suggested removing items that did not directly link to my research questions, or combining a few questions with overlapping purposes, to limit the time needed to take the survey to between 30-45 minutes.

The next round of revisions came when I sent my survey to the professors on my dissertation committee and chair/advisor. The committee suggested that I construct a crosswalk to ensure that I was answering all of my research questions, and that all survey items contributed to answering research questions. A member of my committee also suggested changing some responses to Likert scale questions by giving them negative wording in order to ensure that coaches did not fill in the survey on "auto-pilot". I also changed the order of some questions to avoid possible order effects where mention was made of specific assessments. Some measures were moved to later in the survey in the hope that cognitive-based order effect measure error would not occur.

After these rounds of changes, I piloted the survey with two coach supervisors and a fellow graduate school student familiar with coaching and communities of practice. The coach supervisors are both former coaches, and still maintain a small coaching caseload. I emailed them a Word document copy of the survey, as well as the link. They completed the survey, timed themselves, and then wrote any notes or questions in Word Track Changes for my review. These coach supervisors received \$25 Gift cards as compensation for their time and effort. I also met several times with the

UW Department of Statistics, Consulting Service to discuss the type of data and analysis that I could expect from the question as I had written at the time.

The final version was constructed as an online survey using the University of Washington's license for the Qualtrics Survey computing platform. I attended the one-hour workshop titled "Qualtrics 101: Introduction" Offered by the UW College of Education Technology Center. I met with a tutor at the Center for Social Science Computation and Research (CSSCR) on the UW campus, who recommended Qualtrics as the preferable method of surveying over other web-based systems such as SurveyMonkey, because Qualtrics provides basic customer support and more elaborate data analysis and representation resources.

The questionnaire begins with an introductory paragraph that orients the participant to the context of the study (see Appendix H for complete survey). It was also important to define COPs and name similar concepts and the names used to describe them. Because of the online format, I was not able to procure signed letters of consent before conducting my research. The College of Education IRB liaison suggested that I should begin with a statement verifying that the survey was optional, and that by continuing they were consenting to having their responses included in the study's data (see Q56). This was followed by a question to distinguish coaches who had and had not participated in COPs. Coaches who had not participated in a COP were then directed to a modified survey. The questions in the modified survey had two purposes: firstly, to ascertain which professional development strategies they had used (e.g. conferences and trainings, peer mentoring, etc.) and, secondly, to identify how effective they felt these methods were in terms of helping them to coach more effectively and feel connected to their coaching colleagues (see Appendix H, Questions 41, 57-61). These same Likert-style questions were also used with the COP coaches so that I could compare the respondents' reports from COPs and other trainings.

All the coaches provided information on their general demographics. The demographic questions began with common questions to ascertain the respondents' regions, age range, and gender (see Appendix H, Questions 43-54). Later questions established the proportion of coaches who had participated in ongoing support, such as Cultivate Learning webinars, initial coach training, consultation, EA institutes, and Haring Center internships.

Survey Distribution

I conferred with the lead technology manager at Cultivate Learning to send an email with a survey link to all current coach contacts on the UW email service, Convio. Coach email contacts are updated every month from rosters received from our community partners (Department of Early Learning and ECEAP). I chose an electronic mail only survey because I estimated that it would be difficult to reach coaches, and a burden to them to have to stop their work to answer a survey by phone or surface mail. I believed an online survey would be the easiest mode for coaches, and hoped that this would increase the number of participants, while also keeping the costs low.

The email included an introduction to the current study, as well as a link to the survey via Qualtrics. I emailed two reminders to participants: the first two weeks after the original email; and then again one month after the first email to boost the response rate. During the monthly coach webinar, I included a PowerPoint slide reminding coaches to participate in the survey. The reminder emails were as succinct and engaging as possible, highlighting the \$25 incentive, and thanking the anonymous coaches who had already participated in the hope that other coaches would be inspired to follow their example (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009, p. 282). A return rate of surveys at 70% would have been ideal. However, I estimated that a 20% to 33% return rate would be more realistic, which is common in many studies (Berends, 2012, p. 630).

Construct Validity

To ensure that Likert scale items “hang together” as similar items measuring the same construct, I conducted Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficients on Likert scale items when I had an *N* of larger than 30 participants (Berends, 2012, p. 630). For the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient, the standard in the field is a score at or above .70. I could have conducted reliability coefficients on Likert scale items earlier in the survey that were meant to ascertain how coaches who did not participate in COPs completed their professional development, but I did not do this because the sample size was quite small. The results from these scales are interesting but there is existing data within the Cultivate Learning organization that addresses this.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Qualtrics survey software produces a default report, which is included in its entirety in Appendix I. This includes a data visualization, usually a bar graph, and table of response data for each survey item. In the case of text answers, the text is included. To answer research question #5, i.e. “Are coaches’ COP experiences different across varying COP configurations or protocols, and differing demographics?”, I wanted to run comparisons on various demographics (e.g. age, race, region) and configurations (group size, duration, setting) with responses from Likert scale questions that ask coaches to report the perceived impact of COPs, what they had learned in COPs and how COPs improved their abilities to coach in terms of to varying skills and domains. Qualtrics allows users to filter reports to view data sorted by any of the survey items, with as few or as many of the responses included as desired. For example, I could view only coaches’ responses that reported that they were women, aged 18-25 and had either a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree in all *but* the Central region.

Upon initial analysis, there did not seem to be any major deviation in the data sorted for any of these demographics from the dataset as a whole. After sorting the responses for the three main

Likert scale questions that ask coaches about their perceived benefits of COPs, there were no discernible trends that did not fit that of the data on aggregate by demographics (age, region, gender, education, race), nor COPs configuration (protocol, leadership, group size, duration, meeting length, setting.)

Analysis of open-ended questions

I began with a list of *a priori* responses that I hypothesized coaches' responses would match. I conducted a similar data analysis tactics that I had implemented on previous projects when deducing themes and coding interview transcripts. I learned and practiced these methods in a two-quarter qualitative methodology course the University of Washington. Merriam (2009) was my guiding text in this process. I began by reading through the responses, marking and highlighting interesting passages as one might do while reviewing field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). On the second read through I began to make notes on emerging themes. After reviewing the notes, I then constructed several initial themes. I then read through them again and color-coded the passages according to theme. Finally, I wrote a short statement that described each theme, and reviewed the color-coded passages for goodness-of-fit within that theme.

Chapter IV: Results

I will begin by reporting the demographics of the participating coaches, as well as the reported content and structural characteristics of their COPs, to understand the context of who conducts COPs and how. Next I will summarize the coaches' perceived benefits of COP experiences, drawing from both the (quantitative) data and open-ended (qualitative) answers to the questionnaire. Finally, I will report on how survey respondents who have not participated in COPs access professional development, and the similarities and differences between the two groups. Next, I will discuss the implications of these results for each of the research questions, particularly for policy, practice and future research. I will then note the limitations of the study, drawing from both the literature and survey data.

Before discussing the results, note that you may notice some variation in participation by item. The number of coaches who responded to each item of the survey varied. I chose not to make all the items required before continuing on to the next question in the hope that more coaches would continue to the end of the survey, in case they did not understand or could not answer the question for any reason. This resulted in a varying number of responses (N) from item to item. In the next section I will describe the demographic data from the whole sample of participants who participated in the survey.

Descriptive Demographics

The email list of coaches that I used had a total of 310 names and emails. Out of the 310 emails that I sent out, 290 reached the coaches' inboxes. The remaining 20 gave a "hard bounce" message, most likely indicating that the email address had been deleted from the server, possibly because that coach was no longer employed in that region. Five of those 290 were members of the Cultivate Learning coach and professional develop team who had helped to refine the survey. That left 285 emails, of which 66 coaches completed the whole survey (23%). This is less than the 33%

for which I had hoped. Of the total participants, 72.97% ($n=54$) reported that they had participated in a COP, while 27.03% ($n=20$) had not participated in COPs. I will call these participants Non-COP coaches. (see Appendix I for complete set of raw data).

Gender, Race or Ethnicity, Age, Education, Training, Region (N=72). The vast majority of responding coaches were women, that is, 96.97% ($n=64$). There were only two male coaches (3.03%) in the sample (See Table 1). In terms of age, (50%, $n=33$) indicated that they were between the ages of 41-55 (see Table 2). The majority (74.24%, $n=49$) of the respondents were white. The next largest ethnic group was Hispanic or Latino at 13.64% ($n=9$). The percentage of participants who chose “prefer not to respond” was 6.06% ($n=4$). There were no participants who indicated that their race or ethnicity was Asian, Black or African American. A small percentage, (4.55%, $n=3$), of the participants indicated “other” as their race or ethnicity, and one participant answered “mixed” (See Table 3).

Coach participants were well educated: 63.64% of them ($n=42$) reported that they held Bachelor’s degrees; 30.30% ($n=20$) of coaches reported having earned their Master’s degree (see Table 4). The majority of coaches indicated that they had participated in the following training and professional development activities: initial coach training (81.82% $n=54$); webinars (92.42%, $n=61$); consultation (63.64%, $n=42$); Haring Center internships (74.24%, $n=49$). Only 43.94% ($n=29$) of the respondents had attended a session at an EA Institute (see Table 5). Coaches from the northwest region of Washington represented the largest group of participants at 25.76% ($n=17$), followed closely by: Eastern, 18.18% ($n=12$); both Central, and Southwest registered 16.67% ($n=11$); and Olympic, 13.64% ($n=9$) (see Appendix D). Respondents from King or Pierce counties participated in much lower numbers (6.06%, $n=4$; and 1.52%, $n=1$ respectively).

Table 1. Gender of participating coaches

Gender	%	<i>n</i>
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Male	3.03%	2
Female	96.97%	64
Other	0.00%	0
Total	100.00%	66

Table 2. Age ranges of participating coaches

Age Range	%	<i>n</i>
18-25	3.03%	2
26-40	30.30%	20
41-55	50.00%	33
56-60+	13.64%	9
I'd rather not say	3.03%	2
Total	100%	66

Table 3. Race/ethnicity of participating coaches

Race/Ethnicity	%	Count
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.52%	1
Asian	0.00%	0
Black or African American	0.00%	0
White or Caucasian	74.24%	49
Hispanic or Latino	13.64%	9
Prefer not to respond	6.06%	4

Other	4.55%	3
Total	100%	66

Table 4. Highest level of education completed by surveyed coaches

Level of Education	%	Count
High school	0.00%	0
Some college	0.00%	0
Associate's degree	4.55%	3
Bachelor's degree	63.64%	42
Master's degree	30.30%	20
Advanced graduate work (e.g. MD, JD, Ed.D. or Ph.D.)	1.52%	1
Total	100%	66

Table 5. Participation in coaching support training and resources

Training/Resources	%	Count
2-Day Initial Training	81.82%	54
Coach Webinars	92.42%	61
Coach Consultation	63.64%	42
EA Institutes	43.94%	29
Haring Center Internship	74.24%	49

Note. These data are from five separate survey items, all with $N=66$.

Structural characteristics of COPs

In the following subsections, I will provide the basic descriptive data addressing the structural characteristics of coaches' COPs in Washington State, such as duration, frequency, length, number of participants and other factors. Of the 72 participants, 75% ($n=54$) indicated that they had participated in a COP within the past year. It was important to me to ask only about current COPs so that the coaches' memories would be recent and, in theory, more accurate.

Participation, duration and length. To the survey item on the number of COP sessions that they participated in during the last year, a total of 56.6% ($n=30$) had participated in one to five COPs, 24.53% ($n=13$) in six to 10 COPs, and 18.87% ($n=10$) in more than 10 (see Table 6). $N=52$ responded to the item indicating the time frame in which they had participated in the same COP. The most common response was that that COPs lasted between six months to one year (36.54%, $n=19$), while 30.77%, ($n=16$) of groups lasted one to two years and 17.31% ($n=9$) lasted more than two years. Only 15.38% ($n=8$) lasted less than six months (see Table 7).

Table 6. Approximate number of COP meetings, according to coach report.

Answer	%	Count
1-5	56.60%	30
6-10	24.53%	13
More than 10	18.87%	10
Total	100%	53

Table 7. Duration of participation in their current COPs

Length of time	%	Count
Less than 6 months	15.38%	8

6 months to 1 year	36.54%	19
1 to 2 years	30.77%	16
More than 2 years	17.31%	9
Total	100%	52

Frequency. $N=52$ participants responded to the item on frequency, that is, how often the COP regularly met (see Table 8). Of these, 50% ($n=26$) reported that the COP met monthly, and 21.15% ($n=11$) met quarterly or four times per year. Two coaches reported that they met three times during the academic year, or once per quarter, excluding meeting in the summer months. Three coaches reported meeting weekly (5.77%). Two coaches who chose “other” indicated in the text box that they met “when some or all of the group could”. Another coach reported that the schedule “depends, some monthly, other quarterly”. In the last question of the survey, an open-ended prompt, one coach commented, “Ideally, we would meet monthly instead of quarterly as I think that too much time in between makes it hard to connect with peers and form ongoing, supportive relationships.” As you can see, there was some variance depending on schedules, availability of group members, and interpersonal relationships.

Table 8. Frequency of meeting with their COPs

Meeting Occurrence	%	Count
Weekly	5.77%	3
Monthly	50.00%	26
Bimonthly	11.54%	6
Quarterly (once in 4 months)	21.15%	11
Other (please specify)	11.54%	6
Total	100%	52

Descriptives of group. Item Q17 focused on the attributes that would describe their group. This item was a “choose all that apply” response type, meaning that each respondent could choose one response, or multiple answers, resulting in more selections to respond to the question ($N=129$ total selections, 52 respondents, or approximately 2.5 responses per person). In response, 35.66% ($n=46$) of the selections classified their group as “a group of similar professionals (e.g. coaches; see Table 9), and 10.08% ($n=13$) of selections indicated that groups set “professional goals”. However, only 7.75% ($n=10$) of the selections reported that the groups “followed-up on progress of goals in the next meeting” showing that goals were being formulated but the progress was not always monitored in subsequent meetings.

Table 9. Attributes that coaches selected to describe their current COP

Answer	%	Count
We were a group of similar professionals (e.g. coaches)	35.66%	46
We set personal or professional goals related to area of focus	10.08%	13
We had an opportunity to check in and talk about general issues related to our work	24.03%	31
We followed up on the progress of goals at the next meeting	7.75%	10
We chose an area of focus in which we wanted to improve practice	20.93%	27
Other (please specify)	1.55%	2
Total	100%	129

Note: Survey item is “choose all that apply”.

Protocols and structure. $N=52$ coaches responded to item Q19 regarding use of a guide or protocol for their COP: 75% ($n=39$) of coaches reported using a protocol, or some sort of official process to guide the COP. In the following survey item coaches were asked which protocols they used and 53.85% ($n=7$) of respondents used the “Professional Learning Community Protocol” created and provided by the Cultivate Learning coach support team (see Appendix K). The Cultivate Learning coach team has demonstrated this protocol in several coach webinars. The

protocol is available to coaches to download on the Coaching Companion, an online coaching tool for providers and coaches. One respondent each reported using one of the following protocols: the School Reform Initiative's Success Protocol; Helping Trios; Thrive Washington; and a protocol that they had created.

Group size. $N=52$ respondents responded to item Q22 on group size (see Table 10). Of these, 53.85% ($n=28$) of their groups had 10 or more members, the largest size range designation in the survey item, and 30.77% ($n=16$) reported group sizes of between five to nine members. A few (15.38, $n=8$) reported small group sizes of between two to four members.

Table 10. COP group size, according to coach report.

Group Size	%	Count
2-4	15.38%	8
5-9	30.77%	16
10 or more	53.85%	28
Total	100%	52

Length. Of the total ($N=52$) respondents that answered item Q23, (Table 11), an equal number of participants (38.46%, $n=20$) reported meeting lengths of 61-90 minutes and 90 or more minutes, while 23.08% ($n=12$) indicated that their COPs were approximately 31-60 minutes long. No coaches reported COP meetings of less than 30 minutes.

Table 11. Length of COP sessions in minutes

Group length	%	Count
30 minutes or less	0.00%	0
31-60 minutes	23.08%	12
61-90 minutes	38.46%	20

More than 90 minutes	38.46%	20
Total	100%	52

Leadership. $N=52$ responded to the survey item that addressed leadership or facilitation of a COP (Q24). Of these, 82.69% ($n=43$) indicated that there was an official “leader” or facilitator of the group. In the follow-up “choose all that apply” question, the respondents indicated the role of the facilitator (Q25, Table 12). The most common responsibility of the facilitator was “to keep the group ‘on track’” (29.05%, $n=43$). The next most common responsibility was to keep time (22.97%, $n=34$), while 14.86% ($n=22$) of responses indicated that the facilitator’s job was to “ensure that all members got a turn” i.e. to discuss, share and ask questions. Moreover, 14.86% ($n=22$), selections indicated that the facilitator would “explain and/or follow the protocol”. Only 13.51% ($n=20$) of the selection indicated that the facilitator helped to formulate goals or follow-up steps. In open-ended text boxes the coaches indicated that the facilitator’s role was: “To develop the focus for the group, and foster team building” or to “Provide context, hold accountable to group norms, goals and content”. Two coaches commented that the facilitator’s job was a rotating one that everyone assumed in turn.

Table 12. Reported roles of COP facilitators

Facilitator role	%	Count
To keep time	22.97%	34
To ensure that all members got a turn	14.86%	22
To keep the group "on track"	29.05%	43
To explain and/or follow the protocol	14.86%	22

To help write goals and/or follow-up steps	13.51%	20
Other (please specify)	4.73%	7
Total	100%	148

Note: Survey item is “choose all that apply”.

Setting. $N=56$ participants completed the survey item related to the COP setting. Of these, 83.93% ($n=47$) of the participants attended groups in person, while 12.5% ($n=7$) attended online, via web-based teleconferencing software such as Zoom or Skype.

Content Characteristics

Topics. The coaches noted a broad representation of topics in their COP meetings. I provided 15 choices of topics on this item. The coaches selected a total of $N=343$ selections on this “choose all that apply” item (see Appendix H, Q31). Among the most common topics were (see Table 13) developing partnerships with coaches (9.91%, $n=34$), practice-based coaching (9.33%, $n=32$), promoting self-reflection (also 9.33%, $n=32$), and action planning (9.04%, $n=31$).

Table 13. Topics that were addressed in the coaches’ COP sessions

Topic	%	Count
Behavior management/ challenging behaviors	6.41%	22
Curriculum	4.96%	17
Working with families	2.62%	9
Using data to make instructional decisions	5.54%	19
Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS)	7.87%	27
Environment Rating Scales (ERS)	7.58%	26

Practice-based coaching	9.33%	32
Identifying teacher goals	6.71%	23
Action planning with teachers	9.04%	31
Conducting focused observation	6.12%	21
Providing feedback	8.75%	30
Promoting teacher self-reflection	9.33%	32
Developing partnerships with teachers	9.91%	34
Modifications and individualization	5.25%	18
Other: (please list)	0.58%	2
Total	100%	343

Note: Survey item is “choose all that apply”.

Goals. The most common goal selections, was to “discuss problems and challenges in practice” (37.27%, $n=41$). Next in order of most selected was “professional goals” (20%, $n=22$) (Q34).

The participants also provided five short answers in the text box of the “other” selection. While all five were quite different, there was a common theme: that coaches used COPs to tackle large, conceptual projects such as to “develop departmental visions” or how to implement “performance standards” or new curricula, in this case Conscious Discipline. This question was again a “choose all that apply” item, with $N=110$ selections made. It would be interesting in the future to have coaches rank these in order of importance to their coaching.

Activities. The survey item asking coaches what activities they participated in with their COPs was also a “choose all that apply”, with $N=219$ selections. The two most common responses were that COPs were used to “share ideas” and “discuss problems and challenges” (20.09%, $n=44$

for both). The next most common response was to “share resources” (19.63%, $n=43$). The least common activity was to “discuss case studies” (10.05%, $n=22$)

Formation. For the question about whether COPs on their own (i.e. organically”, there was a fairly even spread across the scale. Combining “strongly disagree” and “disagree”, 32.66% ($n=16$) of the coaches indicated that their COPs did not form on their own. Combining “strongly agree” and “agree”, 30.62% ($n=15$) indicated that their COPs did form on their own, while 18.37% ($n=9$) indicated that they “neither agreed nor disagreed”.

Requirement. The following item in Likert scale was a question about whether COPs were a requirement. In response, 28.57% ($n=14$) “strongly agreed” that they were required to attend a COP and 22.45% ($n=11$) simply “disagreed” with that statement (see Table 14).

Table 14. Likert scale questions asking coaches to rate 1) how organically their COP formed; and 2) if they were required to attend a COP.

Question	My COP formed on our own, or organically		I am required to attend a COP	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Strongly agree	16.33%	8	28.57%	14
Agree	14.29%	7	14.29%	7
Somewhat agree	12.24%	6	6.12%	3
Neither agree nor disagree	18.37%	9	14.29%	7
Somewhat disagree	6.12%	3	4.08%	2
Disagree	18.37%	9	22.45%	11
Strongly disagree	14.29%	7	10.20%	5
Total		49		49

Reported Benefits of COPs

On item Q28, the participants ($N=49$) were asked to report their level of agreement with statements related to the impacts of COPs on coaching using a seven-point Likert scale question. The results are shown in Table 15. The participants reported generally positive agreement with the benefits of COPs. On subscale items, the coaches either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that COPs had a positive effect on their coaching. Here I have combined the percentages for “strongly agree” and “agree,” for two reasons. The first one is that “strongly agree” and “agree” are the two selections at the extreme of the seven-point Likert scale. Secondly, in all but one case, the two adjacent selections also constituted the first and second most common responses that the participants selected. Combining “strongly agree” and “agree”, 69.39% ($n=34$) had time to reflect on and analyze practice; 65.3% ($n=32$) gained access to new resources; and 61.23% ($n=30$) reported that they improved their coaching practices between COP sessions. Equal proportions of respondents (57.14%, $n=28$) reported both “learned more about elements of coaching” and “found solutions to problems in my coaching practice”. Again equal percentages (55.1%, $n=27$) reported that their feelings of isolation were reduced and that they have received helpful feedback on their coaching.

There was less consistent responding on whether COPs helped coaches to learn to coach more effectively: 18.37% “strongly agreed” this was true and 38.78% “agreed”. In this case, the second highest proportion responded “neither agree nor disagree” (20.41%, $n=10$). I also included one item about a possible negative impact of COPs (item #4). In the case of the negatively or reverse-worded scale item, two respondents responded “strongly agree” or “agree” that COPs were a waste in terms of impact on their coaching. Combining “disagree” and “strongly disagree”, 59.18% ($n=29$) disagreed, which indicates an overall positive outcome for COPs on this subscale. This result suggests that coaches were not answering the Likert subscale items on “auto pilot” but comprehending, retrieving information, and making individual judgments (Berends, 2012, p. 633).

Table 15. Likert scale question, Q28 “How much do you agree with the following statements regarding the *impact* of your COP?”

Statement (mean; std deviation)	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I learned to coach more effectively ($M=2.65$; $SD=1.32$)	18.37%	38.78%	14.29%	20.41% ^a	4.08%	4.08%	0.00%
I gained access to new resources ($M=2.27$; $SD=1.24$)	30.61%	34.69%	22.45%	6.12%	2.04%	4.08%	0.00%
COPs were a waste of my time ($M=5.51$; $SD=1.5$)	2.04%	2.04%	8.16%	10.20%	18.37%	26.53%	32.65%
I found solutions to problems in my coaching practice ($M=2.71$; $SD=1.47$)	20.41%	36.73%	16.33%	10.20%	10.20%	6.12%	0.00%
I had time to reflect on and analyze my practices ($M=2.39$; $SD=1.48$)	28.57%	40.82%	14.29%	6.12%	2.04%	6.12%	2.04%
I learned more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.) ($M=2.57$; $SD=1.28$)	20.41%	36.73%	18.37%	18.37%	2.04%	4.08%	0.00%

I got helpful feedback on my practices ($M=2.73$; $SD=1.48$)	22.45%	32.65%	14.29%	16.33%	8.16%	6.12%	0.00%
I improved my coaching practices between COP sessions ($M=2.59$; $SD=1.40$)	22.45%	38.78%	12.24%	14.29%	8.16%	4.08%	0.00%

Note. Combined highest responses are in **bold** text.

¹This item is an exception, in which two adjacent selections do not constitute the highest percentages.

Coach reports. The following data show the reported benefits of learning as a result of COPs. The coaches answered subscale questions on the essential elements of the practice-based coaching cycle, EA Guiding Principles and use of technology in coaching ($N=49$). This item had eight components in total. The first four were the three components of practice-based coaching: reflection and feedback; shared goal setting; focused observations; and the collaborative partnerships in which practice-based coaching occurs (see Appendix A). The next three items corresponded to EA’s Guiding Principles: culturally responsive coaching; adult resilience; and parallel process (see Appendix C). The last question was a standalone item referring to using technology in coaching, a useful coaching support in a system in which providers are spread throughout a large geographic area, with access to technology such as the Coaching Companion.

Practice-based coaching. In this item, 36.73% ($n=18$) of coaches reported learning “a lot” about reflection and feedback (See Table 16), while 28.57% ($n=14$) of coaches reported learning “a moderate amount” about focused observations. Coaches were split on whether they learned “a lot” or “a little” about focused observation (26.53%, $n=13$ for both) and 30.61% ($n=15$) reported learning “a lot” on shared goal setting. Furthermore, 28.57% ($n=14$) of coaches reported learning

“a lot,” about building collaborative partnerships with providers. The data on this item differ from previous responses where coaches were much less skewed to one extreme of the scale than the item reporting on the impact of COPs. Most coaches reported learning “a lot” on all items except focused observation.

EA’s Guiding Principles. In the case of culturally responsive coaching, 30.61% ($n=15$) of the respondents reported learning only “a little.” Combining the two highest, equal responses, 53.06% ($n=26$) of coaches reported learning “a lot” or “a moderate amount” about Parallel Process (26.53%, $n=13$ each) and 26.53% ($n=13$) reported learning “a moderate amount” about adult resilience and wellness.

