

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature related to the topic of this study. Three areas of literature are reviewed. The first one is an extension of the underpinning theories and model adopted in this study. Next, there is an overview of the performance of the English language and schools in Malaysia. This is followed by pertinent literature about the transformation in education with a summary of the District Transformation Program (DTP). As this research is centred on the coaching and mentoring by the SISC+, the next section offers some measurable information on coaching and mentoring also on the people involved. This literature review provides the necessary background on the topics relevant to this study.

2.2 Underpinning theories and models

This section aims to explore into, and understand, theories and models within the coaching process. The researcher reviewed theories and models related to coaching and mentoring in order to lay a more or less solid foundation upon which this study can be based. Then, the validation of theories and models is established and their contribution to the issue of coaching and mentoring analysed. Most importantly,

it helps to unveil a deep concern for the coaching and mentoring relationship that this research aims to address.

There are two theories and one model that have become the mainstay of this study. They are Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Biggs's Presage-Process-Product Model and The GROW Model. They are to be discussed in order.

2.2.1 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Scaffolding

In this research, the researcher outline the theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) deliberated by Vygotsky, and the application of the theory to the coaching and mentoring phenomenon. For any field of skill, a ZPD can be created. This concept has a significant contribution to the field of education and is used in developing age-appropriate curriculum and teaching techniques. In the education domain, teaching and learning occur when help is offered at points in the ZPD, at which performance requires help. The assistance is provided by the teacher, the expert, or a more capable person in giving help or assistance. Consequently, teaching consists of assisting performance through the ZPD.

Vygotsky's description of the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD), is the distance between what an individual can achieve individually and what he or she is capable of accomplishing with more expert assistance (Vygotsky, 1978). It is vital to note, however, that the term was never used by Vygotsky in his writing, but it was introduced by Wood and Wood (1996). Cole and Cole (2001) point out that the term specifies that the support provided goes just slightly beyond the learner's present competence complementing their existing abilities. The key point of the concept developed by Vygotsky refers to the difference between a learner's ability to perform a task independently and guidance.

As pointed out by Rasmussen (2001), ZPD is a form of support for the development and learning of children and young people. Jacobs (2001) describes ZPD as the way teachers or peers supply students with the tools they need in order to learn. Under the concept of ZPD mentioned by Vygotsky (1978), individuals learn best when working together with others during collaboration, and it is through such collaborative endeavours with more skilled persons that learners learn and internalise new concepts, psychological tools, and skills.

The term 'scaffolding' as applied to the concept of learning was introduced by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) in their attempt to demonstrate the concept of teaching in the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Researchers believed that the socio-cultural theory of the mind and the concept of ZPD form the basis of the notion of scaffolding (Berk, 2002; Daniels, 2001; Wells, 1999). Nevertheless, there is a distinct understanding and explanation of the differences between ZPD and scaffolding. Wells (1999) defines scaffolding as a way of operationalising Vygotsky's (1987) concept of working in the zone of proximal development. He introduced three critical features of educational scaffolding. The first is the essentially dialogic nature of the discourse in which knowledge is co-constructed; secondly is the implication of the activity in which knowledge is embedded. Finally, there is the role of artefacts that mediate knowing (Wells, 1999). The primary goal of scaffolding in teaching represents the view on the ZPD characteristics concerning the transfer of task responsibility to the student (Mercer & Fisher, 1993). They highlight the collaboration between the teacher and the learner in constructing knowledge and skills. With the benefit of scaffolding, after the student has mastered the specific aspect, the task removes the scaffolding to enable the student to try to complete the task again on his own. Once learners have demonstrated their task mastery, the support is decreased, and learners gain

responsibility for their growth. A central aspect of scaffolding is related to what Wood, Wood and Middleton (1978) referred to as the conditional change principle.

The principle lies in two folds to "increase control when students fail, and decrease control when students succeed" (Van de Pol & Elbers, 2013: 33). In this context, the scaffolds act as support to the learner's development. In recent years, scaffolding has been adopted and interpreted in numerous ways to describe all types of support and guidance (Boblett, 2012). Viewed from this perspective, scaffolding is seen both as supportive and liberating (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). In an analysis of scaffolding, Mamour (2008) described that scaffolding is an instructional structure in which the teacher models the selected learning strategy then slowly changes responsibility to the students. As for the coaching and mentoring by SISC+, both participants, the SISC+ and their coaches, actively build common understanding during coaching through communicative exchanges in which the coachees learn from the perspective of the more knowledgeable other that is the coach. The ZPD concerns issues in coaching and mentoring, specifically in the education industry, and thus is relevant to be discussed as the duty of SISC+ is to provide support needed by coachees.

