



RESEARCH ARTICLE

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MCLYMONT'S (2015) THE COACHING APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING: (CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3, AND 4)

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ABSTRACT

The article examines critically Chapters 1-4 of McLymont's (2015) *The Coaching Approach to Teaching and Learning*. The main emphasis of the article is professional learning, collaboration, reflective learning, and cognitive coaching tools for building trust. Drawing from copious peer-reviewed literature, the analysis considers McLymont's coaching-centred framework challenges traditional supervisory practices by positioning teacher development as collaborative, reflective, and trust-based rather than evaluative or compliance-driven. Consideration is given to aligning professional learning with teachers' needs, strengthening collegial relationships, promoting reflective practice, and using cognitive coaching strategies, including paraphrasing, probing, clarifying, silence, and wait time, to support professional growth. The article also examines the role of school leaders in fostering professional learning communities and safe environments that promote reflection and collaboration. The analysis suggests that these conditions enable teachers to critically evaluate practice, refine instruction, and enhance student learning. Overall, McLymont's coaching-based framework emerges as a valuable approach to strengthening teaching effectiveness, professional development, and sustainable educational transformation.

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INTRODUCTION

McLymont, E. F. (2015). *Coaching approaches teaching and learning*. (Draft of Unpublished Book). Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Jamaica. W.I. McLymont, E.F. (2015), presents a coherent framework for understanding how professional learning, collaboration in the classroom context, reflective learning and cognitive coaching work together to enhance teaching effectiveness and educational growth. These chapters, although challenging traditional supervisory practices that focus on professional learning, collaboration, reflective learning and cognitive coaching tools that build trust were not laid out to describe strategy but to enhance leadership through reflection and professionalism that can be applied to the teaching and learning process. McLymont's work advocates for a shift toward coaching-based leadership that strengthens teachers' capacity to think, reflect, and grow, ultimately leading to enhanced teaching practices and improved student learning outcomes. McLymont developed a coaching-centered supervision framework which is laid out in four chapters selected which offered fascinating insights into instructional supervision; Chapter 1 (Professional Learning),

Chapter 2 (Collaboration), Chapter 3 (Reflective Learning) and Chapter 4 (Cognitive Coaching Tools for Building Trust). This paper will critically analyse these chapters, drawing on peer

reviewed journals as well as demonstrate the understanding of these chapters. This analysis will also seek to highlight the educational experiences that can be impacted by what has been dealt with in the chapters.

Professional Learning in the Coaching Approach: McLymont (2015) explored the concept of professional learning, resistance to change, a fluid and dynamic initiative for professional learning, congruence between the professional learning objectives and teacher's needs, the need for teacher collaboration, factors that impinge on optimizing students' learning, involvement of the educational hierarchy to effect the change process, and administrative involvement in the professional learning experience. According to Sparks & Hirsh 1997 as cited by McLymont 2015, p. 2, professional learning or professional development means providing teachers with the occasion to reflect and shape new knowledge and beliefs and engage in discourses about content including that which they teach and the way their students learn. It also means providing active engagement of a small group of teachers in collaborative learning communities, functioning as a team, and helping one another to improve student learning (Owen, 2014 cited by McLymont, 2015, p. 2). McLymont also cited Brown - Easton (2008) arguing that professional learning is also a shared responsibility when teachers' roles are changed from one that is passive to one that is active; when teachers

identify what students need and what they as teachers also need to learn (p. 2). McLymont posits that to bring about professional learning which is growth - oriented, an approach is needed which does not encourage resistance to change but which is fluid and dynamic and recognizes the complexities of the classroom, gives voice to teachers and students, and encourages teachers' growth for students ' growth in a collegial collaborative setting where teachers are engaged in learning for an extended period of time (McLymont, 2015, p.2 - 3). Whilst resistance to change is undesirable there are legitimate causes of such. Gusky (2021) suggests that too much change in either direction (individuals adapting to the new policies and the innovation adapting to fit the unique characteristics of the context) can mean disaster. If the innovation, Gusky maintains, requires too much adaptation from individuals and departs significantly from their current practice, implementation is likely to be mechanical and ineffective. But too much adaptation of innovation may result in the loss of elements essential to program impact.