Use of Technology to support coaching. Only 34.69% ($n=17$) of coaches reported learning “a little” about how to use technology to support coaching. Responses were less skewed to one extreme of the scale than they were for the last item reported on the impact of COPs. Most of them reported learning “a lot” or “a moderate amount” on most items. Coaches reported learning only “a little” about culturally responsive coaching, and using technology to support coaching

Table 16. Coach responses to Likert scale question, “As a result of your COP how much did you learn on the following coaching skills?”

Question (mean/std deviation)	A great deal	<i>n</i>	A lot	<i>n</i>	A moderate amount	<i>n</i>	A little	<i>n</i>	None at all	<i>n</i>
Reflection and feedback ($M=2.43$; $SD=1.11$)	22.45%	11	36.73%	18	18.37%	9	20.41%	10	2.04%	1
Focused observation ($M=2.96$; $SD=1.12$)	10.20%	5	26.53%	13	28.57%	14	26.53%	13	8.16%	4
Shared goal setting ($M=2.71$; $SD=1.16$)	16.33%	8	30.61%	15	24.49%	12	22.45%	11	6.12%	3
Building collaborative	24.49%	12	28.57%	14	24.49%	12	18.37%	9	4.08%	2

partnerships with providers ($M=2.49$; $SD=1.16$)										
Culturally responsive coaching ($M=2.94$; $SD=1.04$)	8.16%	4	28.57%	14	28.57%	14	30.61%	15	4.08%	2
Parallel process ($M=2.71$; $SD=1.18$)	18.37%	9	26.53%	13	26.53%	13	22.45%	11	6.12%	3
Adult resilience/wellness ($M=2.78$; $SD=1.22$)	18.37%	9	24.49%	12	26.53%	13	22.45%	11	8.16%	4
Using technology to support coaching ($M=3.31$; $SD=1.15$)	8.16%	4	16.33%	8	26.53%	13	34.69%	17	14.29%	7

Note. The largest percentage responses are in bold text.

COPs' effect on coaching to skills. The following data are from the Likert scale item (Q30), which) asked the respondents to rate the effect their COPs had on their ability to coach *to* important provider skills. This item does not refer to coaches' personal skills in, for example, addressing challenging behavior, but their ability to coach those skills to providers. The first two skills were included because they were recent webinar topics (addressing challenging behaviors, and meeting the needs of dual language learners). Coaches provide input on webinar topics based on their needs by filling out a short Internet survey that is provided after every webinar. The next two skills (modifying and individualizing instruction, and embedding instruction) are two of the main agenda items at the Haring Center Internship. These are topics on have many questions and often request consultation. The remaining skills are drawn from The "House" Framework (Appendix B).

In this item, most of the answers were in the moderate range, with the exception of meeting the needs of dual-language learners, and curriculum and assessment (see Table 17). The following

are percentages of coaches who reported “a moderate amount” of effect on their abilities to coach to the following skills as a result of their COPs: 40.82% ($n=20$) addressing challenging behaviors; 38.78% ($n=19$) fostering positive social environments; 35.42% ($n=17$) creating organized learning environments 33.33% ($n=16$) for both modifying and individualizing instruction, and embedding instruction; and 30.61% ($n=15$) for supporting engaging interactions; 35.42% ($n=17$) for creating organized learning environments; and 38.78% ($n=19$) for fostering positive social environments. For . In the next two questions in this item, coaches reported that their COPs had only “a little” effect on their ability to coach to: using a research-based curriculum (28.57%, $n=14$); and collecting ongoing child assessment (29.17%, $n=14$). Only 27.66% of the coaches’ indicated that their COP had no effect at all on their ability to coach to meeting the needs of dual language learners.

Table 17. Coaches’ report on effect that COPs had on their ability to coach *to* the following skills

Question (mean; std deviation)	A great deal	<i>n</i>	A lot	<i>n</i>	A moderate amount	<i>n</i>	A little	<i>n</i>	None at all	<i>n</i>	Total ^a
Addressing challenging behaviors ($M=3.04$; $SD=1.23$)	14.29%	7	14.29%	7	40.82%	20	14.29%	7	16.33%	8	49
Meeting the needs of dual language learners ($M=3.45$; $SD=1.33$)	12.77%	6	10.64%	5	23.40%	11	25.53%	12	27.66%	13	47
Modifying and individualizing instruction ($M=2.92$; $SD=1.24$)	16.67%	8	18.75%	9	33.33%	16	18.75%	9	12.50%	6	48
Embedding instruction ($M=3.02$; $SD=1.22$)	12.50%	6	20.83%	10	33.33%	16	18.75%	9	14.58%	7	48

Supporting engaging interactions ($M=2.59$; $SD=1.18$)	20.41%	10	28.57%	14	30.61%	15	12.24%	6	8.16%	4	49
Creating organized learning environments ($M=2.90$; $SD=1.12$)	10.42%	5	27.08%	13	35.42%	17	16.67%	8	10.42%	5	48
Fostering positive social environments ($M=2.78$; $SD=1.17$)	14.29%	7	26.53%	13	38.78%	19	8.16%	4	12.24%	6	49
Using a research-based curriculum ($M=3.24$; $SD=1.27$)	12.24%	6	16.33%	8	24.49%	12	28.57%	14	18.37%	9	49
Collecting ongoing child assessment ($M=3.33$; $SD=1.25$)	8.33%	4	20.83%	10	20.83%	10	29.17%	14	20.83%	10	48
Click to write Statement 11 ^b	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. ^aThe totals for each question in this item vary from $N=47-49$. ^bThe last item “click to write statement 11” was included in the original survey in error. This item should have read “Family engagement and partnership”, so the data from this item were discarded and not used in the analysis.

Summary of demographics findings

Average coach. Our average participating coach was a white woman between the ages of 41 and 55, with a Bachelor’s degree. According to the survey data, the average coach has taken advantage of most coach supports, such as webinars, training, and internships. The majority of coaches who participated in the survey were from the coaching regions consisting of largely rural

counties, such as Northwest, Eastern, Southwest and Central. There were very few coaches from King and Pierce Counties. No African American or Asian coaches self-identified in the survey.

Average COP. According to the responses to this survey, the average COP shares the following common characteristics: the groups met over the course of six months to one year, and longer in some cases. Most groups meet in person and their meetings last at least one hour, and in many cases longer than 90 minutes. Most groups meet monthly, while some meet quarterly or at least three times during the academic school year, excluding the summer months. Groups are often made up of similar professionals i.e. coaches. A total of 75% of the groups used some kind of guiding protocol, many using the COP protocol provided by Cultivate Learning. Group sizes are much larger than those mentioned in the COP literature. Most of the respondents said that their groups consisted of 10 or more members, and had some sort of leader or facilitator, a role that members shared on a rotating basis. Groups often focused on skills in building relationships with other coaches and the practice-based coaching cycle.

Qualitative Data

The questionnaire concluded with three open-ended questions. I designed these to be broad enough that they might elicit any thoughts on the overall outcomes that the coaches experience, or that they feel they could expect from a COP. The three questions were:

1. What can coaches learn from each other in a COP?
2. How can coaching change teaching practices?
3. What else would you like us to know about your experiences with COPs?

I conducted qualitative data analysis first by writing *a priori* hypotheses (i.e. what responses I would expect, based on my experience of working with coaches as a trainer and consultant). I read the complete responses multiple times, as reported in the methods section, and identified several

themes from each question (see Tables 19, 20 and 21). I will discuss the themes for each of the three questions in the following sections.

Table 18. *A priori* hypotheses (i.e. What I would expect as coach responses) to open-ended survey items

What can coaches learn from each other in a COP?	How can coaching change teaching practices?	What else would you like us to know about your experiences with COPs?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches learn new tactics, or coaching moves, along with resources. • Coaches realize that they are not alone in their feelings of self-doubt in their coaching abilities. • Coaches realize that they hold abundant funds of knowledge and learn from one another to solve problems. • COPs are refresher course on coaching basics (i.e “Coaching 101”) that they knew once, but since forgotten. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching is a complementary extension to more conventional professional development. • Coaching lends itself to more sustainable growth and progress in teaching moves and practices. • Coaching has shown to improve outcomes for children. • Coaching can change teachers’ minds about how they practice and what they think about their own teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches express that COPs are important and valuable to their professional development and overall feelings of wellbeing. • COPs are beneficial, but time consuming and take a lot of energy to schedule and carry out. • Coaches want more resources (e.g. protocols or guides), support (e.g. professional facilitation), and time to conduct COPs

Open-ended question 1. What can coaches learn from each other in a COP? The first theme that I deduced from the responses to this question was that coaches learn that they can discuss shared experiences (i.e. successes and challenges; strengths and barriers) in their coaching in a COP. One provider commented that she could “Learn what other coaches are doing, share ideas.” Another commented on how COPs help coaches learn was, “How other programs cope with the same challenges we have as coaches.” Yet another coach commented,

COPs provide opportunities for coaches to learn about how other co-workers are dealing with similar challenges. It is a great opportunity to network and share resources that we may think everyone has but most individuals do not have. It helped me learn about how other

coaches are working with FCCs and directors with teachers to develop goals (anonymous coach, survey item, Appendix I, Q35)

COPs offer a platform on which coaches can share a challenging experience and learn that they are not alone in facing a particular difficulty. Coaches can also share success stories about how they overcame those challenges with coaching strategies.

The second theme I deduced was that in COPs coaches share tactics, strategies, techniques, tips, resources, and tools to troubleshoot and solve problems. One coach wrote that they share “strategies used and that have worked out in the field, support each other without offering answers or solutions but to brainstorm together”. COPs create a venue in which the coaches are the experts and are not “sitting and getting” information imparted to them by an expert in a training workshop or classroom. Coaches are creating and sharing knowledge and skills with each other.

The final theme was that COPs empower coaches to reflect on practice in a community of encouragement and engage in self-care. The respondents reported that veteran coaches can help isolated or novice coaches to improve. One coach reported that “I am the only coach in my setting and I appreciate learning and listening to other coaches in the state”. Another coach stated that “They can also learn from those who have been coaching longer and have a good understanding of what problems or concerns can come up during different discussions”.

Open-ended questions 2. “How can coaching *change* teaching practices?” Firstly, the respondents’ answers coalesced around the theme that coaching was more rounded, a cycle of emotional and professional support and encouragement, based on trust, relationship and partnership. They commented, “It’s a more [well] rounded model where teachers choose an area to focus on to improve their practice, which increases [the] quality of services.” In coaching, the providers’ input can drive the conversation on which areas they would like to improve. Another coach reported, “Coaching can be a powerful method of making a positive difference for Teachers Through the relationship [...] trust is developed and teachers are more likely to want to implement

the recommendations.” Once again, like COPs, coaching is an ongoing interaction between coaches and providers, not a one-shot training. Coaches develop trust, a relationship, and credibility with teachers when there is success through changes. Another coach reiterated this thought, stating, “Coaching is a consistent and reliable partnership.”

The second theme that emerged from open-ended question two centered on reflection on the context of a safe and supportive partnership, which allows teachers to become more self-aware. This process “centers” teachers in their teaching and professional development. One coach commented, “Coaching reshapes how teachers reflect on their time in the classroom, which makes reflection more productive.” Another respondent stated that coaching “helps teachers to be at the center of their own learning and professional development.” Coaching is an opportunity that most teachers would not have otherwise: to stop and think deeply about their teaching practices and how they could improve. Another coach reports, “Self-reflection is a catalyst to changing and improving teaching practices that directly effect [sic] the children and families.” Self-reflection leads to analysis of practice, and how practice will have positive effects

The third and final theme deduced from responses on how coaching changes teaching is that coaching provides tools, resource, feedback and individualized support tailored to each provider to improve practice and outcomes for children and families. One coach stated, “Coaching provides individualized support for teachers and is an extension of professional development [...] with the goal of improving their teaching practice.” Coaching is a complementary method of professional development that picks up after conventional training, and is tailored to suit the needs of the individual, while adding the accountability of goal setting by coaches and provider partners.

Open-ended question 3: “What else would you like us to know about your experiences with COPs?” This was meant to be a broad, exploratory question that would elicit comments that were not covered by previous questions. Many respondents remarked that COPs were a rewarding, valuable, important and meaningful use of their time. “COPs are invaluable and we are working to

provide more opportunities for intentional COPs at the admin[istrative] level and in the teaching community”

Three coaches reported that COPs were especially important for remotely located coaches, who felt isolated at times. One coach said, “Because coaches are often in standalone roles within their programs, it is important that we have a COP in order to avoid that feeling of isolation.” Another coach commented, “At this time I have very limited experience, but it is an opportunity that supports the work we do—particularly when we work remotely because we often feel isolated from the world (similar to the remotely-located providers).”

Coaches’ responses were, for the most part, positive. However, some coaches did offer some criticisms of the COP process. One coach, for example, commented on the efficacy of COPs among their coaches: “Unfortunately, providers also use this as a venting time, which is very uncomfortable for some participants, as well as the coach.” Several coaches remarked that COPs should form and function organically in order to be tailored to the individual needs of the group, and maintain focus in order to meet prescribed goals and objectives. One coach suggested that an improved COP protocol could make the process more positive. Another coach reported, “COPs could be more effective if topics dig deeper (sic).” Another coach reported that all members should have input. This coach said the following about her COP:

My COP was mandatory and extremely ineffective. I've known and participated in COPs in other areas that were very beneficial. However, when COPs are derailed, don't have clear goals, aren't respectful of time, and/or don't work to build community and trust, they are much more of a negative experience. (Anonymous coach, Q37, see Appendix I)

The respondents were generally positive in their comments about COPs as a method to share experiences and solve problems in an organically formed professional development group. Coaches reported that COPs should be organized and structured to maintain focus on the goals of the group. Not all coaches in the survey participated in COPs. In order to answer all the research questions, it

was imported to capture data on how coaches who did not participate in COPs met their professional development needs.

Table 19. Themes derived from open-ended question data analysis and corresponding quotations that support claims
 “What can coaches *learn* from each other in a COP?”

Themes from open-ended questions responses	Example quotes from coach survey
<p>To discuss shared successes and challenges, strengths and barriers to coaching (e.g. difficult conversations) and how to use new/old strategies</p>	<p>“[We] learned how to be better models in the classroom and that it's okay to not have all the answers. We created our own support system where we could openly talk about challenging conversations and observations in classrooms.”</p>
<p>Tactics, strategies, techniques, tips (i.e. coaching moves) and resources, tools to trouble-shoot or problem solve.</p>	<p>“Strategies used and that have worked out in the field, support each other without offering answers or solutions but to brainstorm together”</p> <p>“There is a great deal that coaches can learn from each other. The possibilities are endless. Different coaching strategies and supports, resiliency practices, communication approaches are a few.”</p>
<p>Reflect on practice in a community of encouragement, engage in self-care; where veteran coaches can help isolated coaches improve and practice coaching; everyone learns from each other</p>	<p>“I am the only coach in my setting and I appreciate learning and listening to other coaches in the state.”</p> <p>“There is a wealth of knowledge Coaches (sic) can share; a tool they developed, individual style, successes that can be recreated, an area of specialty, resources and ideas.”</p>

Table 20. Themes derived from open-ended question data analysis and corresponding quotations that support claims, “How can coaching *change* teaching practices?”

Themes from open-ended questions responses	Example quotes from coach survey
<p>Coaching is a more rounded cycle of emotional and professional support and encouragement, based on trust, relationship and partnership.</p>	<p>“[...] Because it allows us to support, help and empower teachers to take ownership of their learning; we guide their reflection process so they can see their strengths and weakness and act on their own; through this process they are accountable for their progress and success, which make gains more powerful and sustainable.”</p>
<p>Reflection in the context of this safe and supportive partnership allows teachers to become more self-aware and “centers” them in their own teaching and PD.</p>	<p>“[...] We guide their reflection process so they can see their strengths and weakness and act on their own; through this process they are accountable for their progress and success, which make gains more powerful and sustainable.”</p>
<p>Coaching provides tools, resource, feedback and individualized support tailored to each teacher or director to improve practice and outcomes for children and families</p>	<p>“Coaches will learn to put new practices in place and will begin to make those changes” “By supporting teachers in implementing effective practice”</p>

Table 21. Themes derived from open-ended question data analysis and corresponding quotations that support claims “What else would you like us to know about your experiences with COPs?”

Themes from open-ended questions responses	Example quotes from coach survey
<p>Many coaches remarked that COPs are a rewarding, valuable, important and meaningful use of their time.</p>	<p>“COPs are invaluable and we are working to provide more opportunities for intentional COPs at the admin level and in the teaching community.”</p>
<p>Several coaches felt that COPs should form and function organically in order to be tailored to the individual needs of the group.</p>	<p>“My COP was mandatory and extremely ineffective. I've known and participated in COPs in other areas that were very beneficial. However when COPs are derailed, don't have clear goals, aren't respectful of time, and/or don't work to build community and trust, they are much more of a negative experience.</p>
<p>COPs should maintain focus in order to achieve prescribed goals. One coach suggested a protocol, and another reported that all should have input.</p>	<p>“I believe they would work more effectively if the content matched descriptions/goals.”</p>
<p>Three coaches reported that they were especially important for remotely located coaches, who at times feel isolated.</p>	<p>“Because coaches are often in standalone roles within their programs, it is important that we have a COP in order to avoid that feeling of isolation.”</p> <p>“At this time I have very limited experience, but it is an opportunity that supports the work we do—particularly when we work remotely because we often feel isolated from the world (similar to the remotely located providers).”</p>

Table 22. Highest percentages of agreement on Likert scale questions, “How much to you agree with the following statements” regarding varying forms of professional development, for coaches who did not participate in COPs.

<i>Subscale item prompt</i>	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>I learn to coach more effectively</i>	Peer mentoring^a Training/Conferences Self-reflection College courses	Peer mentoring^a Reading Literature Internet Resources			
<i>I gain access to new resources</i>	Training/Conferences College courses Internet resources^a	Peer mentoring Reading Literature Internet resources^a	Self-reflection		
<i>I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members</i>	Peer mentoring College courses	Training/Conferences	Self-reflection, Internet resources^a	Reading Literature Internet resources^a	
<i>My feelings of isolation are reduced</i>		Training/Conferences Peer mentoring College courses	Reading Literature, Internet resources	Self-reflection	
<i>This modality is a waste of my time</i>				Internet resources ^a	Training/Conferences Peer mentoring Self-reflection Reading Literature College courses Internet Resources ¹

Table 22. (continued from previous page)

<i>Subscale item prompt</i>	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice</i>	College courses	Training/Conferences Peer mentoring Self-reflection Reading Literature Internet Resources			
<i>I have time to reflect and analyze my practices</i>	Self-reflection College courses	Training/Conferences Peer mentoring Reading Literature Internet Resources			
<i>I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.)</i>	College courses	Training/Conferences Peer mentoring Self-reflection¹ Reading Literature Internet Resources	Self-reflection¹		
<i>I get helpful feedback on my practices</i>	College courses	Training/Conferences Peer mentoring Reading Literature¹	Self-reflection Reading Literature¹	Internet Resources	
<i>I improve my coaching practices between sessions</i>	Trainings/Conferences College courses	Peer mentoring Self-reflection Reading Literature Internet Resources			

^aNote. Indicates that the highest percentage of agreement that coaches chose was equal across two selections (e.g. for “I learn to coach more effectively” with Peer Mentoring, coaches chose “strongly agree” and “somewhat agree” in equal amounts (50%, $n=6$ each))

Non-COP Coaches

I also created a modified survey pathway for coaches who reported that they had *not* participated in COPs (see Table 22). Hopefully, this will be valuable information in developing coaches' professional development needs. Only 20 (27%) coaches reported that they had not participated in a COP, out of a total of 74 participants who answered that initial question. I included the same Likert scale questions about agreement with the impact of six common professional development modalities. The modalities were: trainings and conferences ($n=18$); peer mentoring ($n=12$); self-reflection ($n=16$); reading professional literature ($n=16$); using the Internet to find resources ($n=16$); and taking college courses ($n=10$). I also asked coaches what other forms of professional development they used in an open-ended text response question. There were two responses: “webinars” and “talking with other coaches within my program—not a formal COP”.

In Table 22, the areas of impact are on the vertical axis and the Likert scale responses are along the top, horizontal axis. I sorted the modalities of professional development under the Likert scale response by the highest percentage of agreement. For example, most coaches reported “strongly agree” that peer mentoring, training/conferences, self-reflection, and college courses had an impact on how much they “learned to coach more effectively”. For the remaining modalities, coaches “somewhat agreed” that peer mentoring, reading literature and Internet resources aided them in “learning to coach more effectively” (see note in Table 21, where the highest percentage of agreement was equal across two categories).

For the subscale response, “I gain access to new resources”, all the modalities were in the “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree” ($n=3$ for both) category, except for self-reflection, for which “neither agree nor disagree” was the top response. Responses to “I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members” was spread across “strongly agree” ($n=2$), “somewhat agree” ($n=1$), “neither agree nor disagree” ($n=2$), or “somewhat disagree” ($n=2$). For “my feelings of isolation are reduced” coaches “somewhat agreed” ($n=3$), “neither agreed nor disagreed” ($n=2$), or

“somewhat disagreed” ($n=1$). There was broad agreement that “this modality was a waste of my time”. The most common responses were in “strongly disagree” ($n=5$) except for Internet resources (“somewhat disagree” ($n=1$)). The most common responses for “I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice” was “somewhat agree” ($n=5$), with college courses alone in “strongly agree” ($n=1$). The most common responses to “I have time to reflect on and analyze my practice” was “somewhat agree” ($n=4$) and “strongly agree” ($n=2$). Responses to “I learn more about elements of coaching” ranged from “strongly agree” ($n=1$) to “somewhat agree,” ($n=3$) and “neither agree nor disagree” ($n=1$, where self-reflection was equal across the last two categories). “I got helpful feedback on my practices” covered four categories “somewhat agree” ($n=3$), “neither agree nor disagree” ($n=2$) “somewhat disagree” ($n=$) and “strongly agree” ($n=3$). For “I improve my coaching practices between sessions”, most of the coaches selected “somewhat agree” ($n=4$), and “strongly agree” ($n=2$).

Difference in COPs by Demographics

In this section I report on data and findings that I used to answer the research question “Are coaches’ COP experiences different across varying COP configurations or protocols and differing demographics?” To answer this question, I first conducted a visual inspection of each survey item that addressed the impact of COPs in Qualtrics, in which I filtered the data according to demographics (e.g. age, race, region, education, gender) and COP configurations (e.g. protocol, leadership, size, duration, length, frequency).

During visual inspection, I looked for any deviation in the data that resulted in the highest percentage of selection for any one subscale item changing more than for the adjacent selection in the Likert scale. That is to say, if the data on aggregate indicted that, for example, the majority of coaches either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” and the data filtered for a specific demographic changed only on selection to “somewhat agree”, I did not deem that to be significant enough for further evaluation. If the operand consisted of an n greater than five and resulted in the largest

percentage selection changing more than one place (e.g. from “agree” to “neither agree nor disagree” or even more, i.e. to “disagree”), I deemed that data possibly significant enough for further evaluation via the ANOVA test.

Upon visual inspection, the trends in the data remained in the same pattern when filtered by most demographics and configurations. For example, all the coaches tended to “strongly agree” or “agree” on the benefits of COPs in terms of solving common problems, such as feelings of isolation, and offering resources. Similarly coaches “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” that “COPs were a waste of time” when filtered by demographics and configuration. However there were some exceptions related to how coaches who reported being Hispanic or Latino responded to how much they could learn about culturally responsive coaching and meeting the needs of dual language learners.

Race and region. Coaches of Hispanic or Latino descent ($n=6$) reported learning “a great deal” (33.33%, $n=2$) or “a lot” (50%, $n=3$) about culturally responsive coaching from their COPs. This differed from the trends in the whole population sample. White coaches reported learning “a moderate amount” and “a little” in equal proportions (32.43%, $n=12$ for each) on culturally responsive coaching. The opinion on culturally responsive coaching was similar in the largely Hispanic Central Washington Region. Of the coaches from the Central region, ($N=8$) 50% ($n=4$) reported learning “a lot” about culturally responsive coaching. The majority of the coaches reported learning “a little”.

To test the assumption that there was a significant difference in the reports of coaches based on race and region, I conducted a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) in SPSS. I combined the seven regions into three: 1) Northwest, King, and Pierce; 2) Olympic and Southwest, and 3) Central and the Eastern region because of the low number of overall participants. I conducted a Pearson Chi-squared test, in which the significance level was set at anything below $p < .05$. I found that the relationship between race and perspectives on the ability to coach to

providers on meeting the needs of the coach were ($\chi^2(4) = 16.10, p = .03$). Coaches of Latino descent were significantly more likely to report that COPs had a “great deal” of effect on their ability to coach providers on meeting the needs of dual language learners. Reported scores on the Likert subscale were lower, meaning more effect, for Latino coaches ($M = 2.00, SD = 1.67$) than for white coaches ($M = 3.54, SD = 1.17$), or coaches from Olympic or Southwest ($M = 3.00, SD = .86$). The Levene’s test indicated unequal variances ($F = 5.18, p = .001$).

The responses from Latinos in the Central region on dual language learners were the only divergence from the overall trends in the data that I tested and for which I found significant difference. There were some differences between the responses of men and women, but with only two male respondents, I did not test these differences.

Data on Survey Tool

I used Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficients for Likert scale questions, to measure how well the subscale questions “hung” together as a set. Cronbach’s Alpha is an internal reliability, or consistency, measure. This coefficient measures how closely related a set of items, in this case the subscale on a Likert scale survey item, are as a group. The value for Cronbach’s is expressed as a numeral between 0.0 and 1.0. Berends (2012) states that a Cronbach’s Alpha of at least .70 is acceptable to show that items “hang” together well.

Cronbach’s Alpha reliability statistics for the 11 Likert scale questions in item Q28 regarding the degree to which coaches agreed with the impact of their COPs on coaching practice was .784. The exceptions to this item were questions that were negatively ordered (“COPS are a waste of my time” and “I am required to participate in COPS”). In the cases that these items were deleted, the Alpha coefficient was .859 and .773 respectively.

I calculated internal consistency for Likert scale questions in item Q29 of the survey, in which the participants were asked, “As a result of your COP, how much did you learn about the following coaching skills?” The eight items were the four components of practice-based coaching,

the three Guiding Principles, and using technology to support coaching. The Likert scale items show an internal consistency, that is, a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .939.