2.2.2 Biggs's Presage-Process-Product model

Learning is a dynamic process involving learners, learning, and teachers. The awareness of the relationships of the factors that influence learning allows teachers to develop the learning environment that facilitates the learners' efficient learning. Thus, the opportunity to learn is a complex dynamic system that seeks for balance. Biggs's (1996) Presage-Process-Product, or 3P, model was developed to express the interactions between lecturers and students from the opinions of the expectations that

both would have regarding the teaching and learning process. The 3Ps model describes 3 points in time at which learning-related factors are placed. This model refers to individual states of being, that foreshadow the educational process. The first stage in Biggs model is the presage stage, which is before the learning takes place while the process means during the learning, and finally, the product is the outcome of the learning. At the individual level, it describes the worldview of each participant in the classroom. According to Prosser and Trigwell (1998), students' approaches to learning are a function of their prior experiences in teaching and learning environments while Ramsden (2003), indicates that a student's approach to study would be influenced by their previous experiences.

In this research, the presage stage describes the coachees in terms of their prior knowledge, abilities, and skills, to learning new knowledge which may or may not impact their learning processes and outcomes. This stage is simultaneously affected by the process and product. Following the Presage stage in the 3P model is the Process stage. In this stage, it refers to the way that coaches characteristics come into play in response to the tasks set by teachers. Process stage referred to how coachees handle the task, and it was determined by their observations towards the coaching context, their motives, and tendencies and their decisions for instant action, all of which include their approach to the learning task. Finally, the Process stage leads to the Product stage of students' learning and at this stage, it describes low- and high-level cognitive results that encompassing from quantitative recall in the case of low-level outcomes, to relevant answers.

This model has provided help to explore the nature of educational opportunities intended to encourage collaborative work because it represents a closed system that can be described as learning processes of students from similar or

different cultural, language and educational backgrounds (Biggs, 1996). The nature of the collaborative practice that positively motivates and engages learners by their respective learning styles, therefore, leads to the framework of this study. With reference to this research, this model is significant because the learning process promotes collaborative work between SISC+ and the coachees when the teachers receive the coaching from the SISC+. Thus in this study, Biggs's Presage-Process-Product Model is essential to describe the contribution of different stages in the changes of coachees' levels of knowledge skills and abilities after being coached by the SISC+.

2.2.3 The GROW Model

The GROW model, one of the more popular coaching models, has gained its popularity since its inauguration in the 1980s. It was developed by Alan Fine, Graham Alexander and Sir John Whitmore during the 1980s (Whitmore, 1992).

Mukherjee (2014) stressed that the GROW model is a proven performance coaching instrument that is employed by most companies whenever they dealt with performance issues. According to her, the model's principle behind the GROW model is rooted in the Inner Game theory developed by Timothy Galleway, who was frustrated with the weaknesses of conventional coaching methods in sports (Mukherjee, 2014). In his argument, Galleway said just by witnessing a player's faults and bringing them to his or her attention, does not bring the desired results nor lasting change because people do not keep advice or instructions in their minds for a long time (Parsloe & Leedham, 2016). The problem with the instruction is that a player will be able to follow it for a short while but he or she may be unable to keep it in mind in the long term. Galleway realised that, a coach must guide the coachee to

reduce internal impairments to performance and this will then result in the flow of natural ability to perform without the coach's input (Mukherjee, 2014). The players' result started to improve because the managers, in their role as coaches, help the players through the instructions given so they can gain better access to their own internal resources. Through the knowledge that he gained, he discovered that learning is about learning how to learn, and learning how to think differently. Whitmore's (1992) definition of coaching, which is the process of unlocking an individual's potential to maximise their own performance, is based on Galleway's views. The structure of the GROW coaching model for the coaching conversation stands for:

G – Goal

R – Reality (Current Reality)

O – Options and Obstacles

W – Way Forward

The GROW model helps to solve problems and achieve goals because it is a solution-focused model (Whitmore, 2009). There are four stages in the model, which require the coach to captivate the coachee's interest. Each of the four distinct stages is represented by a simple question, or a series of questions to help develop people and discover their potential. It is an ideal model for setting goals, solving problems, preserving personal achievement, and efficiency (Leedham & Parsloe, 2016).