Resistance to change (Fullan & Miles et al cited by McLymont) is said to be generally interpreted as intransigence, entrenchment, fearlessness, reluctance to buy in, complacency, unwillingness to alter behaviors, failure to recognize the need to change or when the program does not address teachers' felt needs. Time, as a resource, is also considered a crucial element that contributed to resistance to change (Fullan & Miles; Green, 1992, p. 478 as cited by McLymont 2015, p. 4). McLymont asserted that seeking teachers' input in planning and ensuring that pre-designed professional development is aligned to teacher's need are measures that staff developers can employ to try to gain teacher's acceptance and commitment prior to the implementation of the new program or innovation (McLymont, 2015, p. 4). This point has other support in academia. According to Gusky (2021) professional learning experiences must be planned that assist teachers in adapting innovations to the unique characteristics of their students, classroom, schools, and communities while maintaining the elements of the innovation most vital to success. McLymont is also of the view that an approach that re - examines the process of teacher change as a gradual process, provides teachers with regular feedback about student learning, follow- up support, provides opportunities for teachers to enquire and reflect upon practice, elicit and share knowledge, work collaboratively, offers continuous and on - going professional growth and change in behavior, and that guarantees increased student academic achievement must be embraced through a fluid and dynamic process (McLymont, 2015, p. 5). This fluid and dynamic initiative recognizes the complexities of the classroom interactions and allows for diversity and variability so that teachers' multiple voices can be heard and therefore ensure that professional learning is meaningful to teachers (Spencer, 1996, p.17 as cited by McLymont 2015, p. 5). McLymont cited Lambert, 1989, p. 78 stating that the ability of adults to learn does not diminish with age, because the complexity of their cognitive ability has the potential to develop into late adulthood as a result of the reservoir of experiences they have, their need to self-directing and to solve real - life problems, and the fact that adults are performance centered in their orientation to how they learn (Lambert; Glickman; Gordon, & Ross - Gordon, 2013 cited by McLymont 2015, p. 6). Hence, McLymont has concluded that when professional learning is a dynamic process of engagement, it leads to learning by understanding instead of acquiring new factual knowledge (McLymont, 2015, p. 6). It

serves to equip teachers individually and collectively and engage them in multiple challenges "in subject matter standards, curriculum content, assessment, and pedagogy that increasingly aspire to more ambitious outcomes (Little, 1993, p. 130 cited by McLymont 2015, p. 6). McLymont further stated that through unique means teachers' needs have to be identified and planned for, hence there should be congruence between the objectives for professional learning and teachers' needs (McLymont, 2015, p. 7). It is McLymont's belief that for professional learning to be meaningful to teachers, their professional needs must be met. In McLymont's (2000) research as cited by McLymont (2015) teachers recognized their inability to make a difference and to optimize student learning on a larger scale in each of their classes. This was attributed to teacher collaboration, teachers' exposure to and engagement in professional development activities. Teachers explained that a limited amount of sharing was taking place between the teachers who have to teach different groups of students at the same grade level. Thoonen et al. (2011 cited by Belay et al 2022), is also of the view that teachers can improve their professional development as well as the development of their school by participating in professional learning and development activities and thus make a significant contribution to improving teaching practice. Hence, the teachers' level of engagement in both individual and collaborative professional learning activities would have a significant impact on their professional capital (Thoonen et al 2011 cited by Belay, Melese & Seifu, 2022). Teachers also stated that they would not mind having an individual sit in their classes to observe and provide feedback. They also expressed the need for time and provision to be made for the opportunity to share class related information with each other and to engage in visiting each other's classes. Other needs expressed by teachers relate to having students perform at their full potential (McLymont, 2000 cited by McLymont 2015, p. 7-8).

McLymont outlined that the limitation of resources, the diversity among students as learners, the home context, poverty, the poor attitudes of students toward the subject and schooling in general, the fact that many students were neither motivated to learn nor value education, the long distances traveled to school, the direct teaching methods, the unreadiness of students entering high school, the extensiveness of the CSEC program of studies, the overcrowded classes, and timetable constraints are factors impinging on optimizing student's learning and all contributed to student's poor performance. These factors attest to the need for a different approach in the teaching and learning, hence McLymont asserted that professional learning that meets teacher's needs and students' needs comes about when administrators are also involved in the professional learning experience. McLymont suggests that it is essential to have teachers and administrators at the local school site participating from the initial stages in the accommodation of professional learning initiatives and that when a school district is closely involved with a school in a supportive, collaborative manner, successful change will most likely be effected (McLymont, 2015, p. 11 - 12). Regardless of whether an initiative originated with teachers, building administrators, or a school system," ... "shared understanding fuels and sustains" initiatives (Showers, Joyce, & Bennett, 1987, p. 80 cited by McLymont, 2015, p. 12). McLymont maintains that when groups or representatives of school districts enter a program together, higher degrees of engagement and learning are achieved. McLymont reinforces this by citing Wood, Killian, McQuire, & Thompson as cited

in Hodges, 1996, p. 231 that principals are gate keepers of improvement in schools. Their level of involvement is important to the success of any professional learning effort designed to improve school practices because initiatives that engender change cannot run by themselves – change requires power – and therefore keeping administrators informed will aid in eliciting their support and involvement, McLymont continued (p.14). McLymont ended by saying that “the power and attraction of the professional learning process lie in the opportunity for teachers to engage in discourses with other teachers, which can only be brought through teacher collaboration with the aid and involvement of the administration” (p. 14). The involvement of administration, according to McLymont 2000 cited by McLymont 2015, was very crucial to the success of the professional learning process that involved all mathematics teachers at a particular high school in Jamaica. Also, for any new initiative to succeed in any school context and for teachers to be able to embrace the concepts and processes involved, a climate has to be created where the administration’s support and or involvement are elicited for teachers to optimize student’s learning and their own professional learning needs (p. 14). To avoid doubt, McLymont concluded, suspicion, and even sabotage; to encourage understanding and appreciation of an initiative; and to get an educational organization to operate as a “family” – a community with one major goal which is to enhance student learning – it is necessary to have members at the various levels of the hierarchy generate an interest in the initiative to be accommodated. For professional learning to be appreciated and to fulfil the needs of teachers, collaboration must be an integral aspect (p. 16)