Cronbach's Alpha .972 ($n=9$) was recorded for Q30: "How much did your COP affect your ability to coach *to* the following skills? I excluded the tenth item because it was included in error. The questions in this item related to the foundational aspects of the EA "House" Framework, and four items related to meeting the needs of students with special needs, challenging behavior, or children who are dual language learners. All Likert style, subscale questions met or exceeded the minimum standard of .70 for Cronbach's. I am sufficiently satisfied that these questions were closely related, and "hung" well together (see Table 24)

Table 24. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for Likert Scale items measuring coaches perceptions of impact, knowledge of coaching skills, and abilities to coach *to* common coaching issues

Survey Item	Cronbach's Alpha value (a)	N
Q28-Impact of COP on Coaching	a=.784	11
Q29- How much coaches learned about coaching skills	a=.939	8
Q30- Effect COP had on ability to coach to Skills	a=.972	9

Chapter V: Discussion

In this final chapter, I will revisit the research questions to discuss whether the survey data provided sufficient responses. I will also integrate my findings with the current literature on coaching and COPs has to say on that topic. I will also discuss the limitations of these findings, and end with recommendations for practice, policy and future research regarding the topic of COPs among coaches.

Structural characteristics of COPs

The current literature on COPs for early childhood education and early childhood special education teachers consists almost entirely of qualitative and descriptive studies ($N=17$), in which interviews were conducted with participants during or after their participation in COPs (Christ, & Wang, 2013; Gerdes, & Jefferson, 2015). More often than not, researchers observe teacher-child interaction in the classroom, and not teachers interacting with each other in a COP (Puig & Recchia, 2008; Bradley, 2004). Sawyer et al. (2016) is the exception; they used interviews *and* observation of the Teachers and Parents as Partners COP model in practice.

Group Size. The EA coaches who answered the question (53.85%, $n=28$) reported that group sizes were usually “10 or more”. This was much higher than I had anticipated, based on the number of coaches in the regional offices. These results mean that determining an exact size of COP groups would be difficult because they could be any size over 10. In future surveys, I would increase the size of group intervals to also include “10-20 members”, and “20 or more” options. Previous literature on the subject of COP size has not determined an ideal size for efficiency; however the majority of studies reviewed indicated that common sizes were between 5-10 participants. Groups larger than 10 members were less common.

There were four studies that were mentioned in the literature review in which the researchers reported the size of the COP groups. Hoffman et al. (2009) studied five COP groups in total. There were three areas of focus, with two groups each. In all cases the focus groups later merged into one larger group, making three groups with 25, 16 and 15 participants. In many cases, the researchers intended for groups to be larger, but in their results reported group sizes of five (Sawyer et al., 2016) or seven (Bradley, 2004), or multiple groups of diverse sizes from four to as large as 11 (Cherrington & Thornton, 2013, p.

It is possible that survey respondents in this study labeled groups “COPs” when in fact they more closely resembled a training or even staff meeting, with the classic training configuration consisting of a presenter leading instruction on a topic instead of a facilitator leading a discussion among professional in a true COP. There was one response from the open-ended questions that mentioned group size. One coach reported that it is “important to do these [COPs] with professionals you trust and know fairly well. We have a small group of 5 and, since they also have familiarity with teachers we are coaching, that also helps with this process”..” This coach’s quotation speaks to the importance of familiarity and trust within a group. In larger COPs, that feeling of trust and relationship can be diluted.

COP sessions count, length, frequency, and time frame. Nearly 77% of the coaches surveyed in this study reported that COP sessions lasted either “61-90 minutes” or “more than 90 minutes” (both selections in equal numbers 38.46%, $n=20$). The largest percentage of participating coaches surveyed (56.6%, $n=30$) reported participating in one to five COPs. Percentages diminishing as the session count goes up: 24.53% ($n=13$) participated in six to 10 COPs; and 18.87% ($n=10$) in more than 10 (see Table 6). The majority of COPs lasted between six months to one year (36.54%, $n=19$) and 50% of the respondents ($n=26$) reported monthly COP meetings in the reviewed articles, the exact length of the COP meeting is not reported. Gerdes and Jefferson (2009) was a three-year study, where teachers met monthly, but the session length was not

reported. In many studies the unit of measure was the classroom observation or interview, on which time *was* reported.

Structure, leadership, and setting. There are various models for how to lead and structure a COP in the literature. Brody and Friedman (2012) reported that systems such as Critical Friends Group’s “rigid protocol was found to interfere with progress on commonly shared matters of practice” and instead opted for a more open-ended inquiry-based atmosphere of open listening and responding. Hoffman et al. (2009) summarize this well, saying:

COPs can be structured in various ways. In general, a group determines a time, location, duration, and focus for its COP meetings. Participants are asked to commit to regular attendance, reading, and preparation before each meeting. Participants must be willing to engage in and contribute to discussions. Leadership is often shared, although it can be delegated (p. 29)

In the current study, 75% ($n=39$) of coaches reported using a protocol, or some sort of official process to guide the COP. Moreover, 82.69% ($n=43$) of the survey participants indicated that there was an official “leader” or facilitator of the group, while 29.05% ($n=43$) of respondents reported that the leader’s responsibility as a facilitator was “to keep the group ‘on track’”. The next most common responsibility was to “keep time” (22.97%, $n=34$). The role of timekeeper in a COP may seem like a marginal job, however it is integral to keeping the group focused on the current issue, and preventing the participants from going off on tangents. Thus these jobs might be seen as similar; that of keeping the group “on track” and focused on the task at hand.

A total of 83.93% ($n=47$) reported that their COP groups met in person, while a not insignificant amount (12.5%, $n=7$) of groups met online using ZOOM or Skype teleconferencing software. I find it interesting that no coaches reported conducting COPs via the Cultivate Learning’s Coaching Companion, an online coaching tool for both coaches and providers to interact distally with video observations and resources. Cultivate Learning webinars have

conducted case studies of coaches who have connected provider COPs via the Coaching Companion. However, it is possible that coaches do not feel it is necessary to connect with other coaches using Coaching Companion because they are centrally located near the regional office, and might use video conferencing software such as Skype to connect during COP meetings only.

Content characteristics of COPs

Attributes. The definition of a COP was drawn from the body of literature at large but specifically from Snyder et al. (2012; see Chapter one section on Defining Communities of Practice). I used this definition to craft survey question Q17: “Which of the following attributes describe your COP?” The most common response was that COPs were “a group of similar professionals (e.g. coaches)”. The second was an equal split among coaches who “had an opportunity to check-in and talk about general issues related to work” and “choosing an area of focus in which we wanted to practice”.

Topics. The coaches reported that the most common topic that COPs covered was “developing partnerships” with providers ($N=34$). The next most common topics reported were “practice-based coaching” and “promoting teacher self-reflection” (9.33%, $n=34$ each). The least common topic was working with families (2.62%, $n=9$). The findings on which topics were covered the most might be less telling than the data on how many topics were covered in COP groups over the course of the past year. This survey item was a “choose all that apply” question. There was a total of 343 selections, from $N=52$ respondents. On average, coaches chose over six different topics that their COPs had covered in the past year. Considering that more than half of coaches reported participating in only one to five COP sessions in the course of one year that would mean either that multiple topics were covered in each COP session, or that the topics changed from one meeting to the next. Snell et al. (2012) found that current early childhood professional development is insufficient because of, among other reasons, its fragmented nature. This would suggest that COPs are also fragmented. (Another possible explanation would be that

the coaches did not understand or remember that this item was in regard to their most recent COP experience.)

Activities. The respondents reported that the most common activities in their COPs gatherings were sharing ideas, discussing problems or challenges, and sharing resources. Once again, what I find the most interesting is not the most common responses for this item, but rather how few coaches reported discussing case studies as an activity. Only 22 coaches selected case studies (10% of overall total selections, $N=219$). This is especially interesting because 75% of the respondent reported using a protocol to guide their COPs and 54% of those coaches reported using the Professional Learning (PLC) Protocol (see Appendix K). The PLC protocol is essentially a guide to discussing a specific case in-depth. However the word “case study” is not used with reference to any protocol in the data, which might be the reason for which case studies were reported in such small numbers. It might also be true that coaches considered case studies to be purely hypothetical in nature, and not actual cases from their coaching experience.

Goals. Coaches reported discussing problems and challenges in practice ($n=41$) almost twice as much as the next most common response, namely setting professional goals ($n=22$). Once again, the goals that coaches reported in relation to their COPs were less interesting to me than what they did not report. Only 15 coaches reported tracking the progress towards achieving their goals. Also, 13 coaches reported setting personal goals. There were more coaches that set goals than there were following up on those goals. It would be an issue if coaches were to set professional goals but not monitor their progress towards achieving them, or if they abandoned previously set goals for newer objectives. Also, one would expect that coaches would set more professional goals in a work group; however it is also important to set personal goals, especially related to resilience and adult wellness.

Benefits to coaching from COPs. Now I will synthesize and summarize results that answer my research question on the reported benefits of COPs among a coaching cohort in

Washington State: “What do Washington State coaches who have engaged in communities of practice report about the experience?” Data were derived from a series of three Likert scale questions. It was only after data collection that I realized that these survey items partially address three aspects of adult learning that are often referred to in the literature: skills; knowledge; and dispositions

1. Q28 - What do coaches say the *impacts* of COPs are on the necessary skills and dispositions of coaching, such as finding resources, problem-solving and reducing feelings of isolation by feeling affiliation with a community?
2. Q29 - How much do coaches report having *learned* (i.e. increased knowledge) from COPs about necessary coaching skills, such as the Practice-based Coaching cycle and the EA Guiding Principles.
3. Q30 - How did the COPs affect your ability to effectively *coach to* the following teaching skills.

During data analysis and further review of the literature, I noticed that these questions were dealing with *skills*, *knowledge* and *dispositions*. Coaches need to strive for continuous growth and development in all three areas in order to improve their skills. Schachter (2015) addresses these three concepts related to professional development:

[...] skills as units of action that occur in time and that are easily observable or inferable; knowledge as facts, concepts, ideas, vocabulary, or understandings of best practice; and dispositions as ‘tendencies to exhibit a pattern of behavior frequently, consciously, and voluntarily’ (Schachter, 2015, p. 1066, quoting Sheridan et al., 2009).

In future iterations of this survey, it would be interesting to align survey items to address skills, knowledge, and dispositions in isolation. However for the current findings, I think that it is still

useful to use these three processes of adult learning as a lens through which to view coaches' responses to items regarding the benefit and impact of COPs on coaching. In the current findings, coaches generally agreed more strongly that COPs had an impact on aspects of coaching related to *dispositions*. Their agreement with how much coaching can affect *skills* was mixed. The effects of COPs on knowledge were generally more measured to low. These results give rise to new questions to be answered in future research such as: What professional development is best for specifically targeting skills? How do COPs impact dispositions? What structures and activities influence dispositions? I hypothesize that dispositions change when coaches make new coaching habits by implementing goal behavior and best practices. Coaches can identify practices, and make goals in COPs but the changing of practice actually occurs in coaching itself. COPs would have an impact on dispositions when these goals are revisited in ongoing COP sessions. This stresses the importance of "ongoingness" or continuity of cohesive, and not fragmented, professional development to ensure accountability to goals that coaches set.

Impact. The coaches generally "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that their COPs impacted a wide range of necessary skills and dispositions to enable them to coach more effectively. The strongest case, combining "strongly agree" and "agree" 65% (30.61% and 34.69% respectively) was that they gained access to new resources. The exception to this was that coaches generally "agreed" or "neither agreed nor disagreed" that the impact of their COP was that they "learned to coach more effectively".. Coaches "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that "COPs were a waste of time."

Learning. In survey item Q29, coaches were asked to indicate how much they had learned from their COP on coaching skills that were a part of the EA practice-based coaching framework and Guiding Principles. Their responses were much closer to the median of the Likert scale. They reported learning "a lot" or "a moderate amount" on all questions in the item, except on culturally responsive coaching and using technology, on which most coaches reported learning only "a

little”. It could be that a COP setting is not the ideal configuration for learning and building skills in these areas of coaching practice. It is also possible that these are not popular topics for discussion in coaches’ COPs. Unfortunately, I do not have data from survey item Q31 on topics that were addressed in COPs relating to cultural responsiveness or technology.

Effect on their ability to coach. Coaches reported that their COP had “a moderate amount” of effect on their ability to coach providers on most of the EA “House” framework and addressing challenging behavior. Coaches reported only “a little” effect on how to coach “using a research-based curriculum” and “collecting ongoing child assessment”. Coaches reported no effect at all on their ability to coach providers on meeting the needs of dual language learners.

Demographics. The largest percentage of coaches who participated was white women from the ages of 41 to 55, with a Bachelor’s degree. Initially I was surprised that the majority of coaches were in this age bracket. Upon reconsideration, it is sensible that coaches would be in the latter half of their careers, possibly having spent some time as classroom staff, or other varied experiences, especially considering the number of coaches with advanced degrees. I did not ask participants to indicate in which field they had earned their degrees. In a future iteration of this survey it would be interesting to ask about their level of education in early childhood development and related fields. The sparse participation from King and Pierce Counties was surprising, because these counties are the largest population centers; however they are both single counties and regions, whereas other regions consist of between 3-12 counties.

Training and Support. The large majority of coaches indicated that they had participated in the various training and support activities such as the initial coach framework training (82%), consultation (64%), and webinars (92%). Participation in training and support is necessary to provide a reliably high quality coaching experience that aligns with the goals of the EA system. Ideally, the participation rate would be closer to 100% for initial training and consultation; however there is a possibility that newly-hired coach cohorts had not attended the training yet, but

planned to do so. It might also be possible that local agencies provide their own foundational training and do not require participation through Cultivate Learning, but encourage it.

Relatively high percentages of attendance of webinars might actually be an indicator of internal validity problems. It is possible that coaches who are likely to attend webinars are also more likely to participate in a survey. Additionally, the webinar promoted the survey, which could also account for the high percentage. Most of the participants had not attended an EA institute session for coaches (56%), which is not surprising because coaches do not all have the same access to sessions. The first reason is that the sessions have limited capacity. Secondly, there are four EA Institutes per year in rotating regions, so there cannot be one in every region every year.

Difference across demographics. Are coaches' experiences different across varying COP configurations or protocols, and differing demographics? To detect any trends in the data that could explain differences in demographics or COP configuration, I conducted a visual inspection. I viewed the Likert scale data and filtered for all variables associated with demographics (age, race/ethnicity, region, gender, education) and COP configuration (structure, length, frequency, duration, size, leadership, setting). The only deviations from the data aggregate were that coaches of Latino descent were more likely to respond that their COPs had an effect on how much they learned about "meeting the needs of dual language learners". Latino coaches who are dual language learners themselves might be more likely to spend multiple COP sessions addressing how to meet the needs of dual language learning providers and the children that they serve. This might account for the significant change of coaches' perceptions of COP efficacy when controlled for changes in racial and ethnic demographics.

Professional development for non-COP coaches. Any single professional development modality is one component to, what should be, a larger professional development plan. This might account for why the most common responses to the impact of various modalities of professional development were moderate in the "somewhat agree" category, especially for the questions

regarding finding solutions to problems, having time to reflect, and learning more about the elements of coaching practice. In response to modalities being a waste of time, coaches most “strongly disagreed” with all modalities, except for Internet resources, for which they “somewhat disagreed”. This negatively worded response was the only question prompt for which coaches “strongly disagreed” with that professional development modality’s benefits on their coaching practices. Coaches for the most part “somewhat disagreed” that reading literature and Internet resources had an impact on their emotions or personal connection to group members. Coaches similarly “somewhat disagreed” that self-reflection reduced feelings of isolation. This makes sense since these are both solitary activities that alone would not connect coaches to the larger learning community. No single modality was the “be-all and end-all” or “magic bullet” that would solve all of the participant’s problems and meet all professional development goals. Coaches indicated that professional development was necessary for their own continuous growth and development as professionals in the field.

Upon visual inspection of the responses to the item asking coaches to rate agreement on the impact of COPs, juxtaposed against various other forms of professional development, the only marked difference was in the subscale in which they were asked whether feelings of isolation were reduced. Again, this is not surprising because reading literature, finding Internet resources and self-reflection are not inherently social activities.

The coaches were asked if they felt an emotional or personal connection to their group members on the modified survey section, but the same subscale item was one of the Likert scale items related to COPs. This item was removed and replaced with items about whether COPs form organically and whether they were mandatory. In future iterations of this survey it would be interesting to see how much of a personal and emotional connection coaches feel to members of their COP. I would hypothesize that it would also be in the “strongly agree” to “somewhat agree” category.

Limitations

There are several inherent limitations to a survey model, where response rates are often “disappointingly low” (Berends, 2012, p. 630). Small return rates of 20-33% for surveys such as this is more common than reaching the ideal 70%. The low response rates will obviously bias these results to coaches who would be willing to take a survey on communities of practice. It is possible that the relatively positive results of this survey are due to participation by coaches who have positive associations with COPs. Coaches who had negative experiences might have been less inclined to respond to the survey.

Coaches are extremely busy, and this is not the only survey that they have been asked to complete, even by Cultivate Learning. I emailed coaches a much shorter (five minute) survey at the end of monthly webinars. Another doctoral student also deployed a survey of similar length within one to two months before this survey. Coaches might have reached saturation point or fatigue with surveys, resulting in low participation.

Self-selection bias. It is possible, in fact it is inherent in the design of the study, that we were able to reach only a select sample of coaches, because I used an email list that is primarily used for sending coaches invitations to the webinar. It is possible that there are new coaches who are not on this list yet. Another possibility is that some coaches might not open these emails, or who purposely block these messages, or whose email services regard these messages as “spam” and automatically file them before the coaches can view them.

I promoted the survey on the coach webinars, so there is a possibility that coaches who are more likely to attend webinars are the same coaches who were more likely to take and complete the survey. In a future study with more funding, it might be worth the time and resources to send physical paper fliers to advertise the survey. These fliers could have an abbreviated web URL to the survey on “tear-off tabs”.

I was also troubled by the lack of participation from Asian and African American coaches, and coaches in the Seattle and Tacoma metropolitan areas. It is likely that these problems are one and the same, since these counties have the first and second largest populations of African Americans (119,801, and 53, 998) and Asian Americans (53,702 and 85,743) for King and Pierce respectively (Washington State Commission On African American Affairs, 2010; Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, 2010). Future researchers might need to employ disproportional sampling in order to account for the non-response from King and Pierce counties. Secondly, they might employ more focused outreach and promotion tactics in King and Pierce Counties, connecting with regional coordinators and administrators in these offices who could personally promote participation in the survey as a way to improve their professional development opportunities. Coaches in King and Pierce counties might be oversaturated with requests to complete surveys because of their proximity to Washington's metropolitan areas, such as Seattle and Tacoma, and multiple colleges and universities.

Researcher positionality bias. I chose this topic because I believe in COPs. I have personal experiences with COPs as a coach support team member and teacher. I would not have undertaken this research if I had not had a positive association with COPs. My opinion of the COP process could have influenced the way that I wrote survey items. In future surveys, I might include an item per Likert scale item, and an open-ended question in which I ask about the challenges or shortcomings of COPs, beyond "COPs are a waste of time" to add more nuance to the disadvantages and negative aspects of COPs as professional development opportunities.

As a coach support team member, I have had interactions with many coaches through training, consultation, and indirectly through webinars. My personal connections with coaches might have influenced them, even if subconsciously, to report more positively than they might have if the survey had been sent by the institution, Cultivate Learning or UW.

Qualitative data analysis. I analyzed the open-ended qualitative data visually or manually. I read the passages various times, and used deductive coding. In a future research project it would be interesting to use a qualitative data software system such as Atlas.ti as a preliminary theme production method. Data analysis quality is also limited because I coded the data alone. An additional coder would have provided data on inter-rater reliability and agreement on themes and codes.

Implications and recommendations

The practice of conducting COPs is still a promising method of professional development for coaches and providers. Coaching also shows promise as an effective method of professional development. Despite the limitations of this project, it is necessary to study coaches' professional development, including COPs. The following are my recommendations for practice, policy, and future research based on the findings of this study and the current body of literature on which it is based.

Practice. Given the data from this study, I would roundly recommend that all coaches consider participating in their own COPs and encourage the providers they support to do the same. As a coach trainer, I will continue to encourage coaches to use some sort of protocol to structure their COP meetings. The protocols help to ensure that meetings are focused on their cited goals. If meetings cover multiple topics across even a handful of meetings, the results could be frustrating for coaches who were expecting focused goals. Coaches might also consider assigning a leadership role to COP members on a rotating basis to manage “air-time” and make certain that all members have an opportunity to share, if they would like to do so. Coaches might consider taking time in the beginning of the COP to define the leader/facilitator. I would recommend that coaches set personal and professional goals, both for themselves and the group. Part of that goal setting includes setting mechanisms and timelines for checking on goal progress.

According to the data, coaches mostly meet between one to five times per year. Any COP that meets less frequently would most likely not be achieving its stated goals. I would recommend that coaches strive to meet monthly or bimonthly and pledge to schedule no less than one, two-hour session each quarter (possibly excluding the summer months, when scheduling can be difficult). Once per quarter, coaches should plan on revisiting progress in terms of group and personal goals. COPs might reevaluate and adjust the focus of the group to meet the needs of the members. If the group is too large and ungainly, group members should discuss the possibility of breaking the group down into smaller sizes. Smaller COPs could consider meeting in small groups monthly and reconvening with the whole group once per quarter. Smaller groups might be necessary if the needs of the group vary too much, resulting in too many topics being covered to be useful to everyone.

I encourage new coaches or any early childhood support staff who are feeling isolated or ineffective in managing their multiple roles or to try COPs at least once. COPs might not work for everyone. In these cases, coaches might consider an individual reflection activity, such as journaling, or one-to-one consultation with a mentor or supervisor.

Policy. I will continue to support and promote COPs in my role as a coach support team member. I would also urge regional coach contractors such as Child Care Aware and Childcare Resources of Washington to encourage coach COPs within their ongoing professional development plans. Preliminary data also suggests that Latino coaches from the Central—Yakima and Wenatchee Valley—regions may experience more positive associations with COPs, especially in regards to learning to coach in a culturally responsive way, and to work with providers who have dual language learners. Stakeholders from the Catholic Community Services regional office might consider the added benefits of providing time, space and training on how to conduct efficient COPs among coaches and affiliated support staff. I would also warn policymakers and stakeholders of the possible detriments making COPs mandatory. Again, providing coaches with

institutional time, space, and means to work on their own professional development might encourage COPs to form organically around shared interests and challenges. Some coaches might need to utilize teleconferencing software such as Skype to connect to coaches in distally located regional offices.

Future research. Future research projects would obviously benefit from the participation of a higher proportion of the overall population of coaches in the given area. A return rate of 20-30% is the bare minimum for making any substantial claims about the current state of COPs among early childhood education coaches in Washington State. Future researchers with more resources, time, and staff might undertake a mixed format and method survey, employing Internet, physical mailed copies, and phone call follow-ups to promote a higher participation rate. A larger dollar value attached to survey incentives, or perhaps a guaranteed participation incentive of \$10-25 dollars might increase return rates toward the ideal 70% standard in the field (Dillman et al., 2009).

A revised survey study could also be reproduced in this or another state, with coaches or even childcare providers. Items would need to be adjusted to reflect the benefits and experiences of teacher COPs. A natural, future extension of this study would be to conduct interviews with a small sample of the population in order to gain a better understanding of responses on specific survey items (Berends, 2012, 633). This input could help to modify survey items and ensure that all the respondents are interpreting questions in the same way (Berends, 2012, p. 631).

Future researchers might consider oversampling in areas in which participation was light, namely King and Pierce counties. Furthermore, data from this survey could be combined with recent findings from other surveys on coaches' feelings of efficacy in central skills related to practice-based coaching (Zeng, 2016).

Researchers might consider future steps in intervention research, such as testing the efficacy of COPs on specific mechanisms within the “black box” of the chosen coaching model by

controlling for COP focus. Coaches, for example, could be randomly assigned to COP or non-COP professional development groups, aligned with the practice-based coaching model; meaning there would be a control and intervention groups focused specifically on: focused observation; feedback and reflection; shared goal setting; and collaborative partnerships. Coach efficacy could be measured by self-report and reflection, and by outside observation of data collectors, among various other ways.

Conclusion

Coaching and COPs are promising professional development methods for early childhood professionals. Both approaches are still in the early stages of research and understanding. There is little research that focuses on the professional development of coaches and how they can better support providers to improve their instructional practice. COPs could be a complementary method to encourage the reflection and problem solving of coach cohorts. I conceived this project as an initial step towards understanding the characteristics of coach COPs in Washington State (Berends, 2012, p. 623). I hypothesized that the benefits for coaches would be similar to what they were for teachers.

The responses to this survey highlight the strengths and challenges of COPs. Coaches reported a general-to-strong agreement that COPs had an overall positive impact on their coaching by helping them to reduce isolation, gain new resources, reflect and get helpful feedback on their coaching. These are prospective areas of strength for COPs. Coaches were more measured in their responses to how much they learn, and how they learn to coach in COPs, especially with regard to culturally responsive coaching, meeting the needs of dual language learners, assessment and curriculum. These are areas in which COPs might not be enough to improve coaches' practice on their own.

Coaches' responses help to situate COPs in the larger picture of coach and provider support within a larger professional development system. COPs might prove beneficial to coaches and providers in some aspects of their professional learning and support. They are one tool in a varied toolkit. COPs provide coaches with much-needed small group interaction, where they can individualize and focus on issues that affect their daily coaching interactions. Coaches input their dedication, time, and thoughtful reflection in improving their practice in COPs. The outputs are a clearer understanding of their work, and goals to work towards excelling. The COP is not a "golden ticket" that will magically fix all that is wrong with early childhood professional development. However when coaches or providers use COPs properly, in concert with other training and supervisory tools, they might become more effective coaches and teachers, and happier children and families.

