Coaching as an Instrument of Culture Change in Early Childhood Intervention

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Acknowledgments

- Project participants
- Sir Don Beaven Doctoral Scholarship
- Te Rāngai Ako te Hauora Postgraduate Learning Community
Background

• Family involvement in early childhood intervention (ECI) is fundamental BUT disempowerment still occurs

• Literature suggests facilitative coaching can:
  ◦ empower families, early childhood (EC) educators
  ◦ support embedded intervention
  ◦ promote inclusion and participation

• Early Intervention Practice Framework (EIPF) recommends coaching

• no specific policy or training guidelines exist alongside the document

(Barrera & Rosenbaum, 1986; Lea, 2006; Mahoney et al, 1999; McWilliam et al, 2000; MoE, 2011; Rush, Shelden & Hanft, 2003)
Research context

- Anecdotally, early intervention teachers (EITs) have trialled coaching
- But, little known about how or to what extent this process has taken place....
- nor how practitioners learned to coach....

Aim
- to uncover the motivations for and mechanisms of coaching in ECI in ECE settings in NZ, from the perspective of EITs.
Design

**Part 1** (n = 10)
Semi-structured interviews,
Thematic analysis

*RQ1:* How do EITs describe what coaching is, and why it might be used in ECI?
*RQ2:* How are EITs learning about and using coaching in NZ?

**Part 2** (n = 5)
Ethnographic & semi structured interviews, prospective thematic analysis

*RQ3:* How might a specific PL programme in coaching facilitate learning and praxis?
Theoretical framework

- **Activity Theory**
  Vygotsky, Leont'ev, Engeström *and others*

- **Kuhn**
  ‘*The structure of scientific revolutions*’ (1962)
  “paradigm shifts”
Summary of Findings

Participants described:

1. cultural-historical ECI practices, also influential in the current day

2. the sense being made of coaching in theory and practice

3. how ECI might look and feel with coaching in place
• a “shift”

• coaching as an instrument

a way

a recipe

the means
Activity Theory

(Gedera & Williams, 2016)
Findings 1

Models
- Consultative
- Expert
- Medical
- Teaching

Professional
- directs
- tells, advises
- shows, helps
- holds knowledge, information, answers...
Findings 1

Child focused

deficit lens
developmental assessment,
planning & goal setting

Nice relationships

best intentions,
well meaning,

“she thought she was doing the best for the family”

Creating dependence

I must ask [her] when she comes...then she might wait two weeks...for the answer

solving the problem for them

kind of made them dependent
Findings 2 –

- **motivations**
  
  Old ways not working (Kuhn’s ‘crisis’)
  Coaching in EC becoming visible

- **a turning point**

  introduction of routines based early intervention (RBEI) and the routines based interview (RBI)

(Foster-Cohen & van Bysterveldt, 2016; Kuhn, 1962; McWilliam et al, 2009; Rush, Shelden, & Hanft, 2003)
Findings 2

Challenges

- External
  - expectations of coachees
  - differing philosophy of colleagues
  - family realities and complexities
  - nature of EC centres, knowledge and attitude of EC educators, when to refer on...
  - organisational factors
Findings 2

Challenges

- Internal
  - theory to practice
  - professional identity
Findings 3

Family centred
• adult-focused/whānau
• relationship-based
• partnership / collaboration *together, team*
• self determination
• empowerment

Belief
• belief in the other *instilling that self-belief*
• adults around the child as experts
Findings 3

Building capacity

• setting it up
• building on strengths, using what already exists
• exploring, learning, finding solutions together
• independence
• sustainable
• Implications of findings

• Study limitations
References


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