Collaboration in the Classroom Context: Chapter 2 outlines McLymont’s (2015) exploration of collaboration within the classroom context with teacher collegiality that fosters change and improved relationships among subject - teacher collaborative learning communities. This collaboration takes place during professional learning experiences which promote freedom of expression and lead to student collaboration. The role of collegiality and collaboration, including cognitive coaching that fosters better working relations and offers essential support for teachers to improve their instructional effectiveness as expressed by McLymont, are encouraged for teachers’ professional learning (McLymont, 2015, p. 17). Collegiality among teachers during professional learning (Sergiovanni, 1991, p. 212 - 213 cited by McLymont 2015, p. 18) is an important ingredient to foster better working relationships and conditions, to improve teaching practice and to acquire better results in student achievement. Moolenaar (2012 cited by Sandar & Kalman 2022) supports McLymont in stating that relationships between teachers are critical for issues such as student learning, teaching, and educational change. According to Lee (2007 also cited by Sandar & Kalman 2022) younger teachers who have had more exposure to collaborative teaching methods appear to be more confident and have more positive attitudes towards collaboration with their colleagues. McLymont cited Peterson - Nelson et al (2013) as averring that collegiality is not just congeniality; collegiality is when school personnel connect with each other personally, through sharing and exploring new ideas and innovations in teaching. It reduces classroom isolation, produces satisfaction on a daily basis, brings meaning and rewards to career, lessens teachers burn - out, and stimulates enthusiasm (p.18). McLymont argues that because there has been a shift to collaborative learning in both the elementary

and secondary schools and because many teachers and professors have little or no direct experience with collaborative learning methods, a call is being made for reform in college and university circles to replace the traditional concept of teaching with the new concept of collaboration (p. 18).

Collaboration, according to Wren & Harris – Schmidt, 1991, p. 263 and cited by McLymont 2015, is a broad term used to describe “any number of administrative, faculty, or student groups working together, including faculty doing team teaching or cross – disciplinary research, joint faculty - student inquiry both in and out of class, and students studying together or completing group projects” (p. 18). Collaboration, McLymont asserts, appears to be a democratic way of doing things, and its outcome is a mutual plan of action. The identified behaviors McLymont outlined that are inherent in collaboration are clarifying, listening, reflecting, presenting, problem - solving, testing, advocating, brainstorming and negotiating (p. 19). Collaboration, McLymont further maintained, can take varying forms such as collegial consultation, collaborative consultation, and coaching. Collaboration, McLymont also advised can also take the form of clinical supervision. McLymont further stated that collaboration which offers crucial support for teachers by providing feedback on learning outcomes, guiding them in adapting new practices to meet the needs of students, and helping them analyze the effects on students, may take the form of subject teacher collaboratives (P.20). “Teacher collaboratives” (Little, 1993, p.134 cited by McLymont, 2015), as a networking community, have been viewed as an alternative paradigm for professional learning that targets opportunities for learners to engage in their own learning (p.21). Professional learning involving teacher collaboratives provide “an alternative to the shallow, fragmented content, and passive teacher roles” (Little, 1993, p. 138 cited by McLymont 2015) which are observed in some dominant professional development models (p. 21). It is McLymont’s position that collegial relationships help teachers to integrate thoughtfully the use of new knowledge, behaviors, and materials and add them to their existing repertoires. Also, these interactions help to provide teachers with collaborative relationships and support, as teachers strive to embrace new initiatives or innovations. Thus, the perceived discomfort McLymont asserts caused by isolation is removed as teachers engage in professional learning experiences (p.21).

McLymont, 2015, p. 21 found that, the professional learning experiences (PLE) that were provided for a set of mathematics teachers in one school revealed that the collaborative nature of the seminars was designed to help liberate teachers from their isolation by dissolving “walls of separation” that existed prior to the Professional Learning Experiences. McLymont reported that individualism was being transcended by the dynamic and interactive mode of collaboration inherent in the professional learning experiences (p. 21). McLymont further stated that the comfortable atmosphere generated in the collaborative setting brought with it a sharing and pooling of ideas that fostered creativity among the teachers, that the professional learning experiences also encouraged teamwork, thus the space of each teacher’s world was being extended to accommodate others through their involvement in the various activities of the Professional Learning Experience (p. 22). The approach utilized in the professional learning experiences led to a transformation of relationships to the point that the formality that existed was being eroded: she was now using first names

in referring to her colleagues (McLymont, 2015, p. 23). McLymont went further by asserting that the Professional Learning Experiences embracing collaboration eliminate teacher isolation; transform relationships by generating better understanding between and among teachers and enhance teacher's states of mind as the opportunities to share as a group and on a one-to-one basis promote teamwork as each is given the opportunity to express oneself (p. 24).