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Appendices

Appendix A. EA Practice-based coaching Model (from NCQTL/Head Start)

Appendix A: Practice-based Coaching Model



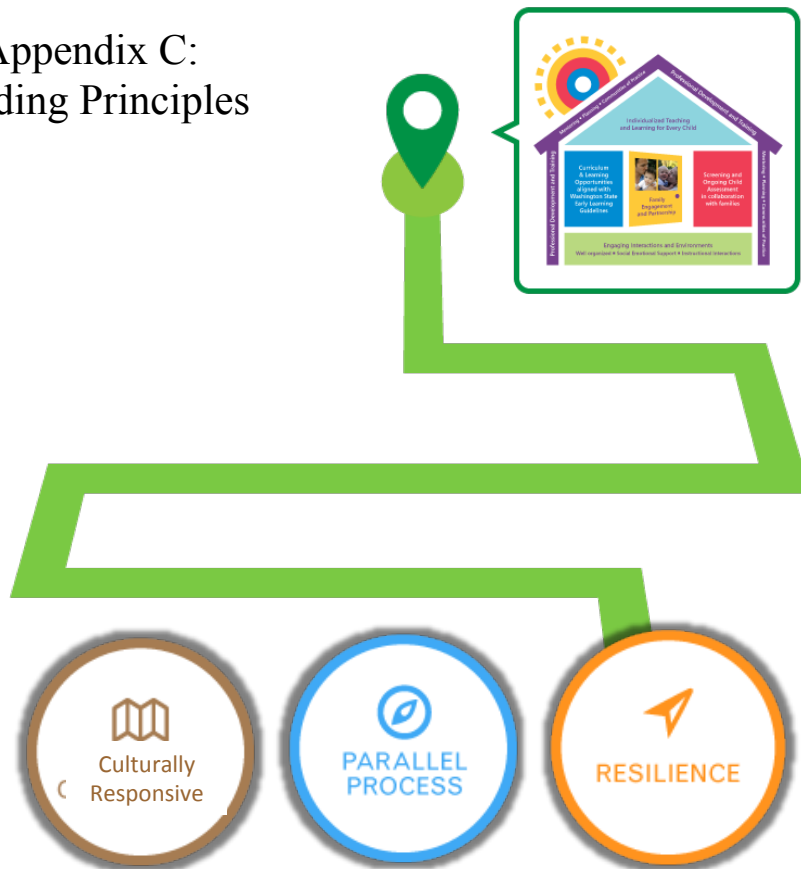
Appendix B. EA “House” Framework

Appendix B: House Framework



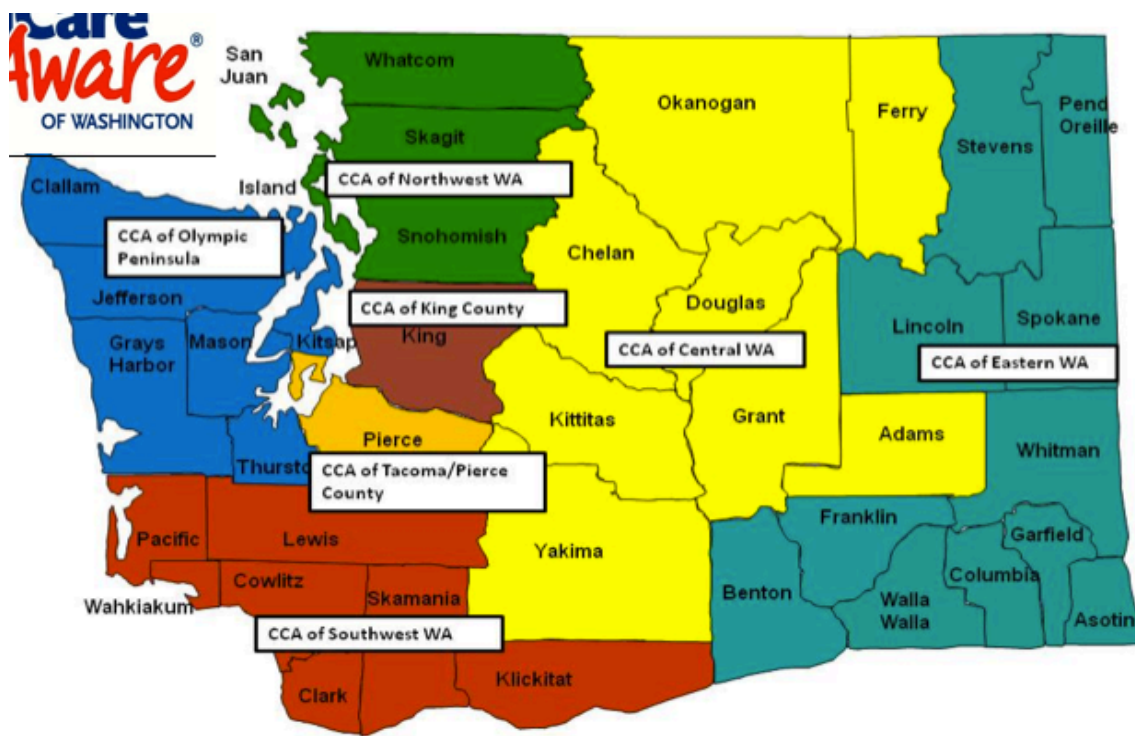
Appendix C. EA Guiding Principles

Appendix C: Guiding Principles



Appendix D. Regional map of Child Care Aware and Childcare Resources in Washington State

Appendix D: Regional Map Of Childcare Aware/Resources



Appendix E. EA Coach Support and Professional Development

Appendix E:
EA Coach Support And Professional Development



Appendix F.

Early Childhood Professional Development Theory of Change, including coaching

Appendix G.

EA coaching position posting for the Yakima Catholic Diocese. A division of Catholic Community services, (who contract EA coaches in the Central region)

What you can expect as a Early Achievers Coach....

Coaches will work with the Early Achievers Regional Coordinator, the local Child Care Aware program staff and the University of Washington (data collection) to deliver on-site technical assistance, coaching, professional development, and consultation to help child care and early learning providers—including licensed centers and family home providers—improve the quality of their programs in Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan, Ferry, Yakima, Grant, Adams, and Kittitas Counties. Early Achiever’s coaches will assist in the development and implementation to promote readiness based on the needs of the community and in alignment with the overarching program philosophy (school readiness).

- Positively promote Early Achievers within the designated counties including building successful relationships with child care providers based on mutual respect;
- Assist in the provision of outreach and technical assistance to local Early Achievers as the program expands;
- Work collaboratively with the Child Care Aware team to ensure optimal provision of all early learning activities;
- Effectively deliver content related to quality improvement through skilled observation, modeling, teaching, feedback and mentoring child care providers;
- Provide ongoing support, training, and technical assistance to rated Early Achievers participants;
- Work with child care providers to define specific, focused and clear goals in the development of quality improvement plans;
- Administer designated assessment tools, recognize high- and low-quality interactions, instructional support, and environments, and deliver content and resources which will guide improvement;
- Understand and interpret all components of the Early Achievers ratings;
- Collect, interpret, and use classroom data in the development of quality improvement plans;
- Demonstrate and model reflective practices with child care providers;
- Demonstrate familiarity with community resources available to child care providers and families in the designated counties.
- Comply with all required data collection, reporting requirements, activities, progress reports, and other required documentation within the designated timeframe;
- Participate in coach framework trainings, checks, community of practice, and other activities to ensure fidelity to the model;
- Develop and maintain a schedule for on-site visits based upon the program needs in collaboration with the Early Achievers Regional Coordinator and Child Care Aware staff;
- Attend all required trainings, meetings, and webinars regarding the coaching framework and other professional development activities;
- Maintain confidentiality in all areas of practice including child care providers, family and child confidentiality; and
- Perform other duties as assigned

Appendix H

Final copy of communities of practice coach survey tool

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey! We are very interested in your experiences and opinions about communities of practice (COPs) as an early childhood coach in Washington State. COPs are a group of professionals with similar jobs or work situations who come together on a regular basis to discuss a specific focus in their practice, to set goals, and to improve performance. Examples of COPs include professional learning communities, inquiry groups, critical friends, and many other names. COPs may meet in-person, by telephone or online. Your valuable input will help the CQEL team adjust current COP practices to better meet your needs. Participation in the survey is completely optional and will have no consequence on your continued participation in any other aspect of your work. When you finish the survey, you will be entered to win one of fifteen (15) \$25 Amazon gift cards as a thank you for your time and thoughtfulness. To enter to win we need only your email address, which will be de-identified from your survey data. If you have any questions regarding this study or your participation, please contact West Keller, at kellerw@uw.edu, or (206) 790-9345.

Q56 Would you like to continue and take this survey? (By answering "Yes" to this question, you consent to participate in this study.)

- Yes, I agree to continue. (1)
- No (2)

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Q6 Have you ever participated in a community of practice?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Block.

Q8 Approximately how many COP sessions have you participated in over the past year?

- 1-5 (1)
- 6-10 (2)
- More than 10 (3)

Q38 This portion of the survey is designed for coaches who have not participated in a COP. Because you have indicated that you do not participate in COPs, we are interested in how you meet your professional development needs.

Display This Question:

Have you ever participated in a community of practice? No Is Selected

Q41 How much do you agree with the following statements regarding trainings and conferences as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to the next question)

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
I learn to coach more effectively (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I gain access to new resources (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My feelings of isolation are reduced (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
These modalities are a waste of my time (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have time to reflect on and analyze my practices (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.) (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get helpful feedback on my practices (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I improve my coaching practices between sessions (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q57 How much do you agree with the following statements regarding peer mentoring as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to the next question)

	Strongly agree (6)	Somewhat agree (7)	Neither agree nor disagree (8)	Somewhat disagree (9)	Strongly disagree (10)
I learn to coach more effectively (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I gain access to new resources (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My feelings of isolation are reduced (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This modality is a waste of my time (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have time to reflect on and analyze my practices (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.) (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get helpful feedback on my practices (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I improve my coaching practices between sessions (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q58 How much do you agree with the following statements regarding self-reflection as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to the next question)

	Strongly agree (13)	Somewhat agree (14)	Neither agree nor disagree (15)	Somewhat disagree (16)	Strongly disagree (17)
I learn to coach more effectively (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I gain access to new resources (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My feelings of isolation are reduced (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This modality is a waste of my time (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have time to reflect on and analyze my practices (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.) (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get helpful feedback on my practices (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I improve my coaching practices between sessions (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q59 How much do you agree with the following statements regarding reading professional literature as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to the next question)

	Strongly agree (28)	Somewhat agree (29)	Neither agree nor disagree (30)	Somewhat disagree (31)	Strongly disagree (32)
I learn to coach more effectively (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I gain access to new resources (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My feelings of isolation are reduced (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This modality is a waste of my time (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have time to reflect on and analyze my practices (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.) (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get helpful feedback on my practices (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I improve my coaching practices between sessions (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q60 How much do you agree with the following statements regarding using the Internet to find resources as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to the next question)

	Strongly agree (12)	Somewhat agree (13)	Neither agree nor disagree (14)	Somewhat disagree (15)	Strongly disagree (16)
I learn to coach more effectively (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I gain access to new resources (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My feelings of isolation are reduced (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This modality is a waste of my time (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have time to reflect on and analyze my practices (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.) (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get helpful feedback on my practices (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I improve my coaching practices between sessions (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q61 How much do you agree with the following statements regarding taking college courses as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to next question)

	Strongly agree (11)	Somewhat agree (12)	Neither agree nor disagree (13)	Somewhat disagree (14)	Strongly disagree (15)
I learn to coach more effectively (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I gain access to new resources (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My feelings of isolation are reduced (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This modality is a waste of my time (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have time to reflect and analyze my practices (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.) (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get helpful feedback on my practices (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I improve my coaching practices between sessions (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If Have you ever participated in a community of practice?; No Is Selected

Q62 What are other means of professional development that you use?

Q43 What is your age?

- 18-25 (1)
- 26-40 (2)
- 41-55 (3)
- 56-60+ (4)
- I'd rather not say (5)

Q44 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3) _____

Q45 What is your race/ethnicity?

- American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
- Asian (2)
- Black or African American (3)
- White/Caucasian (4)
- Hispanic or Latino (5)
- Prefer not to respond (6)
- Other (7) _____

Q46 What is your highest level of education completed?

- High school (1)
- Some college (2)
- Associate's degree (3)
- Bachelor's degree (4)
- Master's degree (5)
- Advanced graduate work (e.g. MD, JD, Ed.D. or Ph.D.) (6)

Q47 Did you attend the initial Early Achievers 2-day New Coaching training?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Not sure (3)

Q48 Have you participated in a CQEL Coach Webinar in the last year?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Not sure (3)

Q49 Have you received individual consultation on coaching in the last year?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Not sure (3)

Q50 Have you attended any EA Institutes in the last year?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Not sure (3)

Q51 Have you participated in a Haring Center Internship?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- not sure (3)

Q52 What region of Washington State do you coach in, primarily? (choose one)

- Northwest (1)
- King County (2)
- Tacoma/Pierce County (3)
- Southwest (4)
- Central (5)
- Eastern (6)
- Olympic (7)
- Other (8) _____

Q53 Please indicate which types of providers you coach (mark all that apply):

- Childcare Centers (1)
- Family Home Care (2)
- ECEAP (3)
- Head Start (6)
- Early Head Start (7)
- Hybrid sites (8)
- Migrant Head Start (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q54 Thank you so much for your time and opinions. We value your feedback. If you would like to be entered into a drawing to earn a \$25 Amazon Gift Card, please copy the link into your browser, and enter your name and email address. Your survey answers will not be connected to your personal information in any way. You will only be contacted if you are a winner https://uweducation.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6R82dSetkGe6Ts1

Q13 In the following section of the survey we are interested in your experiences with the COPs that you were a part of. Try to keep that experience in mind when answering these four questions.

Q14 How long have you participated in your current COP?

- Less than 6 months (1)
- 6 months to 1 year (2)
- 1 to 2 years (3)
- More than 2 years (4)

Q16 How often did/does your COP meet?

- Weekly (1)
- Month (2)
- Bimonthly (3)
- Quarterly (once in 4 months) (4)
- Other (please specify) (5) _____

Q17 Which of the following attributes describe your COP? (choose all the apply)

- We were a group of similar professionals (e.g. coaches, early childhood support staff) (1)
- We chose an area of focus in which we wanted to improve practice (2)
- We set personal or professional goals related to area of focus (3)
- We followed-up on progress of goals in the next meeting (4)
- We had an opportunity to check in and talk about general issues related to our work (5)
- Other (please specify) (6) _____

Q21 COPs sometimes follow a protocol or specific form provided by a guiding organization (e.g. Childcare Quality & Early Learning (CQEL) or School Reform Initiative (SRI).

Q19 Did you use a specific form or protocol to guide your COP?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: The following question....

Q20 Which forms or protocols have you used with your COPs? (choose all that apply)

- SRI Success Analysis protocol (1)
- Professional Learning Community (PLC) protocol (2)
- Critical Friends Group (CFGs) (3)
- Abriendo Puertas (4)
- Others (please list) (5) _____

Q18 The following questions have to do with how your COP was structured.

Q22 On average, how many participants were in your COP?

- 2-4 (1)
- 5-9 (2)
- 10 or more (3)

Q23 On average, how long were the COPs sessions?

- 30 minutes or less (1)
- 31-60 minutes (2)
- 61-90 minutes (3)
- more than 90 minutes (4)

Q24 Was there an official “leader” or facilitator to your group COP?

- No (1)
- Yes (2)

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: If there was a leader or f...

Q25 If there was a leader or facilitator, what were their responsibilities? (choose all that apply)

- To keep time (1)
- To assure that all members got a turn (2)
- To keep the group "on track" (3)
- To explain and/or follow the protocol (4)
- To help write goals and/or follow-up steps (5)
- Other (please specify) (6) _____

Q26 What were the settings of your COP? (choose all that apply)

- In-person (1)
- On-line (i.e. teleconferencing software; e.g. "Zoom" or AdobeConnect") (2)
- _____
- Telephone (3)
- Other (please explain): (4) _____

Q27 We want to hear how your engagement in your most recent COP has impacted your coaching practice.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
I learned to coach more effectively (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I gained access to new resources (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My feelings of isolation were reduced (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
COPs were a waste of my time (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I found solutions to problems in my coaching practice (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had time to reflect and analyze my practices (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learned more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.) (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I got helpful feedback on my practices (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I improved my coaching practices between COP sessions (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My COP formed on our own, or	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

“organically” (10)							
I am required to attend a COP (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q28 How much do you agree with the following statements regarding the impact of your COP?

Q29 As a result of your COP how much did you learn on the following coaching skills?

	A great deal (1)	A lot (2)	A moderate amount (3)	A little (4)	None at all (5)
Reflection and feedback (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focused observation (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shared goal setting (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building collaborative partnerships with providers (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culturally responsive coaching (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parallel process (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adult resilience/wellness (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using technology to support coaching (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q30 How much did your COP affect your ability to coach to the following skills?

	A great deal (1)	A lot (2)	A moderate amount (3)	A little (4)	None at all (5)
Addressing challenging behaviors (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Modifying and individualizing instruction (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meeting the needs of dual language learners (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Embedding instruction (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting engaging interactions (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating organized learning environments (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foster positive social environments (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using a research-based curriculum (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collecting ongoing child assessment (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Click to write Statement 11 (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q31 Which of the following topics have you addressed in your a COP? (choose all that apply):

- Behavior management/ challenging behaviors (1)
- Curriculum (2)
- Working with families (3)
- Using data to make instructional decisions (4)
- Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS) (5)
- Environment Rating Scales (ERS) (6)
- Practice-based coaching (7)
- Identifying teacher goals (8)
- Action planning with teachers (9)
- Conducting focused observation (10)
- Providing feedback (11)
- Promoting teacher self-reflection (12)
- Developing partnerships with teachers (13)
- Modifications and individualization (14)
- Other: (please list) (15) _____

Q32 Which of the following types of technology did you use in your COP?

- Video recordings of coaching (1)
- Audio recordings of coaching (2)
- On-line coaching website (e.g. Coaching Companion) (3)
- Other (please elaborate) (4) _____
- We do not use technology in our COP (5)

Q33 Which of the following activities does your COP group do? (choose all that apply)

- Share stories (1)
- Discuss case studies (2)
- Share resources (3)
- Share ideas (4)
- Discuss problems or challenges (5)
- Read and discuss professional literature (6)
- Other: (please list) (7) _____

Q34 What were/are the goals of your COP? (choose all that apply):

- Discuss problems and challenges in practice (1)
- Make professional goals (2)
- Make personal goals (3)
- Track progress of goals (4)
- Analyze data (5)
- Other: (please list) (6) _____

Q35 What can coaches learn from each other in a COP?

Q36 How can coaching change teaching practices?

Q37 What else would you like us to know about your experiences with COPs?

[end of Appendix H]

Appendix I.

Complete report of all raw data collected from survey responses.

Default Report

Communities of practice Coach Survey - Final

October 25th 2017, 2:50 pm MDT

Q56 - Would you like to continue and take this survey? (By answering "Yes" to this question, you consent to participate in this study.)

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes, I agree to continue.	98.72%	77
2	No	1.28%	1
	Total	100%	78

Q6 - Have you ever participated in a community of practice?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	72.97%	54
2	No	27.03%	20
	Total	100%	74

Q8 - Approximately how many COP sessions have you participated in over the past year?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	1-5	56.60%	30
2	6-10	24.53%	13
3	More than 10	18.87%	10
	Total	100%	53

Q41 - How much do you agree with the following statements regarding trainings and conferences as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to next question)

#	Question	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree	
1	I learn to coach more effectively	16.98%	9	10.67%	8	0.00%	0	5.26%	1	0.00%	0
2	I gain access to new resources	30.19%	16	1.33%	1	4.76%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
3	I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members	5.66%	3	9.33%	7	23.81%	5	10.53%	2	8.33%	1
4	My feelings of isolation are reduced	1.89%	1	18.67%	14	9.52%	2	0.00%	0	8.33%	1
5	These modalities are a waste of my time	0.00%	0	1.33%	1	4.76%	1	31.58%	6	83.33%	10
6	I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice	3.77%	2	17.33%	13	4.76%	1	10.53%	2	0.00%	0
7	I have time to reflect and analyze my practices	9.43%	5	12.00%	9	14.29%	3	5.26%	1	0.00%	0
8	I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.)	13.21%	7	13.33%	10	0.00%	0	5.26%	1	0.00%	0
9	I get helpful feedback on my practices	5.66%	3	10.67%	8	9.52%	2	26.32%	5	0.00%	0
10	I improve my coaching practices between sessions	13.21%	7	5.33%	4	28.57%	6	5.26%	1	0.00%	0
	Total	Total	53	Total	75	Total	21	Total	19	Total	12

Q57 - How much do you agree with the following statements regarding peer mentoring as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to next question)

#	Question	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
6	I learn to coach more effectively	50.00%	6	50.00%	6	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	12
7	I gain access to new resources	25.00%	3	75.00%	9	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	12
8	I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members	41.67%	5	33.33%	4	8.33%	1	16.67%	2	0.00%	0	12
9	My feelings of isolation are reduced	25.00%	3	58.33%	7	16.67%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	12
10	This modality is a waste of my time	0.00%	0	8.33%	1	8.33%	1	33.33%	4	50.00%	6	12
11	I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice	8.33%	1	58.33%	7	33.33%	4	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	12
12	I have time to reflect and analyze my practices	25.00%	3	58.33%	7	8.33%	1	8.33%	1	0.00%	0	12
13	I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.)	41.67%	5	41.67%	5	16.67%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	12
14	I get helpful feedback on my practices	18.18%	2	54.55%	6	18.18%	2	9.09%	1	0.00%	0	11
15	I improve my coaching practices between sessions	25.00%	3	66.67%	8	8.33%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	12

Q58 - How much do you agree with the following statements regarding self-reflection as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to next question)

#	Question	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
5	I learn to coach more effectively	43.75%	37.50%	18.75%	0.00%	0.00%	16
6	I gain access to new resources	18.75%	18.75%	43.75%	18.75%	0.00%	16
7	I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members	12.50%	31.25%	37.50%	18.75%	0.00%	16
8	My feelings of isolation are reduced	6.25%	12.50%	37.50%	43.75%	0.00%	16
9	This modality is a waste of my time	0.00%	6.25%	18.75%	25.00%	50.00%	16
10	I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice	18.75%	62.50%	12.50%	6.25%	0.00%	16
11	I have time to reflect and analyze my practices	50.00%	43.75%	6.25%	0.00%	0.00%	16
12	I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.)	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	18.75%	6.25%	16
13	I get helpful feedback on my practices	6.67%	33.33%	40.00%	13.33%	6.67%	15
14	I improve my coaching practices between sessions	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	16

Q59 - How much do you agree with the following statements regarding reading professional literature as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to next question)

#	Question	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Total					
5	I learn to coach more effectively	25.00 %	4	56.25%	9	12.50 %	2	6.25%	1	0.00%	0	16
6	I gain access to new resources	31.25 %	5	50.00%	8	12.50 %	2	6.25%	1	0.00%	0	16
7	I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members	18.75 %	3	6.25%	1	31.25 %	5	37.50%	6	6.25%	1	16
8	My feelings of isolation are reduced	12.50 %	2	12.50%	2	37.50 %	6	31.25%	5	6.25%	1	16
9	This modality is a waste of my time	6.25%	1	0.00%	0	18.75 %	3	31.25%	5	43.75 %	7	16
10	I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice	12.50 %	2	62.50%	1	25.00 %	4	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	16
11	I have time to reflect and analyze my practices	31.25 %	5	56.25%	9	12.50 %	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	16
12	I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.)	31.25 %	5	43.75%	7	18.75 %	3	6.25%	1	0.00%	0	16
13	I get helpful feedback on my practices	12.50 %	2	18.75%	3	31.25 %	5	31.25%	5	6.25%	1	16
14	I improve my coaching practices between sessions	12.50 %	2	68.75%	1	18.75 %	3	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	16

Q60 - How much do you agree with the following statements regarding using the internet to find resources as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to next question)

#	Question	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
6	I learn to coach more effectively	25.00 %	4 50.00%	8 18.75 %	3 6.25%	1 0.00%	0 16
7	I gain access to new resources	50.00 %	8 50.00%	8 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 16
8	I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members	18.75 %	3 18.75%	3 25.00 %	4 25.00%	4 12.50 %	2 16
9	My feelings of isolation are reduced	12.50 %	2 6.25%	1 50.00 %	8 25.00%	4 6.25%	1 16
10	This modality is a waste of my time	12.50 %	2 0.00%	0 12.50 %	2 37.50%	6 37.50 %	6 16
11	I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice	18.75 %	3 68.75%	1 12.50 %	2 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 16
12	I have time to reflect and analyze my practices	25.00 %	4 43.75%	7 25.00 %	4 6.25%	1 0.00%	0 16
13	I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.)	25.00 %	4 62.50%	1 6.25%	1 6.25%	1 0.00%	0 16
14	I get helpful feedback on my practices	18.75 %	3 18.75%	3 18.75 %	3 43.75%	7 0.00%	0 16
15	I improve my coaching practices between sessions	18.75 %	3 43.75%	7 31.25 %	5 6.25%	1 0.00%	0 16

Q61 - How much do you agree with the following statements regarding taking college courses as a means of professional development? (If you don't use this modality for professional development, skip to next question)

#	Question	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
5	I learn to coach more effectively	55.56%	5	33.33%	3	11.11%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	9
6	I gain access to new resources	60.00%	6	20.00%	2	20.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	10
7	I feel an emotional/personal connection to my group members	40.00%	4	30.00%	3	30.00%	3	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	10
8	My feelings of isolation are reduced	30.00%	3	30.00%	3	40.00%	4	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	10
9	This modality is a waste of my time	10.00%	1	0.00%	0	20.00%	2	20.00%	2	50.00%	5	10
10	I find solutions to problems in my coaching practice	50.00%	5	20.00%	2	30.00%	3	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	10
11	I have time to reflect and analyze my practices	50.00%	5	30.00%	3	20.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	10
12	I learn more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.)	50.00%	5	40.00%	4	10.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	10
13	I get helpful feedback on my practices	50.00%	5	10.00%	1	30.00%	3	10.00%	1	0.00%	0	10
14	I improve my coaching practices between sessions	60.00%	6	20.00%	2	20.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	10

Q62 - What are other means of professional development that you use?

What are other means of professional development that you use?