Firstly, the coach and the coachee needs to establish the goals of the coaching because it is compulsory to know the goal only then both of them can work towards their goals. According to Whitmore (2009), setting goals before exploring into reality helps to develop goals that are not influenced by an individual's current situation. At the same time, the goals must be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realistic

and Timely (Bianco-Mathis et al. 2002). The main question to be addressed when setting goals is whether or not they fit the overall objectives. It is essential to set a goal that is clear and specific. Starr (2016) argues that the idea of setting goals is strongly related to the goal-setting theory, which advocates the setting of clear, specific and challenging goals as this leads to clear direction and motivation.

The second stage is the reality in which the coachee will explain the current reality and what is wrong to help them to see why change is necessary (Weinstein, 2013). It is essential for both the parties to know the current situation because the argument is that it is difficult for them to solve the problem if they do not have a clear picture of the anticipated destination (Whitworth et al. 2007). According to Bridges and Bridges (2017), people cannot solve problems they do not understand or reach goals without considering the starting point. It is vital for the coach and the coachee to keep focus and become aware of the actual situation. As a coach, the crucial role is to stimulate coachees' self-evaluation and identify the obstacles that have been holding them back. This is the crucial part where the coaches need to summarise and repeat what he or she understands with regard to the actual situation of the coachee. At this phase, it often reveals the fundamental fears and beliefs that can be worked on during or in-between coaching sessions.

The option stage is to generate ideas that can contribute to the solution of the problem. It involves exploring into various options and focusing not only on the right answers but on several alternatives to have as many options as possible so that specific action steps can be selected (Dembkowski & Eldridge, 2003). The solutions need to be structured, and then every option needs to be evaluated by creatively brainstorming the process. A coach has to create an environment in which the coachee feels safe to express his or her ideas and thoughts without fear of being judged.

The last step of the GROW coaching model is the choice of one option from the various options stated. Then, the choice is transformed into a more concrete plan.

After a well-planned strategy, the coachee's motivation to follow this plan is maximised. The last phase involves converting the discussions into decisions by means of taking specific actions to move forward (Lesley et al., 2015). This is in accordance with the opinion that in coaching, the coach should help individuals to move from their current positions towards greater effectiveness and fulfilment (Lesley et al., 2015). The assumption is that, if questions in each stage are properly dealt with, obstacles that may negatively impact the individual's performance will be reduced (de Haan & Kasozi, 2015).

As a coach, one of the most critical roles is to guide the coachee to improve their performance by helping them to make better decisions, solve problems that are holding them back. A coach also helps the coachee to acquire new skills and do things differently, and subsequently, they can progress their careers. The GROW model is grounded on the belief that individuals have the most appropriate solutions to their problems while the coach, on the other hand, will succeed with some proven techniques, practice, and even instincts (Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009). This statement leads us to the transformation in education discussed in this study. Because of the importance of this model in the coaching and mentoring industry, it is crucial to shed light on the relationship of the GROW model in the transformation of education because the used of the model as the instrument in coaching and mentoring the teachers.

2.2.4 The relevance of the theories and models

The theories and models highlighted in the previous sections are significant to the whole study to link with the coaching and mentoring done by the SISC+. As illustrated in the conceptual framework the researcher connects the Grow Model and both Bigg 3Ps and ZPD theories to the process of coaching and mentoring to highlight the role of the SISC+. The instruments (The GROW Model) is being used by the SISC+ to carry out their duties thus it is important to highlight about the model.

Next section deals with the school setting in Malaysia. The discussion centres on the performance of schools in Malaysia. The discussion for each component will be based on how coaching and mentoring are emphasised in this study. It is essential to highlight the performance of schools in Malaysia because the deterioration of school performance has paved the way for the transformation of education in Malaysia. Consequently, it leads to the formation of the position of SISC+ in Malaysia which is the motives of this research.

2.3 The performance of schools in Malaysia

The declining performance of Malaysian schools in international standard has awakened the Government of Malaysia through several initiatives to improve the quality of students' performance in Malaysia. Results from the assessments such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) confirm that Malaysia remains impacted at the bottom third of the international group table of schools. Malaysia's performance in TIMSS slithered to below the international average in Mathematics as well as Science. In PISA 2009 and 2012, Malaysia ranked in the bottom third of 74 participating countries. A comparison of PISA scores suggests that a 15-year-old boy

Malaysia would take at least three years of extra schooling to catch up with her peers from high-performing East Asian economies such as Singapore and South Korea (MOE, 2012).

Next, in 2015 Malaysia also took part in the PISA assessment. When the OECD announced the 2015 PISA results, Malaysia results were not published. According to the PISA 2015 results, it portrays that Malaysia's result were not listed in the PISA 2015 assessment results. Figure 2.1 explains this.