McLymont believes that teachers experience professional growth when they begin to examine and question their teaching practices as well as those of others; when they become interested when someone has an exciting new idea for exploration. Professional learning should therefore take place within a team, network or community of professionals. Antinluoma et al (2021) cited by Watson, Turner et al, Lomos et al, Jones et al, Louis et al and Hofman et al, in highlighting the power of having a community involved in professional learning by asserting that the construct of professional learning communities has become a prevailing framework for teachers' professional learning and development (Watson, 2014; Turner et al., 2018). Further positing that evidence suggests that teachers' work within successful professional learning communities improves instruction which may lead to improved students' achievement (Lomos et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2013) and contributes to the effectiveness of schools (Louis et al., 2010; Hofman et al., 2015). This aptly supports McLymont's view on professional learning taking place in a community. The atmosphere generated during the professional learning experience McLymont outlines allowed each individual to feel unique and respected. It created a setting for acceptance, a feeling of security, freedom of expression, and the explorations of thoughts and promoted spontaneous thinking for the generation of Discourses in various situations. McLymont further stated that as teachers collaborated, the professional learning experiences promoted freedom of expression and development of *Discourses* through the generation of a trust – building, secure, relaxing, and collaborative environment as no value judgement was placed on individuals' ideas. Teachers participated and felt safe to express and explore their thoughts and ideas because they were respected and valued. Teachers' experiences influenced their classroom practice which led to student collaboration (p. 24 -27).

McLymont cited Damon & Phelps, 1989; Dillenbourg, 1999 as positing that collaboration is an interactive process between individuals of similar status while working jointly on the same task rather than individually or on separate components, resulting in negotiation, mutual discovery, reciprocal feedback, and frequent sharing of ideas (p. 27). Collaboration allows learners to experience shared responsibility and to share their expertise in the attainment of learning outcomes according to Palincsar, Stevens, & Gavelek, 1989 cited by McLymont, 2015, p. 27 and necessitates the participation and engagement in a coordinated effort to solve a problem or perform a task (Dillenbourg, 1989 also cited by McLymont 2015, p. 27). Collaboration, Brown 1997 cited by McLymont 2015, noted p. 27, is necessary for survival. She further stated that "this interdependence promotes an atmosphere of joint responsibility, mutual respect, and a sense of personal and group identity: (p. 411). In a collaborative classroom setting, Slavin 1995 cited by McLymont 2025, found that social relationships and achievement improved, whereas social relationships were less developed in traditional classes (p.27). McLymont continued, that the main feature of the

collaborative setting is that it affords learners the opportunity to talk with each other as they work together on classroom activities (p.27) and further in citing Golub 1988 maintains that through the interaction with others, they assimilate information and their ideas: thus, the critical element of communication is encouraged (p. 27). Hike 1990 as cited by McLymont 2015 stated that the opportunity for positive interdependence among students as they share the responsibility for learning is provided through student collaboration as their self – esteem is enhanced, and their initiatives are encouraged (p.28). This interdependence McLymont noted in citing Hill & Hill, 1990 p. 28 - 29) can be fostered if specific roles are assigned to group members to perform within the group. Slavin, 1995, p. 18 and cited by McLymont p. 29 amplified this point in asserting that during interactions in the collaborative setting, "students will learn from one another because in their discussions of the content, cognitive conflicts will arise, inadequate reasoning will be exposed, and higher – quality understandings will emerge" (p. 29). Consequently, according to Vygotsky, 1978 cited by McLymont, p. 29 what each student learns while interacting with others in the group setting, he or she will be able to do on his or her own at a later date. Students in a collaborative setting will generate thinking, problem solve and reflect, that is, they will be metacogitating – knowing where, when, how, and why certain knowledge can be used (Garofalo & Lester, 1985 cited by McLymont, 2015 p. 29). Brown (1997) cited by McLymont 2015 p. 30 maintained that effective learners operate best when they access their own repertoires of strategies for learning and insights into their own strengths and weaknesses. McLymont, p. 30 cited Vygotsky (1981a) as commenting that "any higher mental function was external because it was social at some point before becoming an internal, truly mental function" (p. 162). Thus "all higher mental functions are internalized social relationships" (P. 164). This type of knowledge and control over thinking, Brown affirmed, has been termed metacognition.

Professional Learning Promotes Reflection During the Coaching Approach: In Chapter 3, McLymont (2015) explored how reflective learning fosters reflection through the coaching approach. (Hargreaves and Dawe, 1990, p. 230, as cited by McLymont 2015) says that reflection constitutes the heart of professional knowledge and action. As cited by McLymont, Mezirow (1991) posits that reflection and introspection are not the same, he says that introspection is becoming aware of the fact that is being perceived in a particular way while reflection involves a critique (Mezirow, 1991, p. 15, as cited by McLymont, 2015). Further to this McLymont cited Vygotsky's thinking on reflection where he said that reflection is considered as the transferal of argumentation to an internal level. (Vygotsky, 1981a, p.158, as cited by McLymont, 2015). McLymont cited Greene (1992), and his perspective where he applied reflection to teaching, calling it reflective teaching. (Greene, 1992, p. 132, as cited by McLymont, 2015). Reflective practice was also explored in this chapter. McLymont cited Brown (1997) as he argued that reflective practices will eventually become self-reflective practices. He further stated that these self-reflective practices are in relation to people with higher mental functions. (Brown, 1997, p. 406, as cited by McLymont, 2015). This chapter also explored mediational discourses. Cited by McLymont, Feuerstein looked at mediational discourse as the quality of interaction between or among human mediators. They looked at three parameters within the mediational discourse. These were intentionality-reciprocity, transcendence and meaning