Conferences

talking with other coaches within my program--not a formal COP

webinars

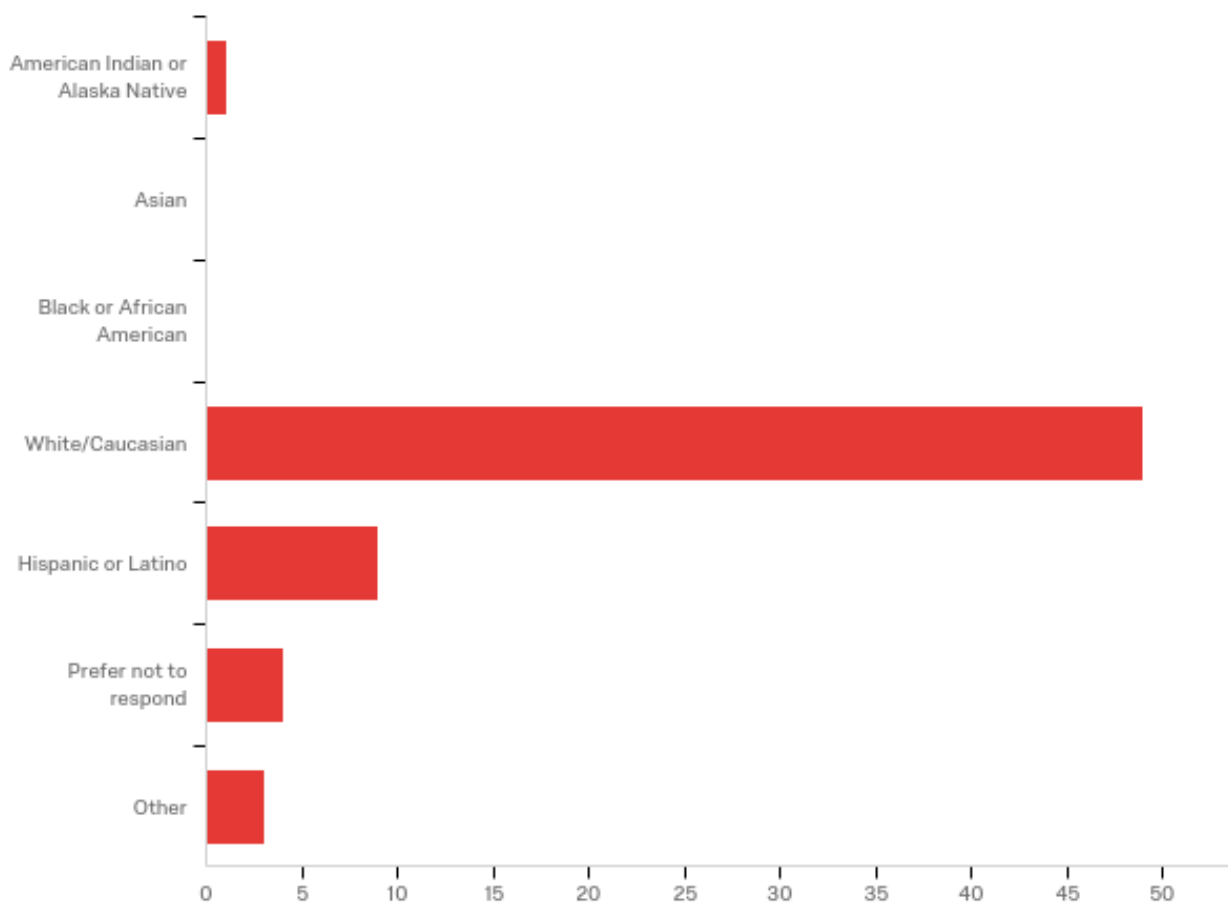
Q43 - What is your age?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	18-25	3.03%	2
2	26-40	30.30%	20
3	41-55	50.00%	33
4	56-60+	13.64%	9
5	I'd rather not say	3.03%	2
	Total	100%	66

Q44 - What is your gender?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	3.03%	2
2	Female	96.97%	64
3	Other	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	66

Q45 - What is your race/ethnicity?

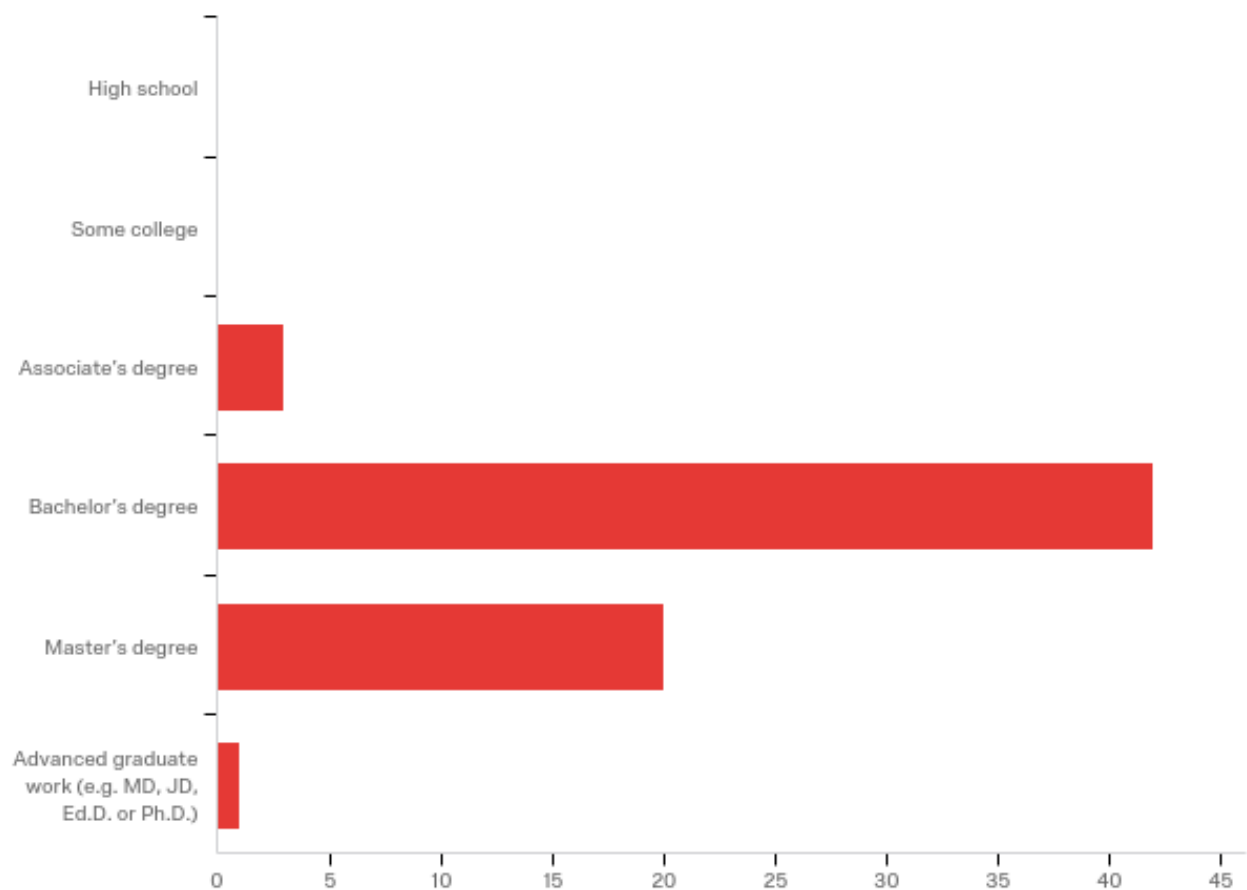


#	Answer	%	Count
1	American Indian or Alaska Native	1.52%	1
2	Asian	0.00%	0
3	Black or African American	0.00%	0
4	White/Caucasian	74.24%	49
5	Hispanic or Latino	13.64%	9
6	Prefer not to respond	6.06%	4
7	Other	4.55%	3
	Total	100%	66

Other

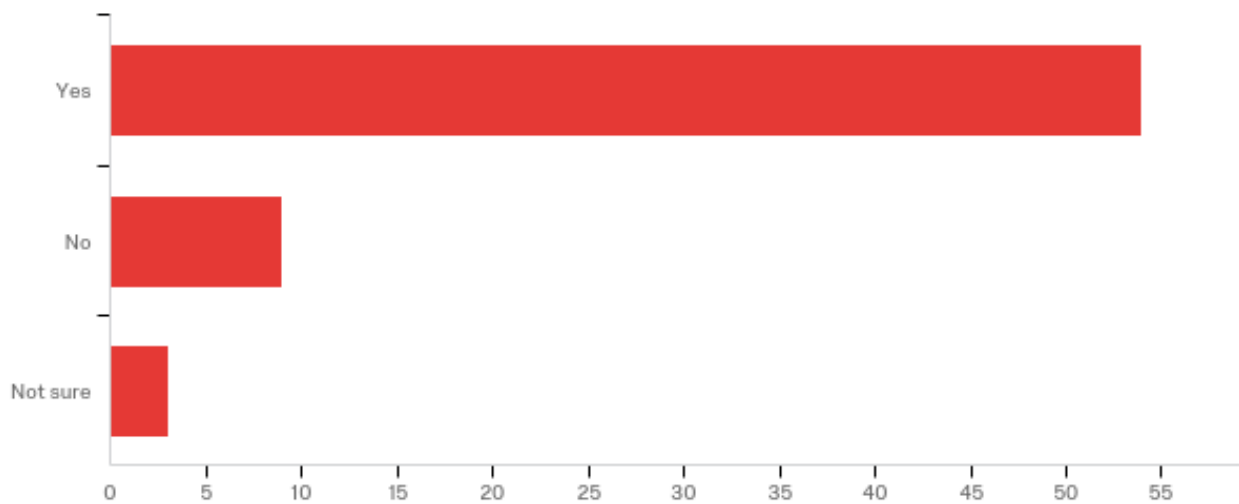
mixed

Q46 - What is your highest level of education completed?



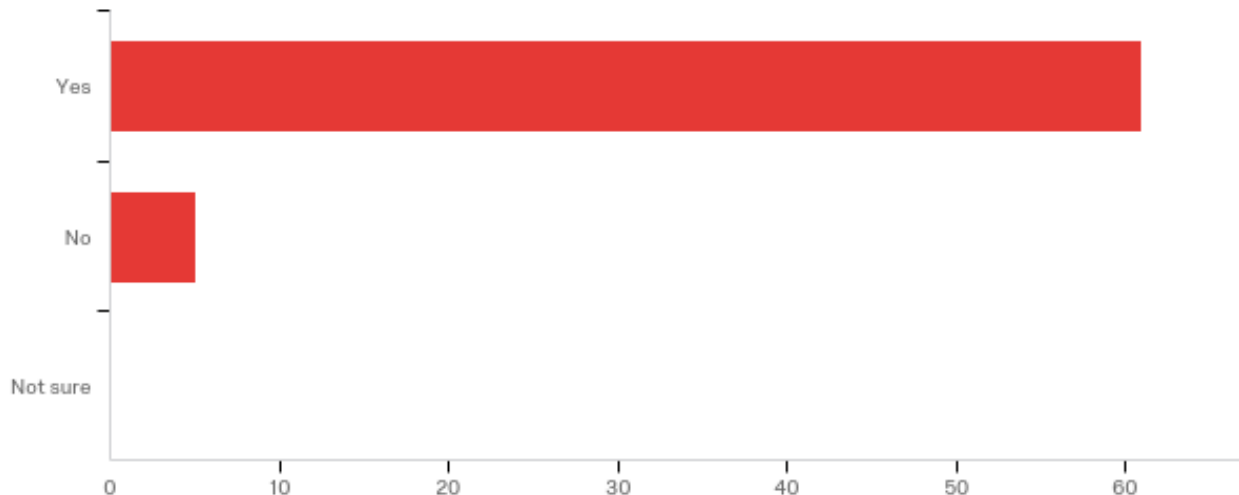
#	Answer	%	Count
1	High school	0.00%	0
2	Some college	0.00%	0
3	Associate's degree	4.55%	3
4	Bachelor's degree	63.64%	42
5	Master's degree	30.30%	20
6	Advanced graduate work (e.g. MD, JD, Ed.D. or Ph.D.)	1.52%	1
	Total	100%	66

Q47 - Did you attend the initial Early Achievers 2-day New Coaching training?



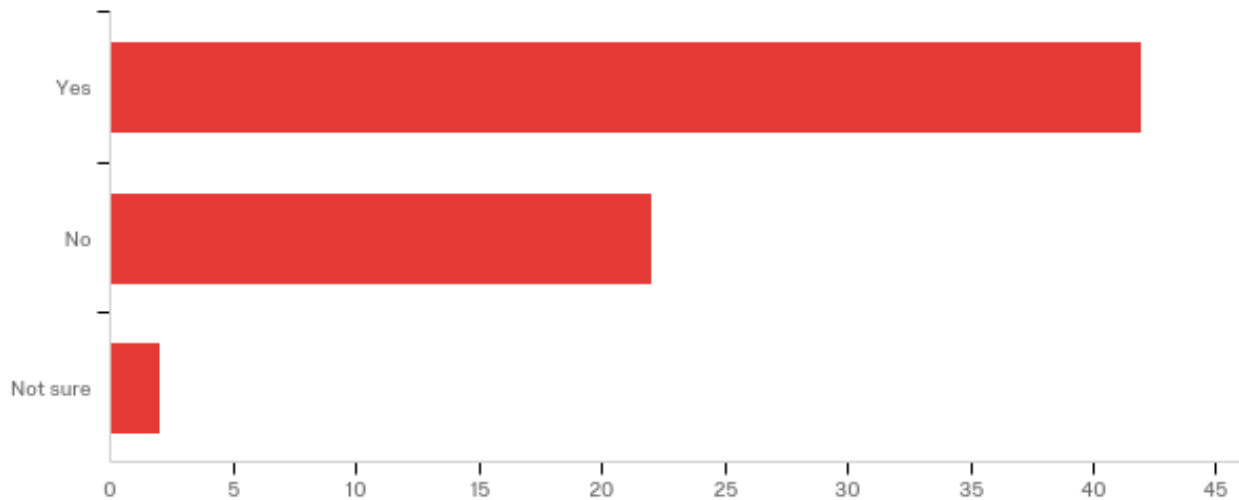
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	81.82%	54
2	No	13.64%	9
3	Not sure	4.55%	3
	Total	100%	66

Q48 - Have you participated in a CQEL Coach Webinar in the last year?



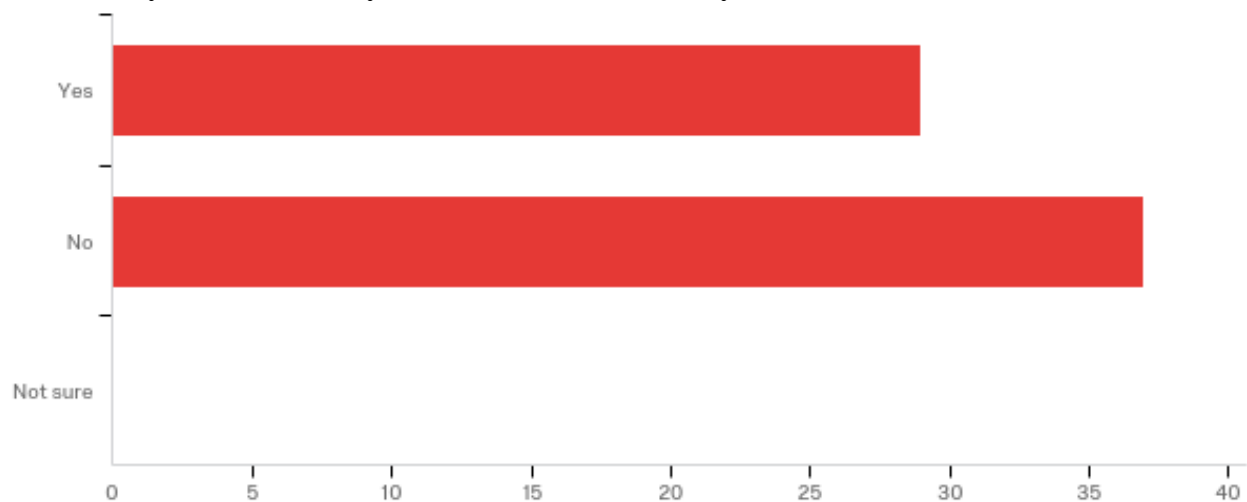
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	92.42%	61
2	No	7.58%	5
3	Not sure	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	66

Q49 - Have you received individual consultation on coaching in the last year?



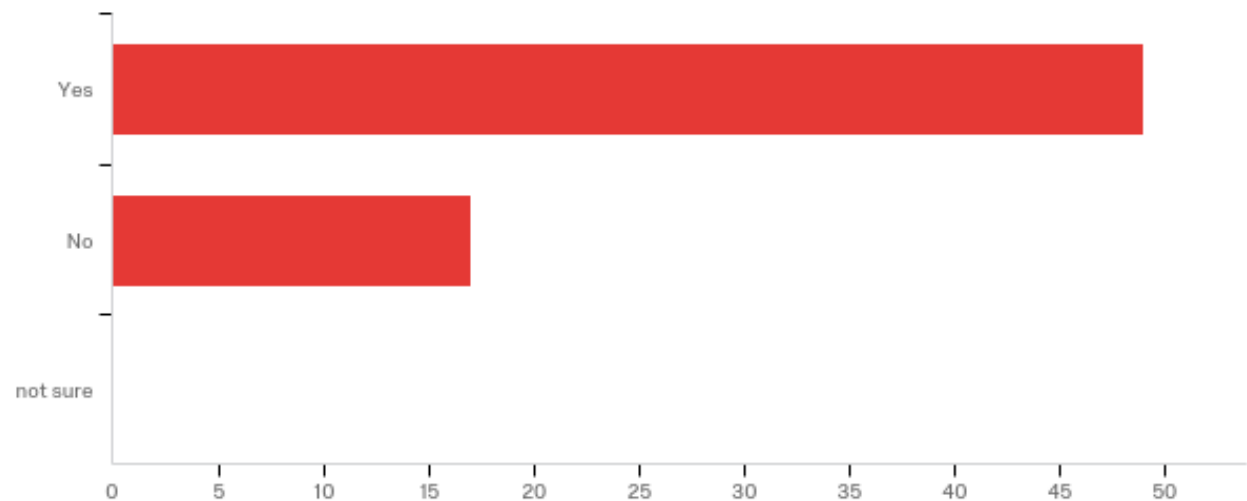
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	63.64%	42
2	No	33.33%	22
3	Not sure	3.03%	2
	Total	100%	66

Q50 - Have you attended any EA Institutes in the last year?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	43.94%	29
2	No	56.06%	37
3	Not sure	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	66

Q51 - Have you participated in a Haring Center Internship?



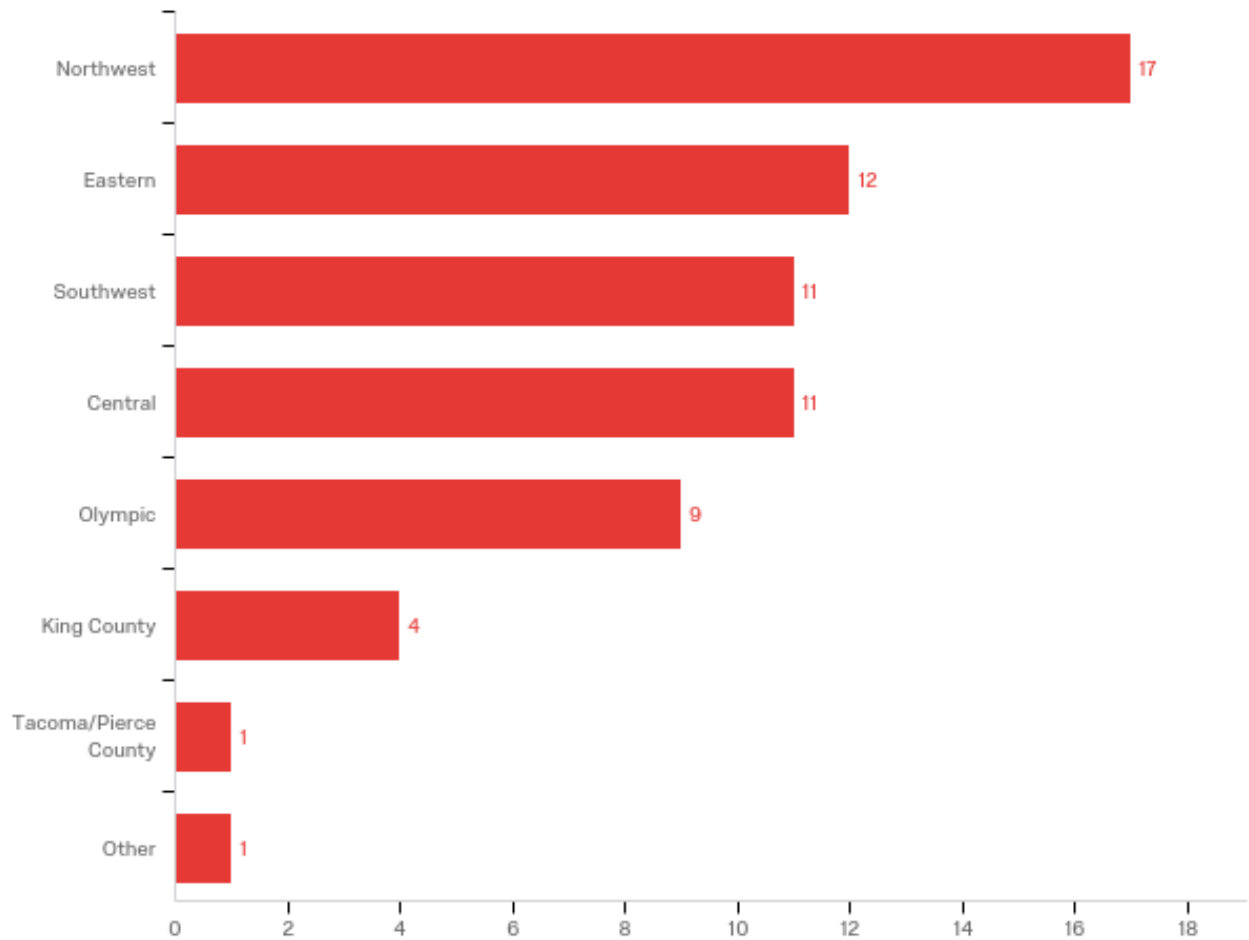
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	74.24%	49
2	No	25.76%	17
3	not sure	0.00%	0

Total

100%

66

Q52 - What region of Washington State do you coach in, primarily? (choose one)

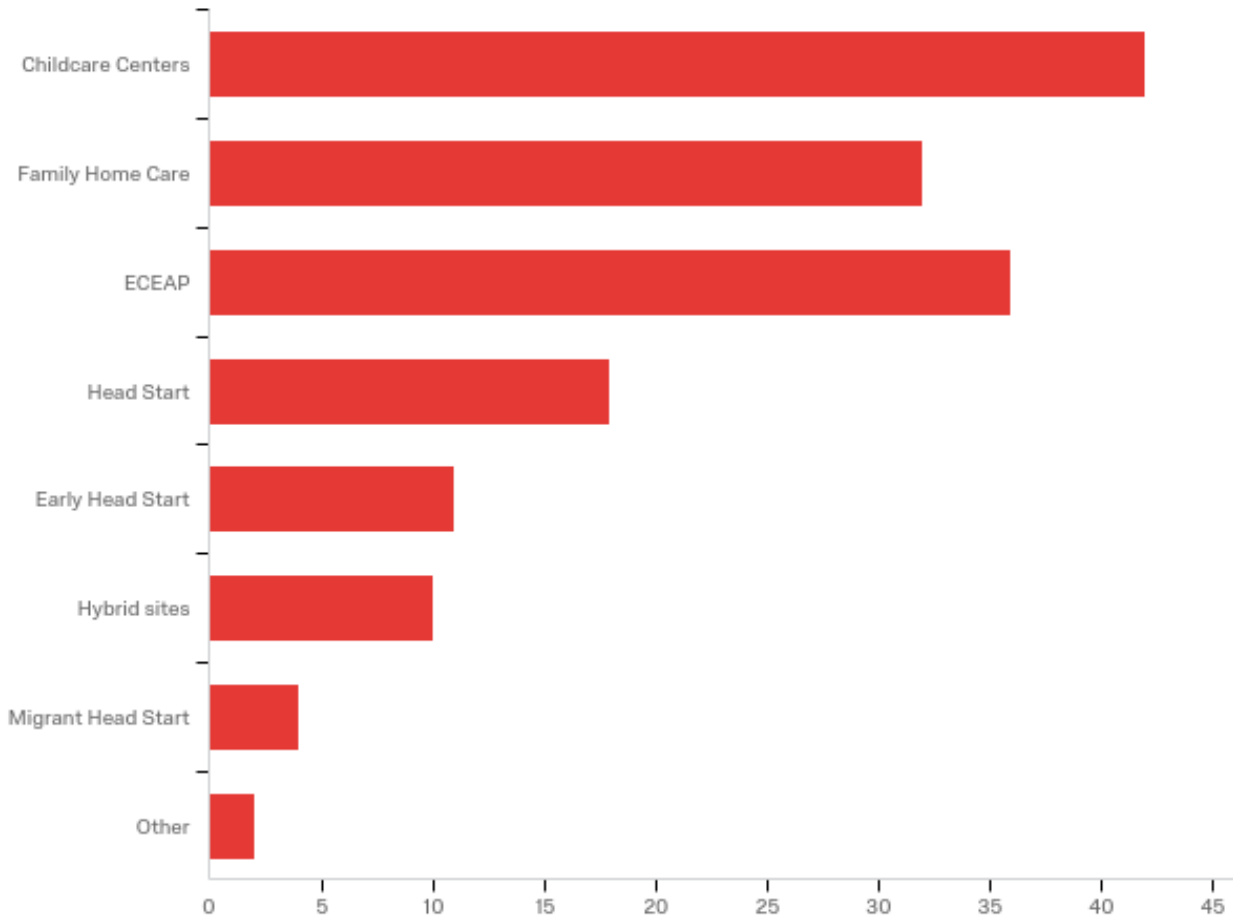


#	Answer	%	Count
1	Northwest	25.76%	17
2	King County	6.06%	4
3	Tacoma/Pierce County	1.52%	1
4	Southwest	16.67%	11
5	Central	16.67%	11
6	Eastern	18.18%	12
7	Olympic	13.64%	9
8	Other	1.52%	1
	Total	100%	66