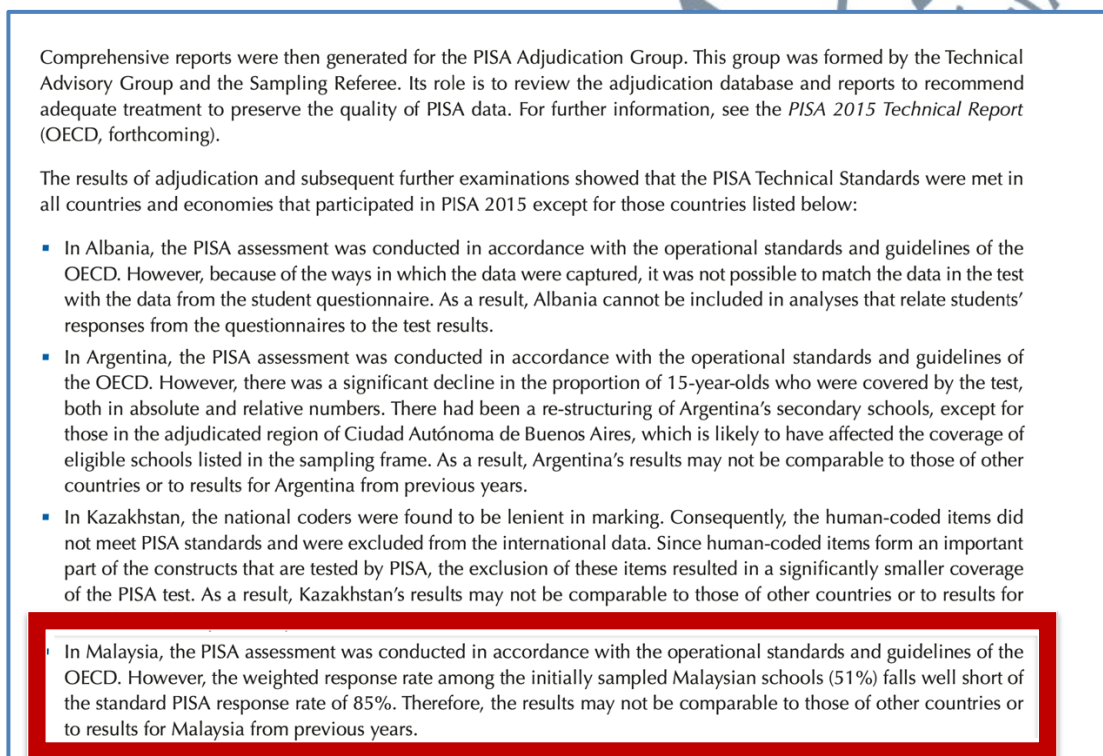


Figure 2.1 : PISA 2015 Results (Volume 1), p. 304

To make matters worse, Malaysia was disqualified from PISA 2015 due to sampling error. According to the reports, this low level of response had disqualified Malaysia from being ranked in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development study. Malaysia was not included in the Pisa ranking since only 51% of schools had participated, short of the standard PISA response rate of 85%.

Based on the unfavourable outcomes on international achievement in PISA and TIMSS, there is a concern that in the past, the teaching and learning in schools have not paid enough attention to the development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). As a result, the MOE is now focusing on how to increase HOTS into the primary and secondary education curricula and assessments (MOE, 2012). The MEB, the recent master plan for the education sector development in Malaysia, came about as a result of a comprehensive review of the education system in 2013. The Blueprint affirms the critical role of education in turning Malaysia into a knowledge-based economy, and to be able to compete in the progressively globalised economy. The focus is on improving the access to education, raising standards, closing achievement gaps, promoting unity among the students, and maximising system efficiency. Raising teacher quality, improving infrastructure for schools in rural areas and improving access to structured education for children will be further enhanced (MOE, 2012).

The Government Transformation Program (GTP) focuses on how the government and the private sector can modernize how the Malaysian Government operates. In relation to this is the Economic Transformation Program (ETP), which focuses on attracting private investment in Malaysia. The end goal of this transformation is for the Malaysian education system to be world-class. In order for this to happen, one of the main focus area for the Ministry is to improve the quality of education and student outcomes (MOE, 2012).