and the irrespective of the language of the culture (Feuerstein and Feuerstein, 1991, p.16, as cited by McLymont, 2015). Feuerstein and Feuerstein maintained that the symbolic modality of mediation is more powerful than gestural action. Bailie et al. in the article *Reflective Learning in Education Courses: Conceptualizations and Instructional Strategies* connect directly and conceptually with McLymont's Chapter 3 especially within the coaching and reflective learning framework outlined. Both McLymont and Bailie treat reflection as foundational to professional identity and practice, not simply a teaching strategy. Bailie operationalizes Mezirow's idea by showing how instructional strategies can move learners from descriptive reflection to critical reflection, aligning closely with McLymont's theoretical grounding. Both works view reflection as dialogic before it becomes internal, reinforcing the socio-cultural lens of learning that underpins McLymont's coaching approach. Bailie provides the practical enactment of Greene's reflective teaching that McLymont theorizes. Both argue that reflection must be mediated—through coaching, structured tasks, or dialogic support—to become transformative. Bailie empirically supports McLymont's claim that reflection matures over time into autonomous, self-regulated learning. Another peer review article, Al-Rashidi & Aberash (2024) connected with McLymont's Chapter 3, using the same reflective learning and coaching lenses. Both works affirm reflection as a foundational mechanism for meaningful learning and development. Al-Rashidi provides empirical evidence for McLymont's claim that reflection matures into autonomous, higher-order thinking. Both texts emphasize that reflection is most effective when mediated, aligning reflective learning with coaching principles. McLymont explains why reflection matters; Al-Rashidi shows what happens when reflection is intentionally cultivated.

The Tools of Cognitive Coaching: This chapter also highlighted trust, McLymont argues that without trust supervision degenerates into compliance, resulting in teachers performing for evaluators rather than for their professional growth. Teachers are more willing to share their challenges openly when supervisors establish an environment of respect, confidentiality and fairness. McLymont argued that trust is not built overnight but rather through behaviours such as fairness in judgement, listening and care for the teacher's development. McLymont cited Johnson (1997) saying that to build trust openness is needed to develop a supportive climate. He further said that openness needs to exist and offers resources to help them achieve their goals (Johnson, 1997, p.75, as cited by McLymont, 2015). McLymont cited Costa and Garmston's trust-building tools of cognitive coaching, they call it the non-judgmental verbal approaches that will contribute to trust (Costa & Garmston, 1994, p.49, as cited by McLymont, 2015). They further posit that paraphrasing is a behaviour for building trust. Probing and clarifying is another tool used to build trust, it elicits clarification, which solicits new information. Clarifying contributes to trust building. There is also silence and wait-time. The chapter explains that a wait time of 3 seconds should be observed before asking another question or up to 15 seconds to wait. Chapter 4 also looked at the diagnostic tools of cognitive coaching to further strengthen this supervisory approach by focusing on key dimensions of professional growth, including self-efficacy, flexibility, interdependence, consciousness, and craftsmanship. These tools support teachers in developing confidence in their abilities, adapting to changing instructional contexts, collaborating effectively with others, engaging in reflective

awareness of their practice, and striving for excellence in their professional work. Collectively, these elements reinforce trust-based supervision as a powerful mechanism for enhancing teachers' growth and development. There is a strong alignment between chapter 4 of McLymont and a peer review article by Mary Bair's article *Faculty Development through Cognitive Coaching*, through core cognitive coaching principles. Bair's article looked at a faculty development where the cognitive coaching model was used by 12 teachers to improve their teaching practice. This article looked at similar themes as seen in chapter 4, it featured reflective interactions as well as cognitive coaching tools. Bair study showed that coaching cycles facilitated professional collegiality and pedagogical improvement which is essential to strengthen a teacher's willingness to reflect on their practice. (Bair, 2017). This reinforces chapter 4's argument about cognitive coaching tools, probing, paraphrasing, and wait time, which allows for reflection rather than compliance. Another argument that stood out in Bair's article that is aligned with McLymont was trust-building, Bair engaged teachers in an non-evaluative reflective dialogue to build a supportive environment. Bair's article points out that it helped them to explore their own goals and challenges openly which build trust among colleagues. Bair's article and chapter 4 both showed how cognitive coaching fosters professional development through trust and reflection. Another peer review article that is aligned with McLymont's chapter 4 is Batt (2010) *Cognitive Coaching: A critical phase in professional development to implement sheltered instruction* by Ellen Batt. Batt showed training workshops in instructional models and that teachers needed a coaching phase to apply what they learned. Batt further highlighted that without cognitive coaching implementation levels will remain disappointing. Batt added value to coaching in professional development and supports chapter 4 by showing that coaching helps teachers to acquire instructional change rather than using traditional training because it is not as effective. Batt also showed that teachers who were engaged in the coaching phase were able to reflect and adjust. This mirrors Costa and Garmston (1994) highlighted by McLymont that coaching is a non-judgmental and collaborative dialogue that builds trust and encourages teachers to refine their practice. Batt's article supports McLymont's chapter 4 cognitive coaching and trust through non-judgmental communication which is critical to helping teachers using the new practices in the classroom.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The four chapters of McLymont's *the Coaching Approach for Teaching and Learning*, which is the subject matter under review, provide valuable learning which will be outlined below. The most important learning from chapter one is that professional learning is important if teachers are to learn and grow, that professional development should consider teachers' input in planning to ensure greater acceptance and commitment, thus reducing or eliminating resistance to change, that when professional learning is dynamic it leads to learning by understanding instead of acquiring new factual knowledge and it serves to equip teachers individually and collectively and engage them in multiple challenges in subject matter standards, curriculum content, assessment, and pedagogy and increasingly aspire to more ambitious students outcomes. Another learning from chapter one is that there are many factors that impinge on optimizing students' learning which include limitation of resources, diversity among students, home context, poverty, poor attitudes, overcrowded classes and many others. These, however, can be successfully