Other
Other

Thurston, Mason, Grays Harbor counties--not sure which region

Q53 - Please indicate which types of providers you coach (mark all that apply):

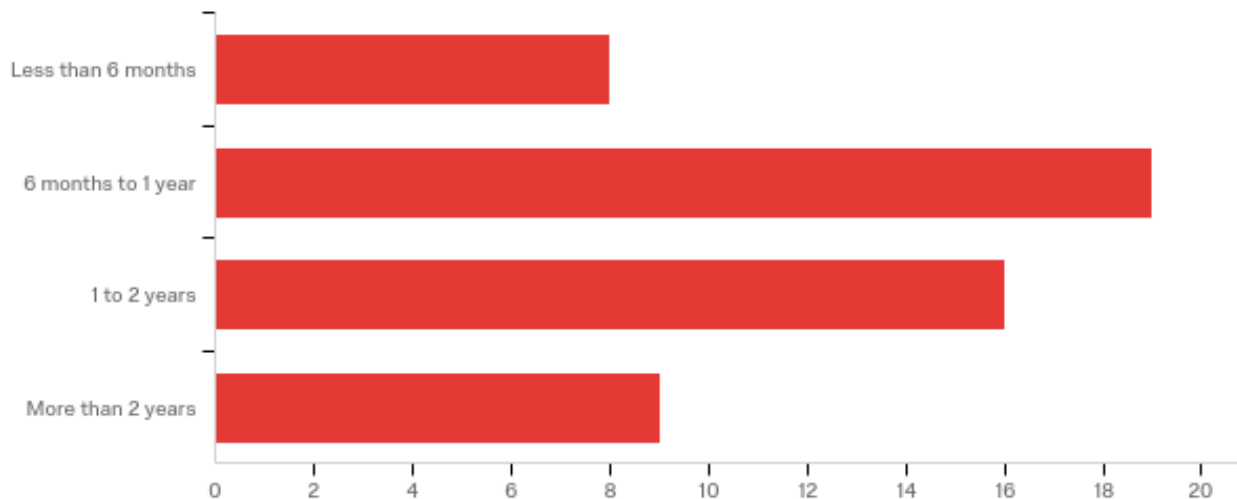


#	Answer	%	Count
1	Childcare Centers	27.10%	42
2	Family Home Care	20.65%	32
3	ECEAP	23.23%	36
6	Head Start	11.61%	18
7	Early Head Start	7.10%	11
8	Hybrid sites	6.45%	10
4	Migrant Head Start	2.58%	4
5	Other	1.29%	2
	Total	100%	155

Q53_5_TEXT - Other
Other

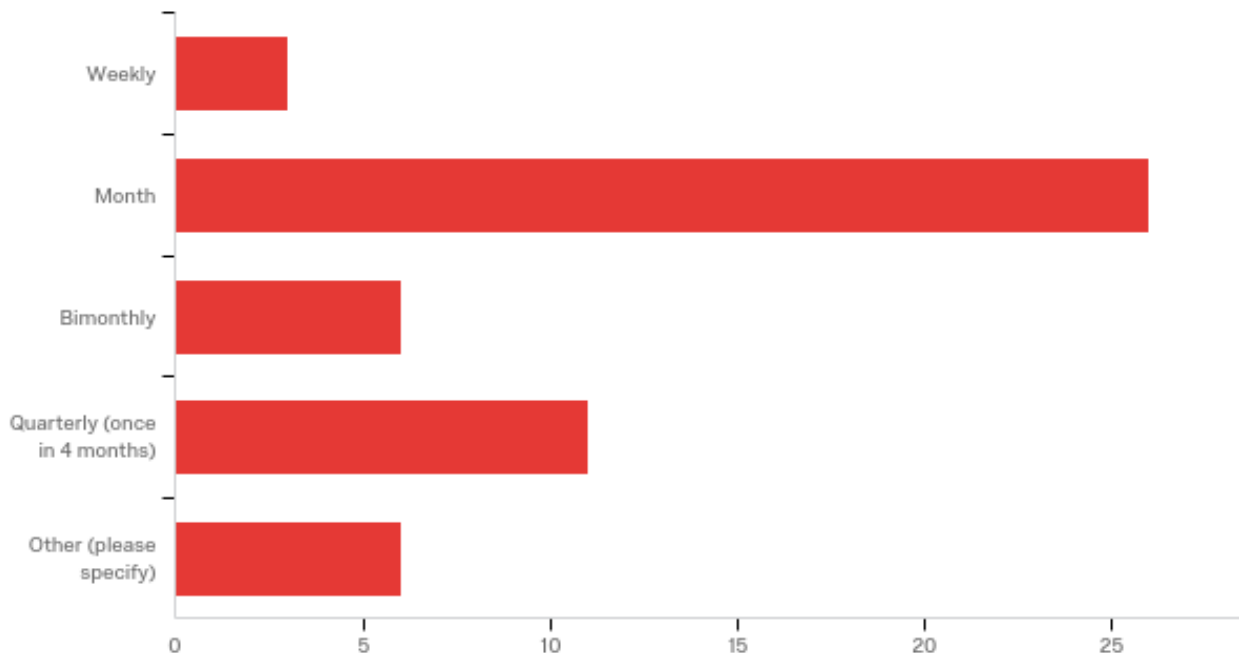
I have a few family homes that are also Military CDH providers with Naval Base Kitsap

Q14 - How long have you participated in your current COP?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than 6 months	15.38%	8
2	6 months to 1 year	36.54%	19
3	1 to 2 years	30.77%	16
4	More than 2 years	17.31%	9
	Total	100%	52

Q16 - How often did/does your COP meet?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Weekly	5.77%	3
2	Month	50.00%	26
3	Bimonthly	11.54%	6
4	Quarterly (once in 4 months)	21.15%	11
5	Other (please specify)	11.54%	6
	Total	100%	52

Other (please specify)
 Other (please specify)

depends on the group - some meet monthly some twice a month and one meets quarterly biannually

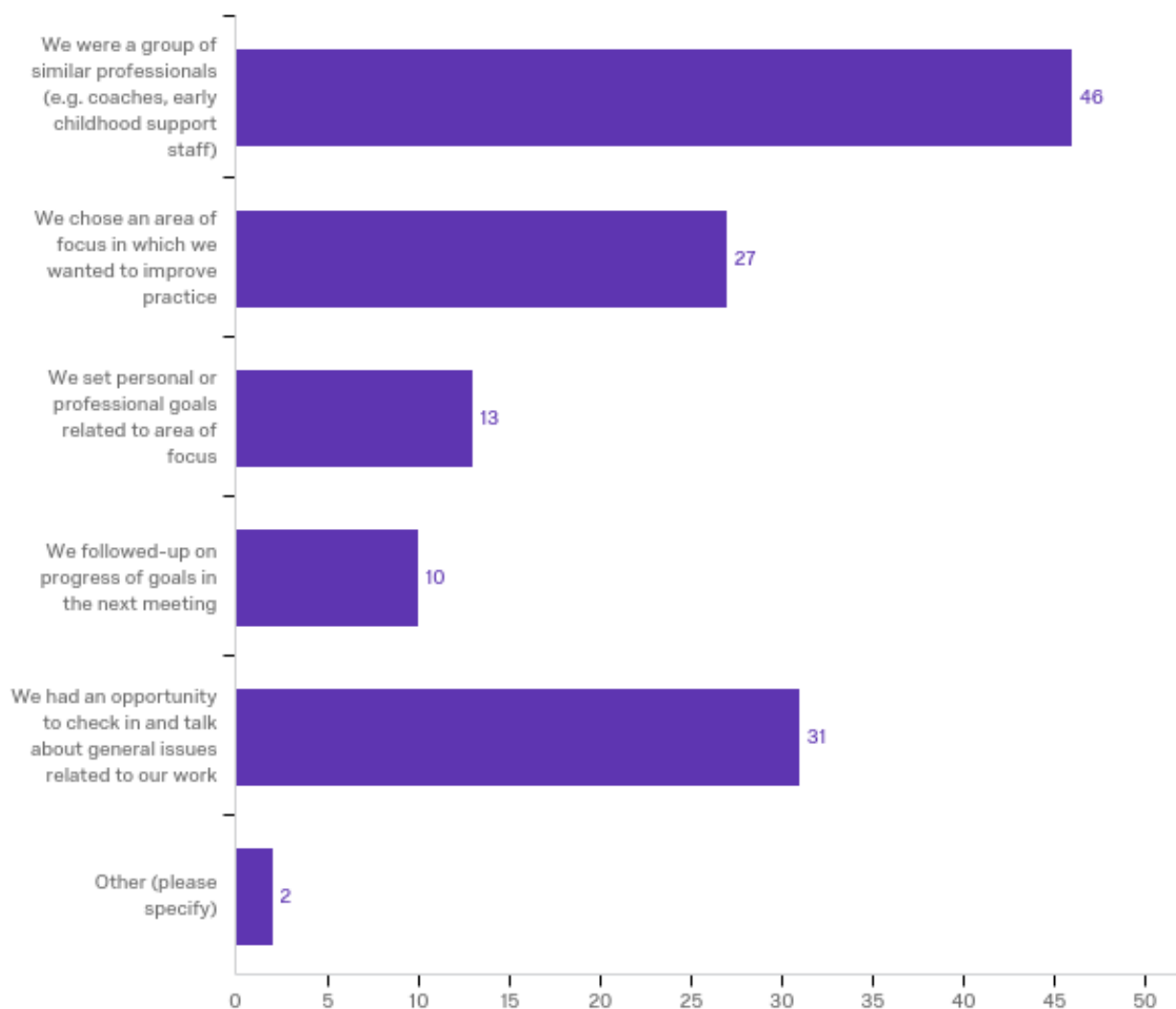
Every 3 months

February/May/June and possibly in August

When some or all of the group can get together

just started our first meeting

Q17 - Which of the following attributes describe your COP? (choose all the apply)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	We were a group of similar professionals (e.g. coaches, early childhood support staff)	35.66%	46
3	We set personal or professional goals related to area of focus	10.08%	13
5	We had an opportunity to check in and talk about general issues related to our work	24.03%	31
4	We followed-up on progress of goals in the next meeting	7.75%	10
2	We chose an area of focus in which we wanted to improve practice	20.93%	27
6	Other (please specify)	1.55%	2
	Total	100%	129

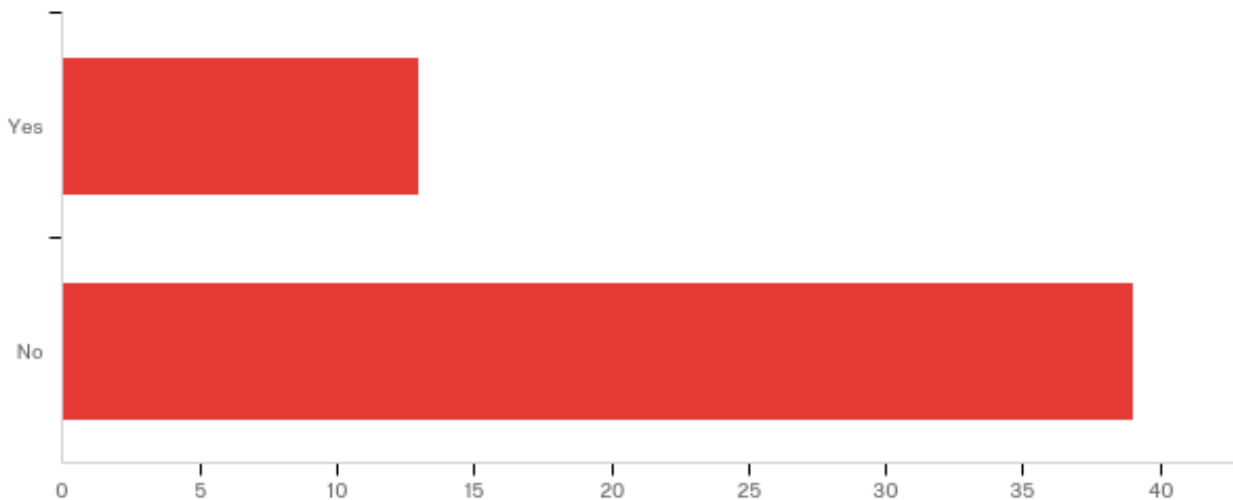
Q17_6_TEXT - Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

We had an opportunity to practice using interactive sessions.

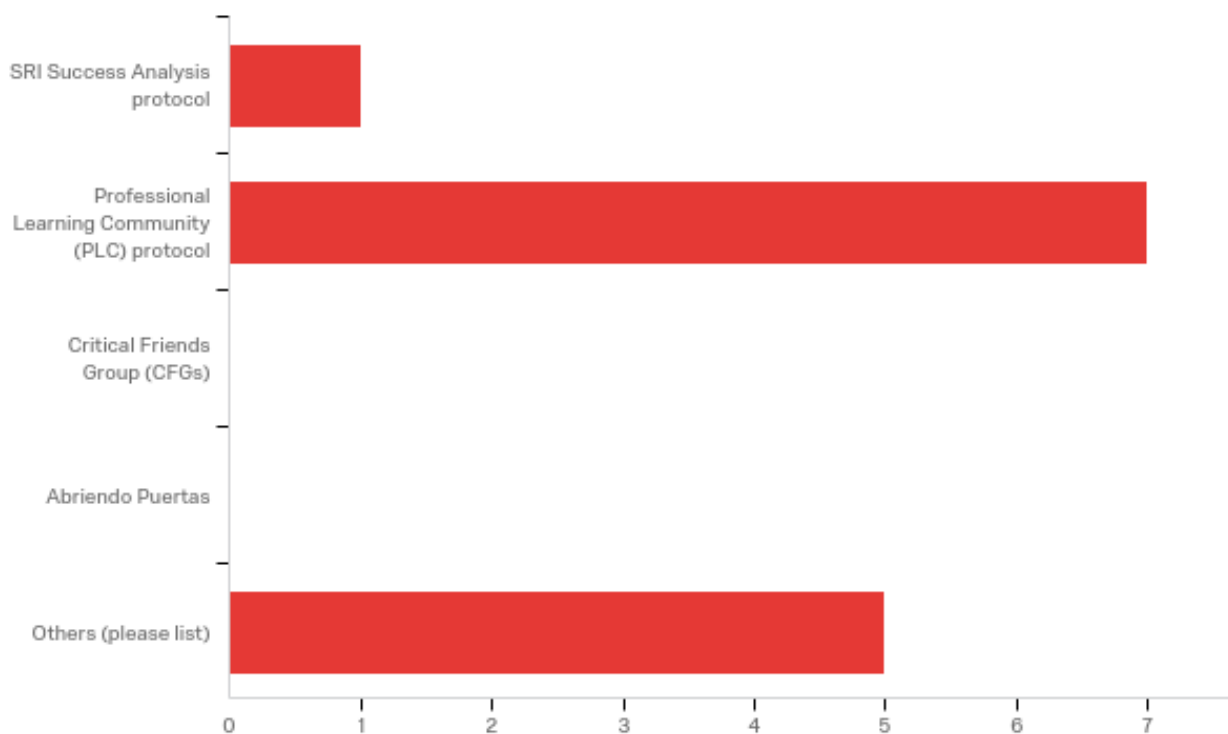
How to implement the new Performance Standards

Q19 - Did you use a specific form or protocol to guide your COP?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	25.00%	13
2	No	75.00%	39
	Total	100%	52

Q20 - Which forms or protocols have you used with your COPs? (choose all that apply)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	SRI Success Analysis protocol	7.69%	1
2	Professional Learning Community (PLC) protocol	53.85%	7
3	Critical Friends Group (CFGs)	0.00%	0
4	Abriendo Puertas	0.00%	0
5	Others (please list)	38.46%	5
	Total	100%	13

Q20_5_TEXT - Others (please list)
Others (please list)

Helping Trios

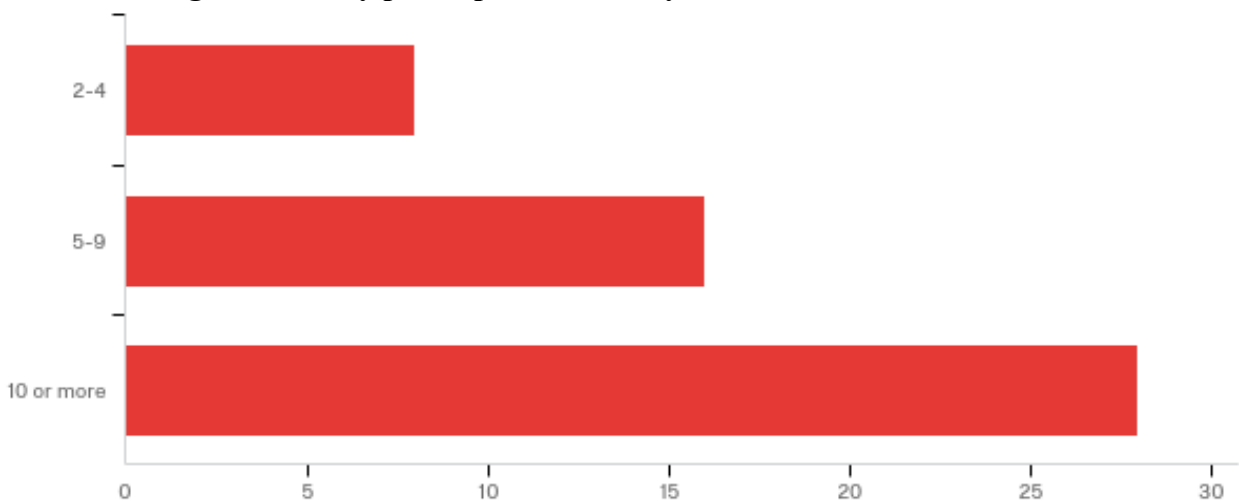
Garrison Kurtz is facilitating

we create our own

unknown

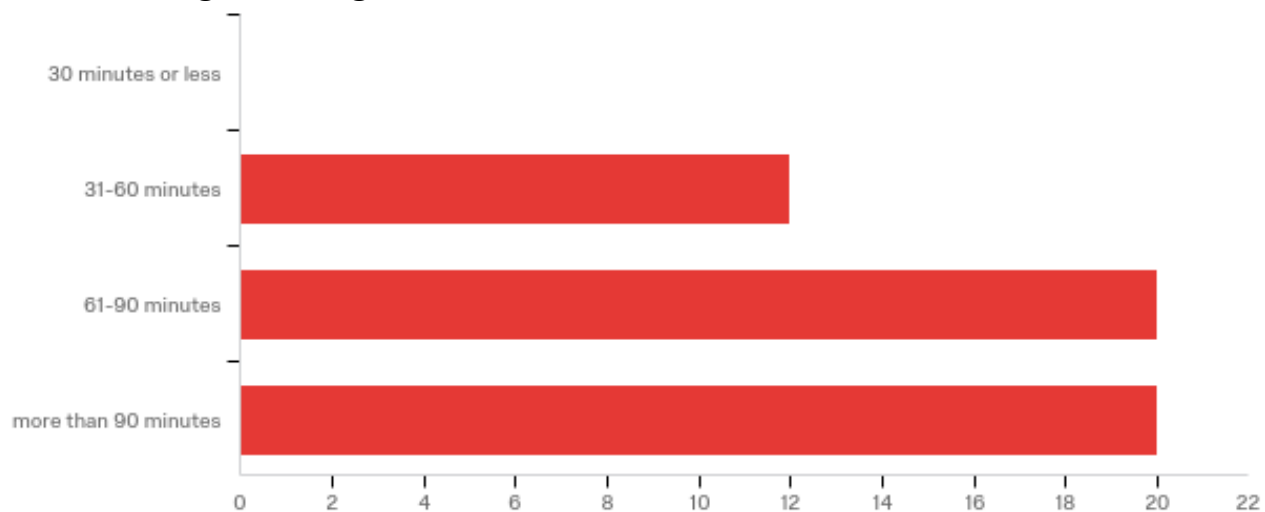
ICF

Q22 - On average, how many participants were in your COP?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	2-4	15.38%	8
2	5-9	30.77%	16
3	10 or more	53.85%	28
	Total	100%	52

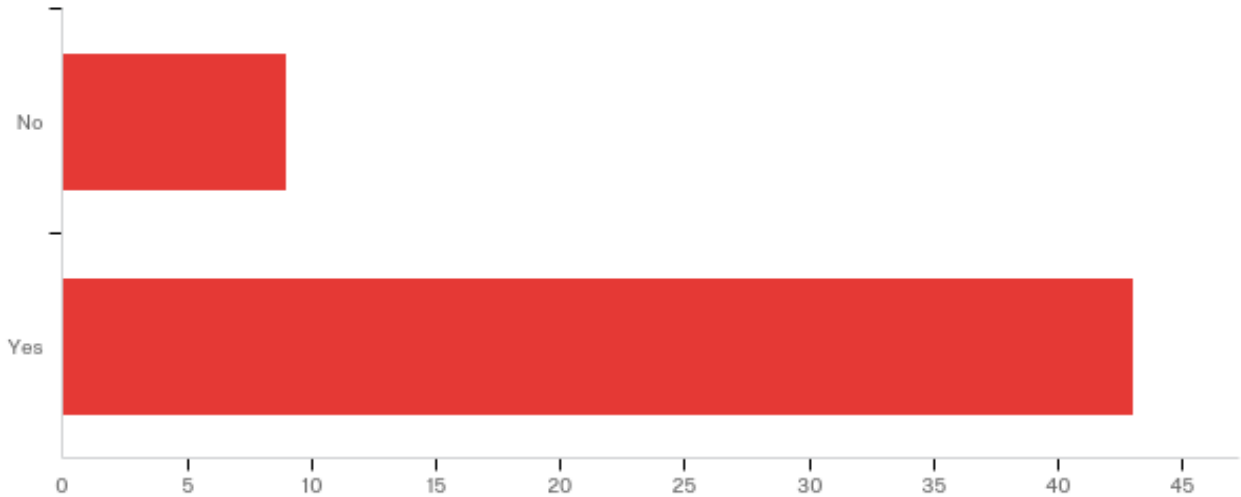
Q23 - On average, how long were the COPs sessions?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	30 minutes or less	0.00%	0
2	31-60 minutes	23.08%	12
3	61-90 minutes	38.46%	20

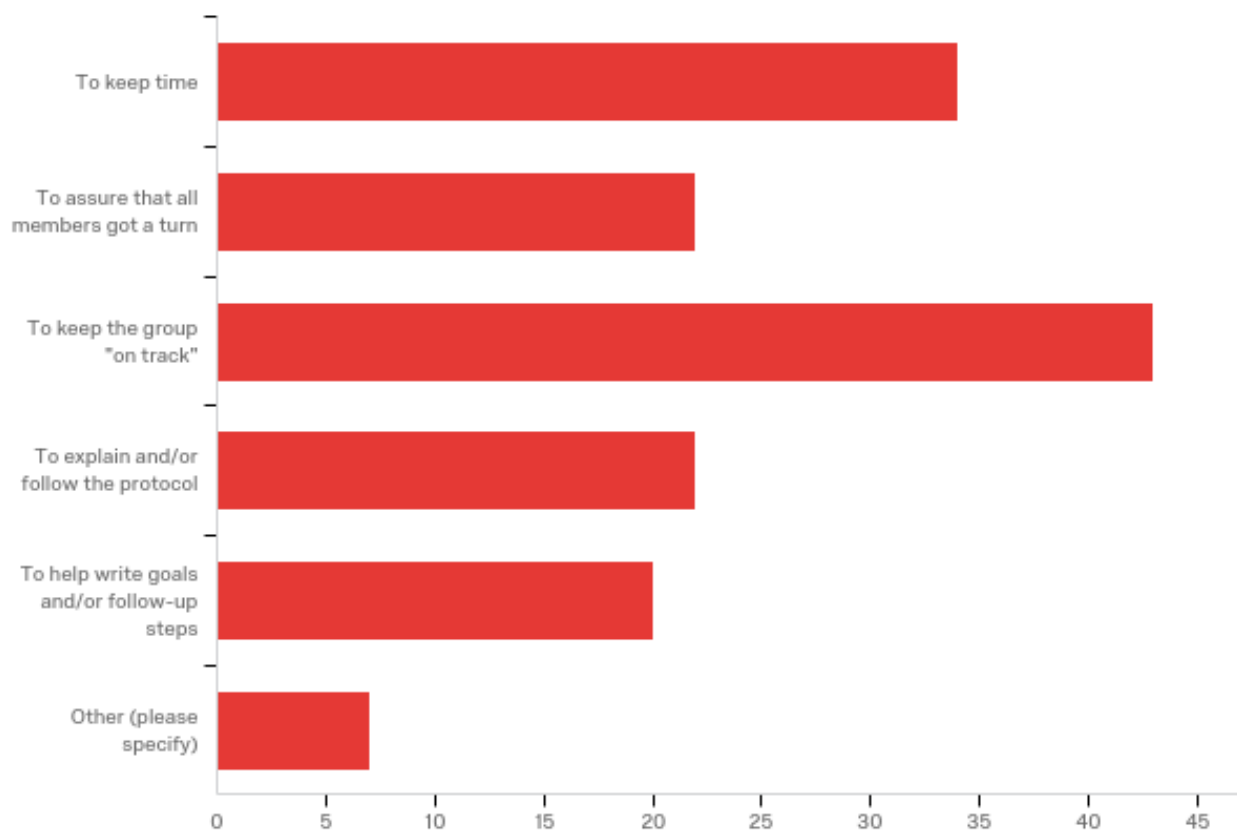
4	more than 90 minutes	38.46%	20
	Total	100%	52

Q24 - Was there an official “leader” or facilitator to your group COP?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	No	17.31%	9
2	Yes	82.69%	43
	Total	100%	52

Q25 - If there was a leader or facilitator, what were their responsibilities? (choose all that apply)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	To keep time	22.97%	34
2	To assure that all members got a turn	14.86%	22
3	To keep the group "on track"	29.05%	43
4	To explain and/or follow the protocol	14.86%	22
5	To help write goals and/or follow-up steps	13.51%	20
6	Other (please specify)	4.73%	7
	Total	100%	148

Q25_6_TEXT - Other (please specify)
Other (please specify)

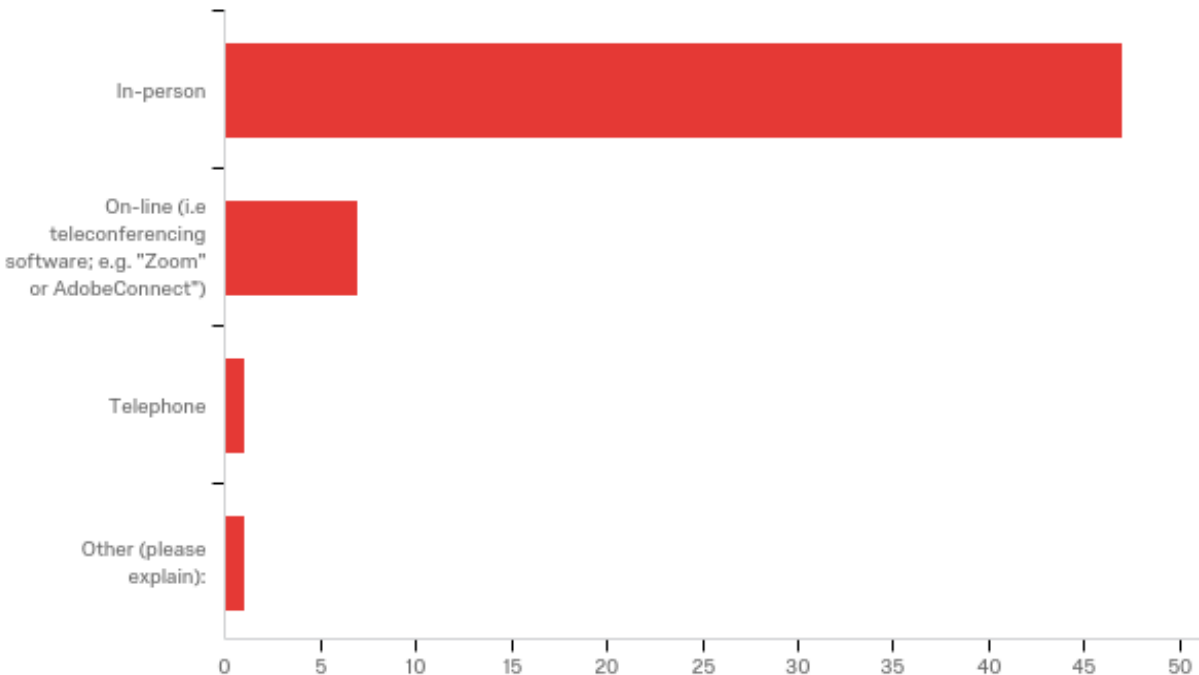
To develop the focus for the group, and foster team building

We take turns in pairs to facilitate the group. We come up with an agenda, activities, and facilitate the discussion that was determined by the group during previous meetings.
Provide context, hold accountable to group norms, goals and content.

facilitate meeting and plan agenda

The facilitator rotated each meeting so everyone had opportunity to lead discussions
 Share the agenda topics and provide information
 give trainings or additional information that would help us meet our goals

Q26 - What were the settings of your COP? (choose all that apply)

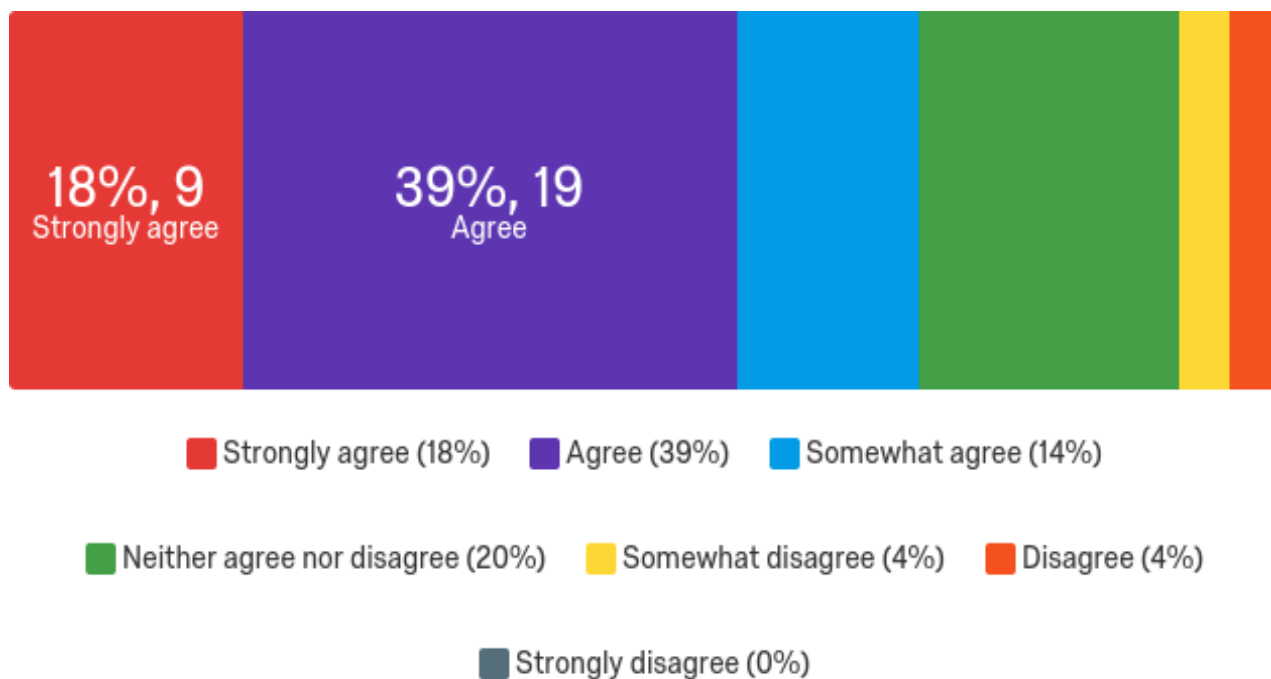


#	Answer	%	Count
1	In-person	83.93%	47
2	On-line (i.e teleconferencing software; e.g. "Zoom" or AdobeConnect")	12.50%	7
3	Telephone	1.79%	1
4	Other (please explain):	1.79%	1
	Total	100%	56

On-line (i.e teleconferencing software; e.g. ZooM; or AdobeConnect;)
 On-line (i.e teleconferencing software; e.g. "Zoom" or AdobeConnect")

ZOOM
 skype

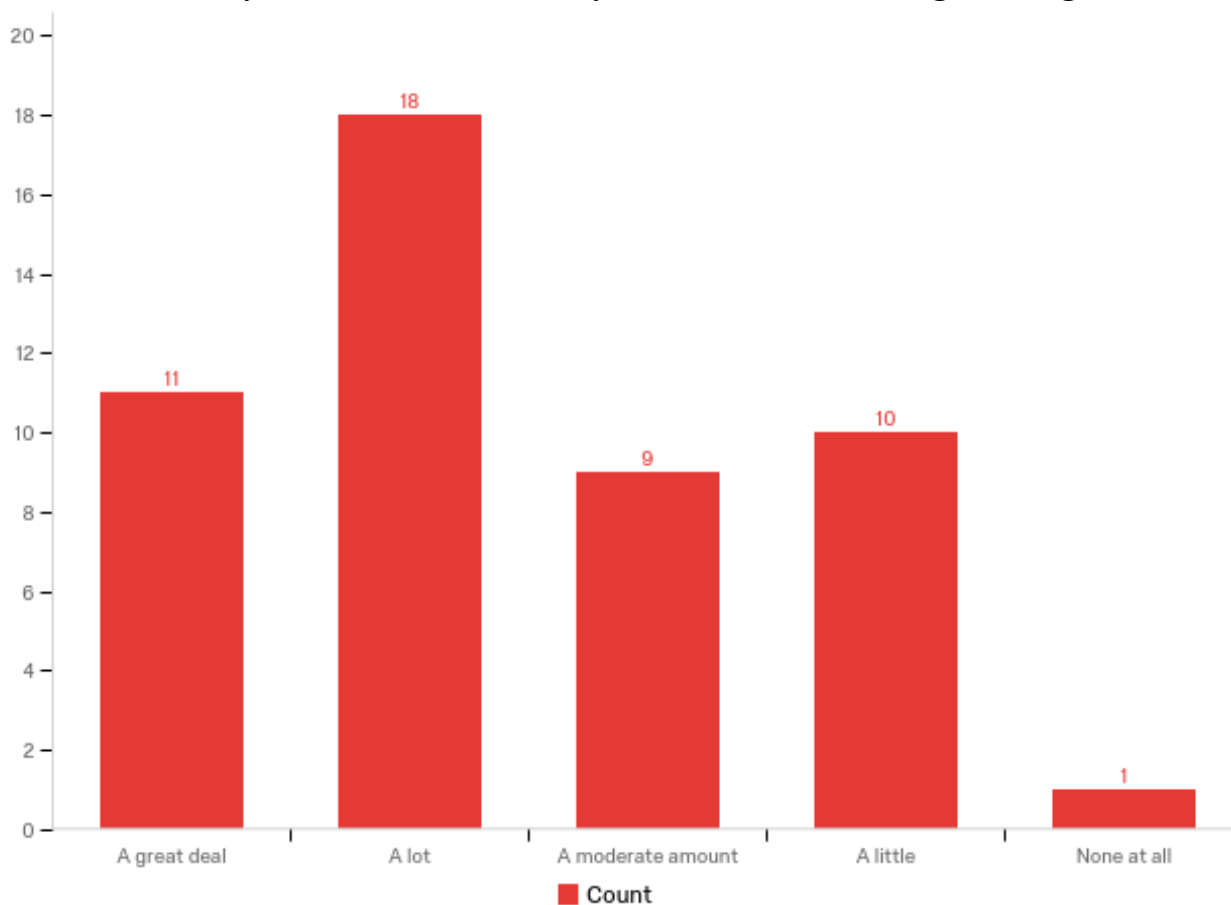
Q28 - How much do you agree with the following statements regarding the impact of your COP?



#	Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
4	COPs were a waste of my time	2.04 10.20%	2.04 10.20%	8.16% 4	10.20% 5	18.37% 9	26.53% 13	32.65% 16	49
5	I found solutions to problems in my coaching practice	20.41% 10	36.73% 18	16.33% 8	10.20% 5	10.20% 5	6.12% 3	0.00% 0	49
8	I got helpful feedback on my practices	22.45% 11	32.65% 16	14.29% 7	16.33% 8	8.16% 4	6.12% 3	0.00% 0	49
9	I improved my	22.45% 11	38.78% 19	12.24% 6	14.29% 7	8.16% 4	4.08% 2	0.00% 0	49

	coaching practices between COP sessions															
1	I learned to coach more effectively	18.37%	9	38.78%	19	14.29%	7	20.41%	10	4.08%	2	4.08%	2	0.00%	0	49
3	My feelings of isolation were reduced	36.73%	18	18.37%	9	18.37%	9	16.38%	8	4.08%	2	6.12%	3	0.00%	0	49
2	I gained access to new resources	30.61%	15	34.69%	17	22.45%	11	6.12%	3	2.04%	1	4.08%	2	0.00%	0	49
6	I had time to reflect on and analyze my practices	28.57%	14	40.82%	20	14.29%	7	6.12%	3	2.04%	1	6.12%	3	2.04%	1	49
7	I learned more about elements of coaching (goals, planning, observation, etc.)	20.41%	10	36.73%	18	18.37%	9	18.37%	9	2.04%	1	4.08%	2	0.00%	0	49

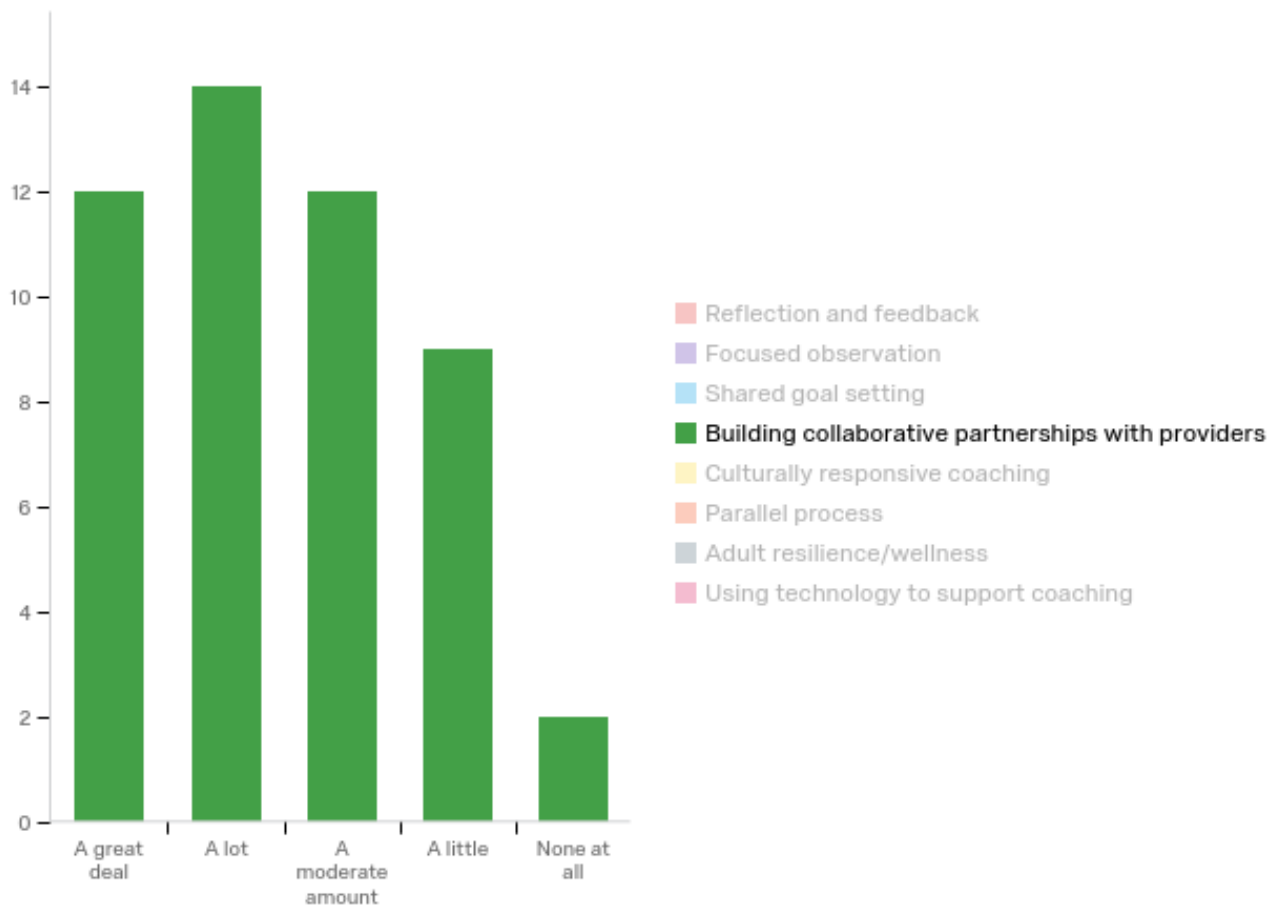
Q29 - As a result of your COP how much did you learn on the following coaching skills?



#	Question	A great deal	A lot	A moderate amount	A little	None at all	Total					
1	Reflection and feedback	22.45%	1	36.73%	1	18.37%	9	20.41%	1	2.04%	1	49
2	Focused observation	10.20%	5	26.53%	1	28.57%	1	26.53%	1	8.16%	4	49
3	Shared goal setting	16.33%	8	30.61%	1	24.49%	1	22.45%	1	6.12%	3	49
4	Building collaborative partnerships with providers	24.49%	1	28.57%	1	24.49%	1	18.37%	9	4.08%	2	49
5	Culturally responsive coaching	8.16%	4	28.57%	1	28.57%	1	30.61%	1	4.08%	2	49
6	Parallel process	18.37%	9	26.53%	1	26.53%	1	22.45%	1	6.12%	3	49
7	Adult resilience/wellne	18.37%	9	24.49%	1	26.53%	1	22.45%	1	8.16%	4	49

SS

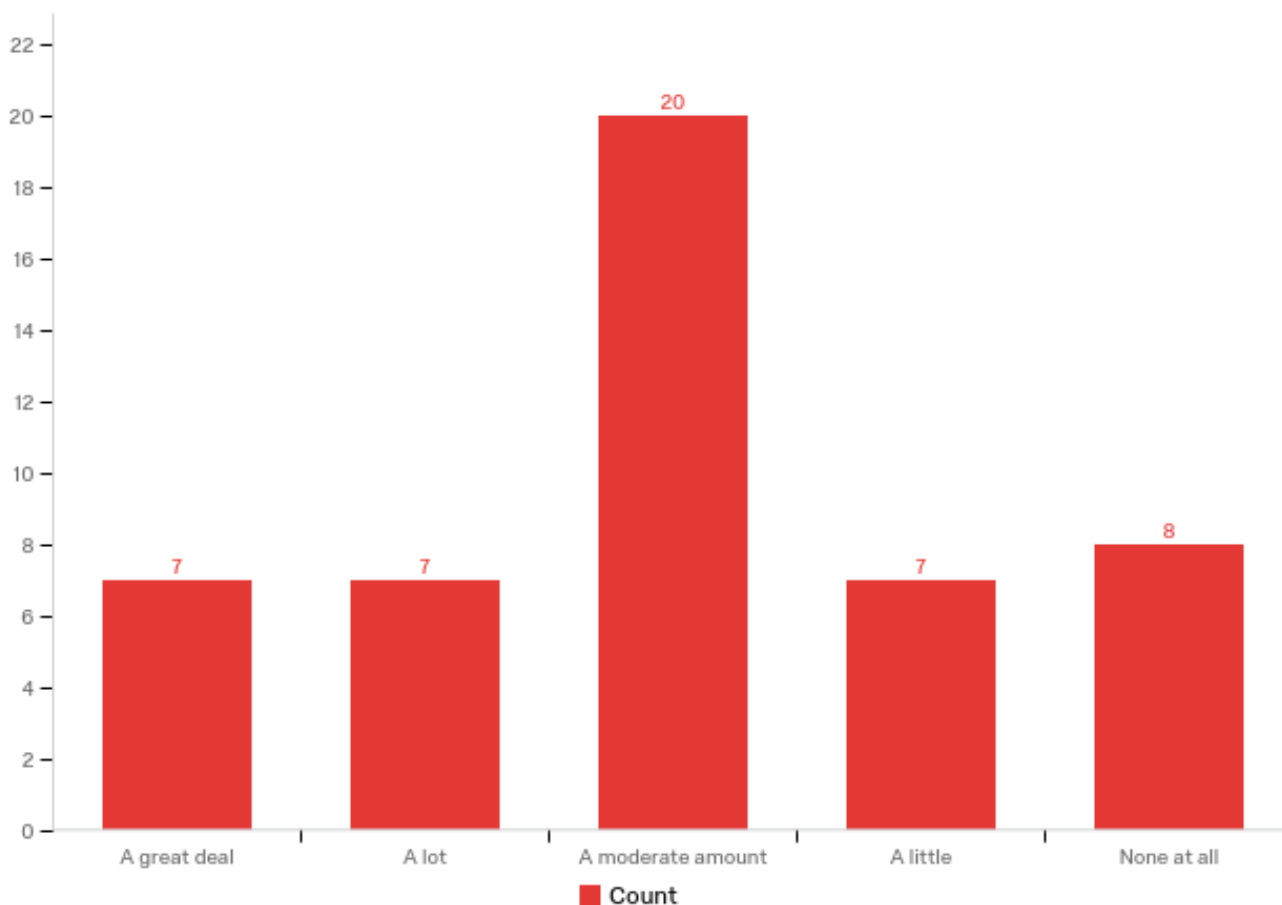
8	Using technology to support coaching	8.16%	4	16.33%	8	26.53%	13	34.69%	17	14.29%	7	49
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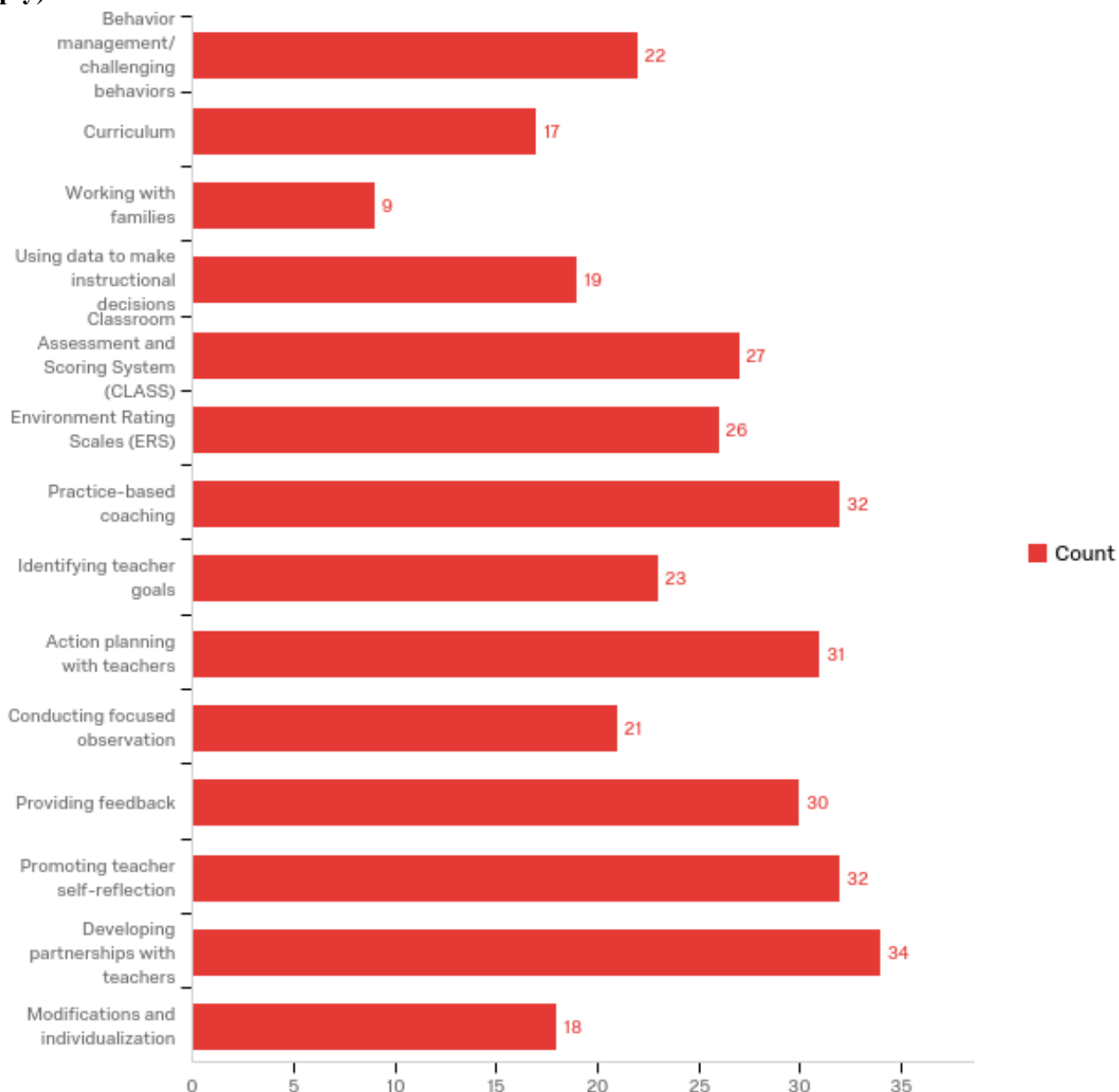
Q30 - How much did your COP affect your ability to coach to the following skills?