combated with administrators becoming involved in the professional learning process. The most meaningful aspect personally is the involvement of educational hierarchy to effect process change and administrative involvement in the professional learning process. This is relevant not only in the classroom but in any organization as subordinates look to the leader to provide guidance, direction and motivation. As Kouses& Posner in their book *The Leadership Challenge* succinctly puts it "Titles are granted, but it's your behavior that is followed and earns your respect. Modeling the way is essentially about earning the right and the respect to lead through direct individual involvement and action. People first follow the person, then the plan (Kouses& Posner 2025). Leaders therefore mirror the performance they desire, and they must go first. This is important when there is uncertainty which normally comes with change. When leaders are involved, it shows subordinates that what they are doing is important and that it has the leader's full endorsement.

In addition to the educational hierarchy being involved to effect change, I value that there is a deep understanding in the academic arena as to what can create a lasting positive impact on both teachers' teaching and learning and also on students' learning. The flow of information in the chapter makes it easy to understand and the transition from one subject to the other is smooth. As we looked at professional learning, it was clearly seen how this could address resistance to change. It was also clearly outlined how ongoing professional growth and change in behavior could be achieved through a fluid and dynamic process. This devastated in the congruence between the professional learning objectives and the teachers' needs and the factors impinging student's learning. With these factors it was clearly outlined how the involvement of the educational hierarchy could affect change and the positive impact of administrative involvement in the professional learning process. The subject matters dealt with in this chapter, if implemented, could have a positive and lasting impact on teachers, school administrators, school leadership and the stakeholder, who is the most important, the students. As articulated above, the layout, the simplicity of speech and the content made chapter one very comprehensive.

Chapter two brought to the fore for learning the fact that collaboration has been recognized as a strategy for bringing about educational reform where teachers have an opportunity to reflect, plan and share innovations with others, that for teachers to develop and grow professionally, they should be brought together in collaborative working relationships that engender teacher – teacher interactions, that the inherent behaviors in collaboration are clarifying, listening, reflecting, presenting, problem – solving, testing, advocating, brain storming and negotiating, that the professional learning experiences encouraged teamwork and that working collaboratively promotes more positive attitude attitudes towards the subject area being studied as well as towards their teachers, greater competency in working with others, and continual opportunities for development of leadership skills and group skills. It was said that in collaboration, teachers participated and felt safe to express and explore their thoughts and ideas because they were respected and valued. It was also stated that teachers' experiences influenced their classroom practice which led to student collaboration. Students in turn developed a more positive attitude towards the subject area and became better competent with working with each other and opportunities created for development and leadership skills.

This is a very meaningful aspect as the multiplying effect of teachers' behavior on students and their resultant success cannot be overemphasized. I value that sharing in a non - judgmental, non- evaluative atmosphere allows one to be open to suggested alternatives. In this kind of atmosphere people will be more creative, more willing to participate and to generate ideas that would not have come to the fore in a situation where it is felt that they were being judged. This kind of setting also allows individuals to be respected and to explore things about themselves that they did not even imagine. This is definitely an area that I truly value being uncovered in the chapter.

A collaborative environment, if fostered and implemented in schools could lead to an environment where teachers can express their thoughts freely which in turn will generate creative ideas. Students will also collaborate and become more successful in mastering their work or just in general be more positive in their schoolwork. The objective of the classroom is for students to learn, it is therefore a win-win for students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders when this is achieved. Educational experiences will most definitely be impacted in a positive way when there is collegiality, collaboration, professional learning experiences which promote freedom of expression and student collaboration.