#	Question	A great deal	A lot	A moderate amount	A little	None at all	Total
1	Addressing challenging behaviors	14.29% 7	14.29% 7	40.82% 20	14.29% 7	16.33% 8	49
2	Modifying and individualizing instruction	16.67% 8	18.75% 9	33.33% 16	18.75% 9	12.50% 6	48
3	Meeting the needs of dual language learners	12.77% 6	10.64% 5	23.40% 11	25.53% 12	27.66% 13	47

4	Embedding instruction	12.50%	6	20.83%	1	33.33%	1	18.75%	9	14.58%	7	48
5	Supporting engaging interactions	20.41%	10	28.57%	1	30.61%	1	12.24%	6	8.16%	4	49
6	Creating organized learning environments	10.42%	5	27.08%	1	35.42%	1	16.67%	8	10.42%	5	48
7	Foster positive social environments	14.29%	7	26.53%	1	38.78%	1	8.16%	4	12.24%	6	49
8	Using a research-based curriculum	12.24%	6	16.33%	8	24.49%	1	28.57%	1	18.37%	9	49
9	Collecting ongoing child assessment	8.33%	4	20.83%	1	20.83%	1	29.17%	1	20.83%	1	48
1	Click to write Statement 11	8.33%	2	8.33%	2	25.00%	6	8.33%	2	50.00%	1	24



Q31 - Which of the following topics have you addressed in your a COP? (choose all that apply):



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Behavior management/ challenging behaviors	6.41%	22
2	Curriculum	4.96%	17
3	Working with families	2.62%	9
4	Using data to make instructional decisions	5.54%	19
5	Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS)	7.87%	27
6	Environment Rating Scales (ERS)	7.58%	26

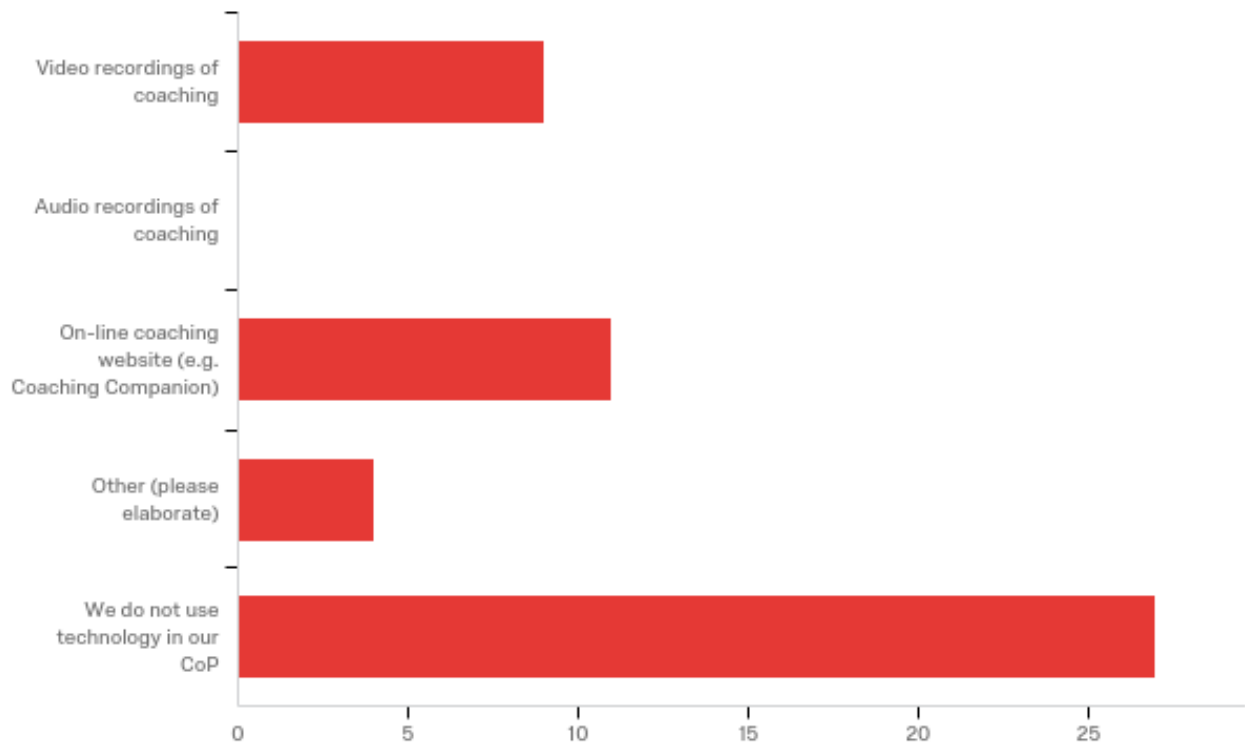
7	Practice-based coaching	9.33%	32
8	Identifying teacher goals	6.71%	23
9	Action planning with teachers	9.04%	31
10	Conducting focused observation	6.12%	21
11	Providing feedback	8.75%	30
12	Promoting teacher self-reflection	9.33%	32
13	Developing partnerships with teachers	9.91%	34
14	Modifications and individualization	5.25%	18
15	Other: (please list)	0.58%	2
	Total	100%	343

Q31_15_TEXT - Other: (please list)
 Other: (please list)

Community Resources

Specifically: Strategies for Intentionally teaching math in ECE

Q32 - Which of the following types of technology did you use in your COP?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Video recordings of coaching	17.65%	9
2	Audio recordings of coaching	0.00%	0
3	On-line coaching website (e.g. Coaching Companion)	21.57%	11
4	Other (please elaborate)	7.84%	4
5	We do not use technology in our COP	52.94%	27
	Total	100%	51

Other (please elaborate)
Other (please elaborate)

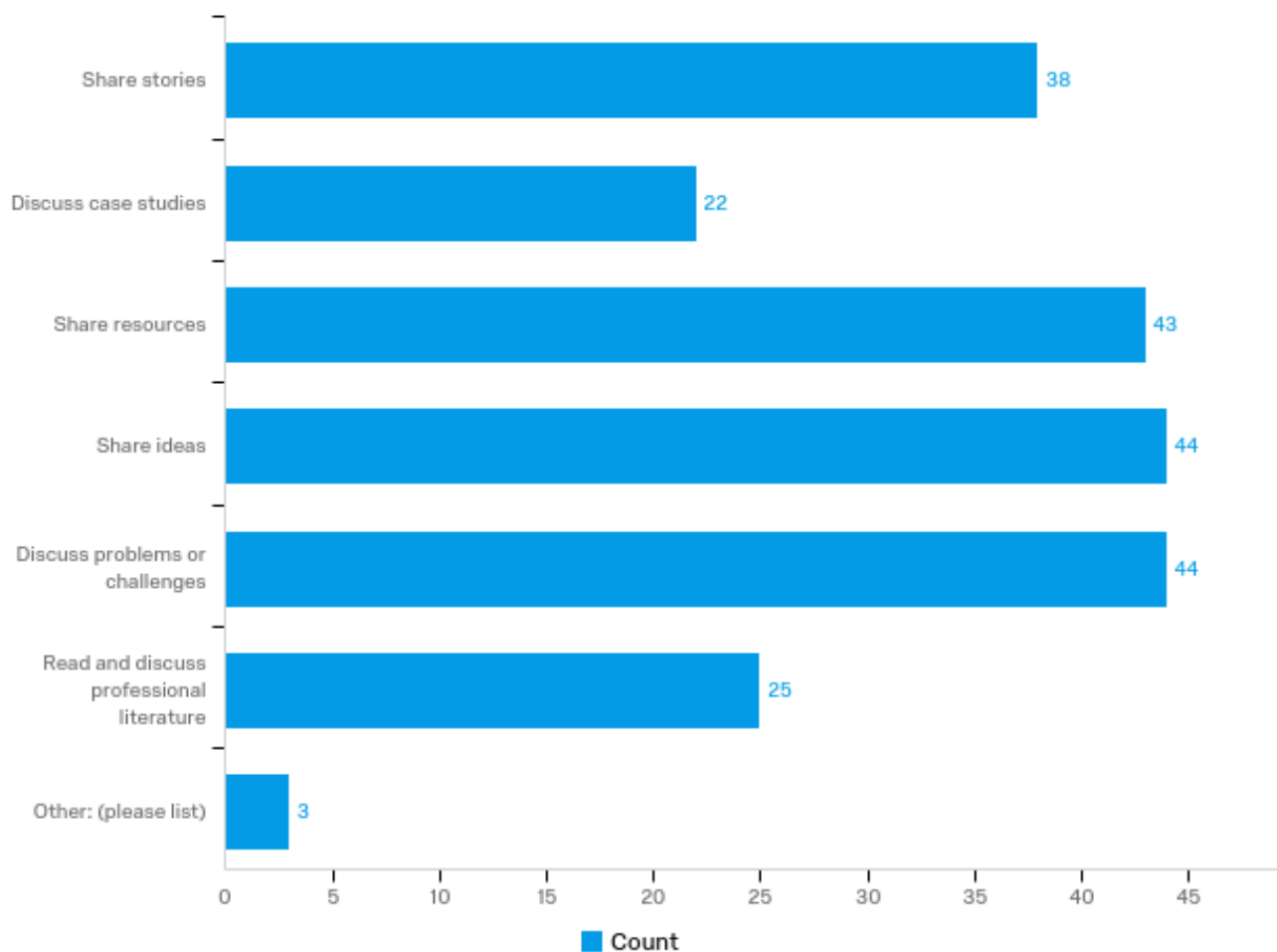
internet,

Google docs

Entering data in WELS

online resources from Conscious Discipline, NCQTL

Q33 - Which of the following activities does your COP group do? (choose all that apply)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Share stories	17.35%	38
2	Discuss case studies	10.05%	22
3	Share resources	19.63%	43
4	Share ideas	20.09%	44
5	Discuss problems or challenges	20.09%	44
6	Read and discuss professional literature	11.42%	25
7	Other: (please list)	1.37%	3
	Total	100%	219

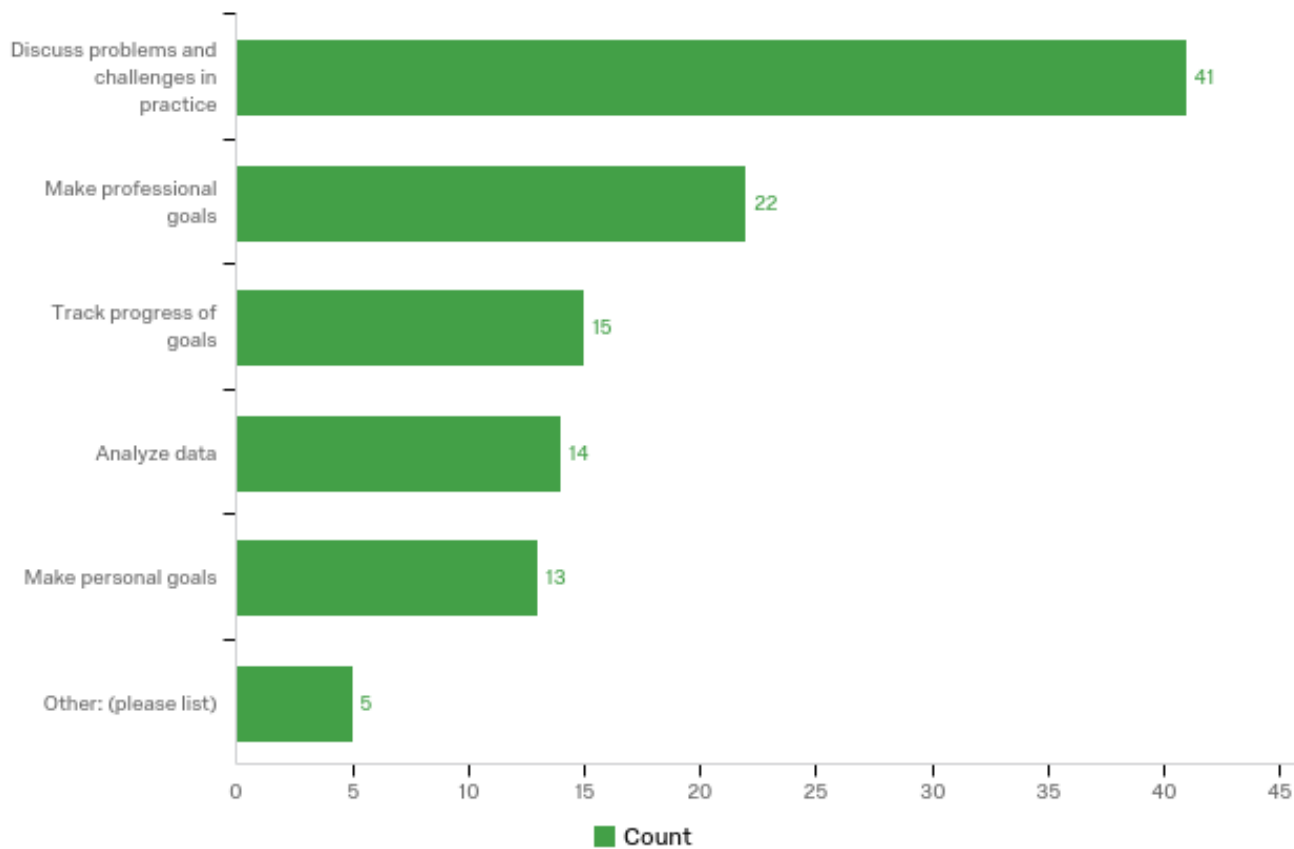
Other: (please list)
Other: (please list)

Book study and discussion - Coaching with Powerful Interactions

Spends much of our time on personal stories/problems.

provide information

Q34 - What were/are the goals of your COP? (choose all that apply):



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Discuss problems and challenges in practice	37.27%	41
2	Make professional goals	20.00%	22
3	Make personal goals	11.82%	13
4	Track progress of goals	13.64%	15
5	Analyze data	12.73%	14
6	Other: (please list)	4.55%	5
	Total	100%	110

Q34_6_TEXT - Other: (please list)

Other: (please list)

Develop departmental vision, expand awareness of resources

Reflection and discussion on how integrate practices highlighted in Coaching with Powerful Interactions

Book study on Conscious Discipline; implementing this curriculum program wide to meet needs of teachers when teaching social-emotional skills and managing difficult behaviors
implementation of performance standards

Finding the time to meet

Q35 - What can coaches learn from each other in a COP?

What can coaches learn from each other in a COP?

Dealing with difficult providers, useful websites, data collection practices

Sharing ideas and practices is helpful for improving field work with providers. Having the support of peers and learning from our collective experiences is immensely helpful.

Strategies for relationship building, information sharing and supporting teachers to learn and implement key concepts.

Ideas on how to foster change and to discover and reinforce best practice.

There is a wealth of knowledge Coaches can share; a tool they developed, individual style, successes that can be recreated, an area of specialty, resources and ideas.

To be part of a group, you can learn and share what you already know.

Coaches in similar roles can learn anything other coaches have to offer. Coaches bringing problems, solutions, new ideas, and engaging others in reflective practices can be some of the most valuable adult learning opportunities.

Strategies for culturally responsive coaching, ideas for challenging situations, identifiers for coaching skills, creative ways to engage teacher's to improve skills, etc.

Practices that are more effective than others and strategies and tips to support the people they coach.

Strategies, resources, empathy, shared feelings.

Helpful tips and techniques to be more effective as a coach.

Different ways to solve problems you face in the field. Effective resources to make the work easier.

So much. We are able to trouble shoot so many challenges, and we have the time to share ideas for improving practice. I have gained many strategies, especially for working with challenging providers. I have also been able to refine my practice in direct modeling and individualized feedback with teachers after talking with other coaches about how they do it.

How to have challenging conversations.

I really like to hear specific challenges others have and share mine, and also hear specific examples and be able to talk about them together.

Successful strategies that other coaches have used for coaching. Problem solving for dealing with particular coaching challenges with teachers. Resources and tools to try. Support and encouragement on coaching and deepening your practice. Reflective process.

How other programs cope with the same challenges we have as coaches.

Learn what other coaches are doing, share ideas

How to refine their practices.

Coaches can learn the difference and similarities that they have with other in their practice. They can also learn from those who have been coaching longer and have a good understanding of what problems or concerns can come up during different discussions.

Successes and challenges as a coach. I am the only coach in my setting and I appreciate learning and listening to other coaches in the state.

There is a great deal that coaches can learn from each other the possibilities are endless. Different coaching strategies and supports, resiliency practices, communication approaches are a few.

Perspective!!! Strategies!!

We learned different approaches to coaching conversations in various situations. We learned how to be better models in the classroom and that it's okay to not have all the answers. We created our own support system where we could openly talk about challenging conversations and observations in classrooms.

Strategies used and that have worked out in the field, support each other without offering answer or solutions but to brainstorm together

Strategies and tips for helping providers with goal setting, how to give feedback, share resources

New ideas and skills on how to apply coaching practices

Successes and challenges in coaching practice. Keeping sites moving forward and growing. Resources and strategies.

Effective coaching strategies and self care.

how to address issues and how others deal with issues

strategies to address challenges, sharing of resources, experiences, stories and tools.

gives fresh ideas

shared resources

Parallel process, ERS and CLASS supports, all of the items listed above.

Different strategies and approaches for programs. Some members are new to coaching so they may have basic questions about EA or coaching in general that they would like some clarity on.

COPs provide opportunities for coaches to learn about how other co-workers are dealing with similar challenges. It is a great opportunity to network and share resources that we may think everyone has but most individuals do not have. It helped me learn about how other coaches are working with FCCs and directors with Teachers to develop goals.

Q36 - How can coaching change teaching practices?

How can coaching change teaching practices?

with good feedback and modeling

We know that being able to work with teachers individually on their teaching strategies by setting goals, observing with intentionality, and providing specific feedback can assist them to begin reflecting on their own practice and how it impacts what children are learning in the classroom. Even just teaching them how to really think about and identify what the children are learning in each situation can dramatically affect the routines and activities teachers choose to present, which in turns creates a higher quality learning environment.

to allow teachers to become more self aware

Reflection, understanding.

Reflection is always helpful when making changes. Coaching promotes reflection.

professional development

Problem solving

Offers support in way of role modeling, providing resources and new information, giving a new way of thinking, and providing emotional support.

It's a more rounded model where teachers choose an area to focus on to improve their practice, which increases quality of services.

It offers an element of reflective practice that is so needed to make profound impact for purposeful practices.

It helps teachers to be at the center of their own learning and professional development.

If you have a trusting relationship you can discuss current practices, try or ask if teachers are willing to try something new. Try strength based approach.

Good coaching provides reflection, goal setting, resources, training, and support to increase the quality of teaching in any setting.

Gives providers tools to reflect on and improve practices.

Coming alongside a teacher to find out areas they want to improve, providing support builds trust and the relationship with the teacher. I have found after coaching in an area they want to improve, if a teacher is facing a early achievers rating within the next 6 months, you can shift the work toward an area that must improve in their practice (ex. - Concept Development - CLASS) in order to have an improved rating.

Collaboration propels our work

Coaching uses "reflective coaching conversations" to build confidence, resiliency and well-being with supervisors, staff and families to inspire change, transform their practices and strengthen outcomes for children.

Coaching supports and empowers teachers to look at their practices and reflect in a safe space to make improvements and hone their skills.

Coaching reshapes how teachers reflect on their time in the classroom which makes reflection more productive.

Coaching provides individualized support for teachers and is an extension of professional development. Coaching gives the opportunity for teachers to try a new skill or modify a current

skill within a safe support system, with the goal of improving their teaching practice.

Coaching is more than information. It is information with support for implementation. That is the key--assistance, feedback and continued learning together on the concept and how it applies to individual programs and children.

Coaching is a consistent and reliable partnership that can help improve all teaching practices.

Coaching helps teachers to reflect and see through a different lens.

Coaching gives teachers a non threatening ally to support them in their practices. Teachers learn to reflect and plan to actively make positive changes in their classrooms. Coaching is encouraging and powerful in helping teachers improve practice.

Coaching can help the teacher recognize his/her own strengths and help the teacher generalize those strengths across his/her practice.

Coaching can help change teaching practices because it allows us to support, help and empowered teachers to take ownership of their learning; we guide their reflection process so they can see their strengths and weakness and act on their own; through this process they are accountable for their progress and success which make gains more powerful and sustainable.

Coaching can change teaching practices by opening up the door to individualized professional development. All teachers should have the desire to learn more about teaching practices and try it out, or do it more, do it better, or do it differently. Coaching is a valuable resource to education staff. Coaches can provide resources, accountability, and reflection and feedback. Sometimes just having someone that believes in you, provides just enough support, and reminds you of how you important you are is all the encouragement you need to reignite the passion that brought you to the field of early childhood education.

Coaching can change teaching practices because it give the provider more information on different subjects. It also allow the provider/teacher to have different strategies of teaching different people.

Coaching can be a powerful method of making a positive difference for Teachers. Through the relationship that is built with Teachers, trust is developed and teachers are more likely to want to implement the recommendations from their coach.

Coaches will learn to put new practices in place and will begin to make those changes

Coaches can help and support providers to reflect on their work with children and families. This self reflection is a catalyst to changing and improving teaching practices that directly effect the children and families being served and to make sure that children receive quality services to help them be successful in school and in life.

Coaching can inform practice, motivate positive changes, and develop opportunities for growth

By supporting teachers in implementing effective practice.

By supporting teachers in best practices in Early Childhood education. By celebrating the teachers strengths and supporting areas of need!! First we celebrate the teacher's strengths. We all want to know what we are doing positively before we want to hear about what we need to change.

By modeling and encouragement for the coachee.

By giving teachers an opportunity to reflect. By trying something new and checking in to see how it is impacting children's learning.

A positive Coaching relationship guides teachers in reflective practices that enable them to recognize their strengths and areas of potential growth. Empowers and informs teachers to set SMART goals which lead to implementing improved teaching practices on a daily basis. Further reflection on new practices forms the cycle which is the base for continuous, sustainable quality improvement.

Q37 - What else would you like us to know about your experiences with COPs?

What else would you like us to know about your experiences with COPs?

Our COP's are very helpful and I look forward to attending them. Ideally, we would meet monthly instead of quarterly as I think that too much time in between makes it hard to connect with peers and form ongoing, supportive relationships.

I think successful protocol would be something to develop.

Mine was mostly around community partnerships, and what supports are available for families and their children and how we can make it easier for families to get resources and let them know they are available.

My COP was mandatory and extremely ineffective. I've known and participated in COPs in other areas that were very beneficial. However when COPs are derailed, don't have clear goals, aren't respectful of time, and/or don't work to build community and trust, they are much more of a negative experience.

They help support my job role as supervisor to support the staff I work with and improve my skills

I believe they would work more effectively if the content matched descriptions/goals. COPs could be more effective if topics dig deeper.

I find them very important to my work as a coach.

I always get something out of attending them that helps make my job easier and benefits my providers.

It has been very rewarding.

I believe they're a valuable resource.

Important to do these with professionals you trust and know fairly well. We have a small group of 5 and since they also have familiarity with teachers we are coaching that also helps with this process. I also work on a monthly basis with 2 other coaches and connect on the phone or through email.

Because coaches are often in stand-alone roles within their programs, it is important that we have a COP in order to avoid that feeling of isolation.

COP's provide time and space for reflection and connection, which is greatly needed in our world today. It allows space for higher order thinking. It generates momentum around the necessary components to lead a life capable of flourishing using the 4 constituents of well-being (positive outlook-attention-resilience-gratitude).

My experience with COP have been a great process. It has been an engaging and rewarding experience to work with others on my team find challenging solutions to everyday issues as well as using parallel process in my own coaching.

As an ECEAP coach I appreciated being able to attend the CQEL webinars.

COPs are a great way to work out the kinks in coaching practices, to connect with others who do similar work and reflect on that work in a way that can support coaches to be stronger partners with the teachers they are coaching.

I like that we are not mandated that it has to fit a certain mold.

I look forward to participating in more COPs

Just emphasize how COPs need to be a collaborative process where all participants are resourceful and knowledgeable and can all receive and provide support to each other. I think these groups are also opportunities to empower each other by challenging each to step out of the comfort zone while learning new skills.

The COP that I participated in was not a coaching COP so this questionnaire was hard to complete due to the questions being around coaching specifically.

They are necessary to maintain parallel process and to have peers to support you in supporting teachers. It keeps you grounded.

I enjoy and look forward to attending my sessions.

COPs should not be one-sided... or one or two people providing information to the rest. It should be meaningful for all in attendance.

n/a

Unfortunately providers also use this as a venting time which is very uncomfortable for some participants as well as the coach.

COPs are invaluable and we are working to provide more opportunities for intentional COPs at the admin level and in the teaching community.

I only considered one COP in this survey.

At this time I have very limited experience, but it is an opportunity that supports the work we do—particularly when we work remotely because we often feel isolated from the world (similar to the remotely located providers).


[end of Appendix I]

Appendix J

From: **TEST MESSAGE FROM: West Keller** kellerw@uw.edu
Subject: UW Research Survey for Coaches' Communities of Practice
Date: June 14, 2017 at 12:06 PM
To: "" west@kexp.org



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



June 14, 2017

Hello Coaches,

Click on this [link](#) to participate in a survey of your experiences in communities of practice (COPs). Your feedback is very important to us, and we will use your suggestions to improve and plan future content and activities. Please take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire via Qualtrics. The link is below and it should not take any longer than 30 minutes of your time.

We know that your time is very valuable and limited, and appreciate your time and participation. **As an incentive upon completing the survey you will be entered to win one of 14 Amazon Gift Cards worth \$25.00.** The link again is:

https://uweducation.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9QtLacT9UQ9z2cJ

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration,

Thank you,

West Keller, M. Ed.
Research Assistant
University of Washington, College of Education
Center for Quality and Early Learning (CQEL)

(Note: This message has been sent with the approval of CQEL leadership, and the College of Education University of Washington Internal Review Board - Human Subjects Division.)

College of Education, University of Washington
Box 353600 Seattle, WA 98195-3600

[Unsubscribe from receiving email, or change your email preferences.](#)

Appendix K. Additional materials from initial Coach Framework Training (i.e. PLC Protocol and training agenda)



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY MEETING PROTOCOL AND TIMING

A professional learning community is a group of professionals who come together to regularly reflect on and support each other's work. For Early Achievers Participants, being part of a professional learning community is the same as being involved in what the standards call a "peer learning community." The following protocol is offered as a format for providers as they guide their communities of practice, though other formats may be used.

Time*	Activity	Notes
5 min.	Presenter describes Scenario.	
10 min.	<i>Round 1:</i> Participants ask factual questions.	
10 min.	<i>Round 2:</i> Participants paraphrase using "what I hear you say is..."	
5 min.	<i>Round 3:</i> Participants write powerful/probing questions and submit to presenter.	
10 min.	Presenter chooses 1 to 3 questions to reflect on, ones that provoked the most thought in herself.	
10 min.	<i>Round 4:</i> Participants provide reflections based on own coaching experience, rooted in "I statements."	
5 min.	<i>Conclusion:</i> Presenter reflects on take-aways, names 1 to 2 action steps.	
5 min.	Debrief, next steps	

*These are suggested times. You can increase or decrease depending on the needs or time restraints of your PLC.

Modified from CCA King

Early Achievers Coach Framework Training

September 5th & 6th, 2017

Trainers: Wendy Jans & Rebecca Cortes Location: Seattle, WA

Tuesday, September 5th

Time	Activity
9:00-9:15am	Welcome and Registration
9:15 – 10:15am	Introductions and Icebreaker: Everyone
10:15 – 11:00am	Introduction to the Early Achievers Coach Model
11:00 – 11:15am	Break
11:15 – 12:15pm	Practice-Based Coaching: Goal Setting and Action Plans
12:15 – 1:15pm	Lunch on your own
1:15 – 2:30pm	Practice-Based Coaching: Focused Observation
2:30- 2:45pm	Stretch Break
2:45 – 4:00pm	Practice-Based Coaching: Feedback and Reflection
4:00- 4:20pm	Coaching Companion
4:20- 4:30pm	Q & A

Wednesday, September 6th

Time	Activity
9:00 – 10:30am	Guiding Principles: Culturally Responsive Coaching
10:30- 10:45am	Stretch Break
10:45- 12:15pm	Guiding Principles: Resilience
12:15- 1:15	Lunch on your own
1:15 –4:00	Guiding Principles: Parallel Process and Communities of Practice
4:00-4:10	Supervisors as Coaches
4:10-4:30	Wrap Up and Evaluations