In chapter 3, I learnt that reflection is purposeful and effective for professional learning. Reflection challenges assumptions, it leads to a deeper understanding of oneself as well as to improve your professional practice. I also learned that reflection develops through interactions and mediation and this plays an important role in shaping how we think. This chapter reinforced reflective practice for professional growth which will result in improvement in teaching and learning. What was most meaningful to me in chapter 3 was the emphasis that McLymont placed on reflective learning through coaching. McLymont showed that reflection is not an individual act but a deep and critical process that supports professional growth. McLymont connected reflection to the theorists, Dewey, Mezirow, Vygotsky, Brown and Greene, which helped me understand the reflective practice. This was meaningful because it helped me understand reflective learning, supervision and coaching, it also helped me to see that teacher development does not occur through monitoring but rather through reflection especially when it is supported by trust and respect. The discussion was important because reflection was clearly defined. It involves critical examination and self-awareness, which will lead to deeper professional knowledge resulting in improved action. This is important because professional development and learning is grounded in trust and reflection, which leads to lasting improvement. Another important point to note is that it transforms professional learning into shared, reflective and developmental experiences which leads to better teaching practice. Educational experiences were impacted positively by the transformation of these ideas. When teachers feel trusted and supported, they will reflect on their practice, while discovering new strategies and learning from their mistakes, which leads to improved teaching practices, improved decision making and a quick responsiveness to student's needs. One area that I did not understand was mediational discourse and the three parameters, I had to do additional readings to understand the concept. The theory was fully explained in McLymont's chapter 3 however, it took some effort for me to truly grasp what it was saying. I have learned in chapter 4 that trust is

important in supervision and coaching. I also learned that without trust it will be a case of compliance. I also learned that teachers would share their challenges once they trust their supervisors and that trust develops over time and is built through listening and openness. I was pleased to learn about the cognitive tools, and I intentionally learnt about wait time which allows space to think and respond. What was most meaningful for me in chapter 4 was trust and its effectiveness in professional growth. Trust allows the teacher to feel safe and respected. It is important because in a learning environment teachers will be willing to take risks and share challenges and seek help when they trust their supervisor. I value trust as a foundation of professional growth. Teachers who feel supported and trusted are more likely to reflect and share their challenges, which will allow them to improve their teaching practice.

The educational experience addressed in this chapter enhances growth and development by positioning supervision as a supportive, trust-based process rather than a compliance-driven exercise. This chapter also promotes trust, openness, and non-judgmental communication, in an environment in which teachers feel psychologically safe to reflect honestly on their practice. This safety encourages deeper self-evaluation, professional learning, and continuous improvement. I agreed with the idea that trust is the foundation of meaningful supervision and professional growth. I agree with McLymont's argument that when trust is absent, supervision becomes an exercise in compliance, where teachers perform for evaluators instead of engaging honestly in reflection aimed at improvement. This resonates because genuine growth cannot occur in an environment where teachers feel judged or unsafe to share their challenges. In my opinion, the overall value of the chapter lies in its strong emphasis on transforming supervision into a meaningful learning experience rather than a monitoring exercise. The chapter is valuable because it clearly demonstrates how trust, openness, and respectful communication create the conditions necessary for genuine teacher growth and professional development. By highlighting the dangers of compliance-driven supervision, McLymont challenges traditional practices and reframes supervision as a collaborative and reflective process.

MAKING JUDGEMENT/ EVALUATION

The educational experiences addressed in Chapter one can enhance growth and development. Firstly, professional learning not only enhances the profession of teaching, but it also enhances the individual teacher. This brings about empowerment that is beneficial to the teacher as it is to the student. The development that comes through professional learning also, if it is aligned to teachers' needs and incorporates the teachers' input, will meet its objective to develop professionals as there will be no resistance to the change objective. For this to happen, a fluid and dynamic atmosphere is necessary as such dynamism increases the professional understanding, which is further enhanced if there is congruence between the professional learning objectives and the teachers' need. The need to work with other teachers, the need for observation and feedback, the need for time and provision to be made for the opportunity to share information and have students perform at their full potential. But even so, teachers are very aware that there are several factors inhibiting student performance. Notwithstanding if there is involvement of the educational hierarchy, changes will be affected. The

impact of the administration's full involvement in the professional learning process will ensure that the changes and success of the overall school will not only be affected, but it will be lasting. Educational experiences will be enhanced and developed if these concepts are embraced.

It was easy to be in full agreement with the concepts outlined in chapter one as it is clear how if these concepts are embraced, they will enhance growth and development. Chapter one is therefore invaluable and relevant to any organization, educational institution or even individual seeking to improve performance, self-worth or who has the best interest of stakeholders at heart. Chapter two should have a coveted place in the heart of all those who have an interest in the classroom. This is so as the chapter looks at how collaboration in the classroom can improve the effective growth and development of both teacher and student. Collegiality among teachers during professional learning is said to be an important consideration for ensuring and fostering better working relationships and conditions, aimed at improving results. Collaboration is built on the foundation of collegiality. The working relationship that is engendered in collegiality brings about collaboration. As collaborative relationships are formed, the atmosphere is created for professional learning experience to take place. Sharing ideas, team work and the freedom to express self together with the transformation of relationship enhances both growth and development for the teacher's development. This lends itself to collaboration by students who develop their thinking, problem solving and confidence as students learn from each other and are exposed to higher levels of thinking. The concepts in chapter two, no doubt will create educational experiences that will enhance growth and development.

Whilst I am in agreement with McLymont on all the areas covered in chapter two, I am most impressed with the exposition on collaboration. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 4:9 (Authorized King James Version 2019) that two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. Collaboration is the key to working together as we are able to combine our strengths to accomplish tasks more effectively. Collaboration is a way of honoring God as we use our talents to enhance and serve others. As was said of chapter one, it is my opinion that chapter two demonstrates considerable worth in its contents and insights and is highly valuable on the subject matter. I see the educational experiences addressed in chapter 3 as a positive to growth and development because it gives way to deep learning, allowing teachers to be aware of themselves and to create a professional environment among teachers. I appreciate the strong focus placed on reflection. The reflective process supports long term professional development rather than short term performance. The chapter also highlighted coaching based supervision, that is grounded in trust, which promotes development. What I agreed with most in chapter 3 was reflection and how essential it is for meaningful reflective learning and development. I agree with McLymont's position about trust and that without trust, supervision is compliance rather than growth. I also agreed that a distinction was made between reflection and introspection. I liked the focus McLymont placed on mediational discourse and the idea that learning is socially constructed through interaction. I disagree with the chapter implementing these ideas in an educational context. The coaching model is ideal; however, I don't agree that it will fit in all educational contexts because this may be time consuming as well as bureaucratic,

and who will be held accountable if the teacher is both the evaluator and the coach. What I value most about this chapter is the fact that clear emphasis was placed on reflection, trust and coaching as the foundation of meaningful professional learning. I value the chapter reinforced learning as internally driven rather than externally imposed. My opinion on the overall value of chapter 3 was impressive. I am impressed with how it was written to include all the early thinkers including Vygotsky, Dewey and Greene among others. I found that the strength of chapter three is the fact that it was not only conceptual but practical, but it emphasizes the growth of teachers. It highlighted trust which is important in supervision. The chapter also demonstrated mediational discourse showing how the learning and reflection are internalized over time. The chapter is highly valuable and offers both theoretical framework as well as practical guidance for improving teaching practice.

In chapter 4 the educational experiences addressed were the coaching tools that were used such as paraphrasing and wait time, when teachers are familiar with these reflective practices or approaches, they are more prepared to engage more openly with supervisors. This will emphasize active participation, feedback and build trust. Teachers who have experience with the coaching tools will respond positively to supervisors as well as improve students' learning outcomes. Once a teacher applies these tools effectively then the educational experiences will signal effectiveness of coaching, which will create a more dynamic teacher in a dynamic learning environment. I agreed with the idea of trust and that teachers perform better when they feel respected and supported. I also agree with the notion of practical cognitive coaching tools because they provide concrete ways to build trust. In my opinion chapter 4 was well written and highly valuable. It highlights the central role of trust in professional growth and for effective supervision. I also think that it moves beyond the idea of evaluation being compliance to the support of reflective and collaborative learning environments. The overall use of the cognitive tools was practical; it offers a clear and practical approach to cognitive coaching. The chapter was clear and easy to understand. I specifically liked the idea of 'wait time, I learned that waiting 3 seconds before asking another question or up to 15 seconds in some context is invaluable as a coaching tool. I will certainly use this wait time moving forward.

CONCLUSION

McLymont(2015) *The Coaching Approach to Teaching and Learning* Chapters 1, 2,3 and 4 have provided great insights on professional learning, collaboration, reflective learning and cognitive coaching tools and those for building trust. Professional learning is designed to enhance the profession of the teacher and to meet students' success. It is a shared responsibility, one that if implemented properly will ensure that there is no resistance to change as teachers buy - in will be sought and efforts will be made to ensure that professional development is aligned to teachers' needs. In addressing the need for professional learning, there is a need for a fluid and dynamic process as when professional learning is a dynamic process of engagement it leads to learning by understanding and it equips teachers to deal with challenges, one of which is that, their needs have to be identified and plan for, creating a congruence between the professional learning objective and the teacher's need. These needs include the need for time and

provision to be made for teachers to engage in professional learning activities that will enhance student learning. Even so, teaching professionals are aware that there are several factors that prohibit students maximum learning, however these can be combatted through the involvement of the educational hierarchy to affect the process change and administrations involvement in the professional learning process which is for initiatives to succeed in any school context.

Professional learning lends itself to collaboration. Collaboration improves teaching and learning and fosters better working relationships and conditions. McLymont showed that when collaboration exists between teachers it redounds to students' collaboration which proves invaluable to students' success. Collaboration is important as it promotes freedom of expression, allowing teachers to feel respected and valued. Collaboration positively impacts reflection. Reflective learning also increases teachers' knowledge and is central to the process of reflection. As teachers reflect on the importance of professional learning, they are able to say what they value, which brings about awareness and understanding of their thought processes. Reflective learning can also assist with cognitive coaching. The goal of cognitive coaching is to help individuals to become self-directed and autonomous, this occurs when positive interpersonal relationships are encouraged. Cognitive coaching is about building trust and the development of relationships. The cognitive coaching tools for building trust includes paralanguage, response behaviours, silence and wait time acknowledging paraphrasing, probing, exploring and clarifying. The diagnostic tools of cognitive coaching included self-efficacy, flexibility, interdependence, consciousness and craftsmanship.

Taken together, these chapters underscore a shift towards coaching-based leadership that prioritizes learning over evaluation.

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