Poor results, despite big government spending, indicate that improving student outcomes is crucial towards developing a more competitive workforce as Malaysia pushes towards becoming a developed nation by 2020. Therefore, in the context of the

education system, teachers' quality needs to be supported by a dynamic coach team at the state education departments and district education offices. Improving student outcomes is crucial in the realisation of government transformation programme so that actions can be done in implementing appropriate and sufficient measures to the school for the benefit of the coaches, teachers and students. The Ministry needs to have an understanding of the intervention so that they can manipulate their knowledge creatively in order for the transformation to happen. Hence, the measures taken by the Ministry to establish the SISC+ in the district education office is a strategic way to impose on quality teaching among the teachers consequently as this will lead to the improvement of students result at international level. In conclusion, the review of school performance in Malaysia is significant to the whole study to link with the coaching and mentoring done by the SISC+. These coaches exist to aid the teachers through coaching and mentoring with the aim of enhancing the performance of schools in Malaysia. Therefore, this section is essential to the whole research to support the benefit of the transformation of education in the country.

2.4 Transformation in education

This section provides an in-depth discussion on the elements of transformation in education and highlights the elements in the transformation as delineated by the Ministry of Education. The concept of transformation offers room for an opportunity for the reconsideration of how appropriate and successful educational practices may be. To begin with, the researcher enlightens on the National Educational Philosophy, which is the framework of any transformation and then followed by the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025).

2.4.1 National Education Philosophy

According to Oroka (2010), philosophy is a philosophic wisdom and activity concerning the existence of things around us that concerns with what is, and why a certain thing works or exists the way it is; it probes into a man's place in the universe of things. It is a belief. Thus, in general, the philosophy of education is the ideology and principle created for the education system. The purpose of philosophy is to form educational principles, guidelines, assumptions, and decisions concerning learning and teaching, intellectual and moral building, and educational goal (Mohamed, 1990). Similarly, in the Malaysian education context, the National Education Philosophy (NEP) was formed in 1989 for the improvement of its citizens in line with the National Principles (*Rukun Negara*) with the final aims of building a united and progressive society (MOE, 2001). It states:-

“Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the betterment of the family, society and the nation at large.”
(MOE, 2008, p. ix)

The National Education Philosophy applies to students of all ages (young children to adults). Specifically, the roles of the NEP as accounted by Meng (1996) and Sang (2008) include (as cited in Al-hudawi et al., 2014):

- a) Providing guidance and direction in the effort of expanding and improving education;

- b) Serving as basic policy and consideration for determining the national education goals;
- c) As a reference for educators (local or overseas) to understand the educational system in Malaysia;
- d) As a guidance for educators to perform educational tasks;
- e) As the basis and foundation for determining the curriculum, teaching materials and learning and teaching strategies;
- f) As controller on a distortion of education policy activities and to eliminate misunderstandings, doubts or disputes while putting effort to perform educational tasks or activities;
- g) Avoiding any inconvenience that may arise during the implementation of a particular curriculum or its component;
- h) As basic considerations while planning for the reform or change in the education system.

In short, NEP was accepted as a foundation for the integration of various ethnic groups in Malaysia as well as the agent for the development of socio-economy (Rosnani, 2004). It is essential to see the NEP as a tool to achieve the betterment of Malaysia in terms of the socio-economy. The considerable emphasis rests on the National Education Policy on utilising education as a measure to build human capital towards achieving a “knowledge economy” (Lee, 1999). Aligned with the National Education Philosophy (NEP) and its aim to create a moral society, the Blueprint aspires to create an education system that gives children shared values and experiences by embracing diversity and an environment where “every student will have ethics and spirituality.” Thus, it shows that Malaysian Education Blueprint and

National Education Plan are closely related. The main idea of both is to provide the guidelines and foundation in the education system. Essentially, therefore, it is significant to study the issues concerning coaching and mentoring among the coaches (SISC+) and the coachees (teachers) as it will give measurable information on the effect of transformation in education and consequently help to implement appropriate methodology and adequate measures to the school for the benefit of the coaches, teachers, and students.

2.4.2 Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025)

Blueprint is an essential document that caters for the needs of any organisations and we should follow it carefully. Similarly, an educational blueprint will be an endorsement to the educational development in a country. The Ministry of Education in Malaysia has implemented a broad range of high-quality initiatives that have resulted in noteworthy improvement in students' achievement and completion. These include the launch of its Education Development Master Plan 2006-2010 (PPIP 2006-2010) in relation to the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

In September 11, 2012, the Ministry of Education launched Malaysia Education Blueprint that restates the commitment of the Malaysian school to the National Education Philosophy. The Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025 is the master plan for the Malaysian education development aiming at transforming Malaysia's education system to increase the educational standard and quality and to pave the way towards a better educated-Malaysia. It aims to outline the progression of education improvement and to respond to many of the challenges faced by the system over the following decade. It is a comprehensive strategy of reforming the National Education system in the country.

The Blueprint contains all the strategic and operational pathways and shifts to transform the country's education system and assurance to continue using "the NEP's vision of a balanced education as its foundation for individual student aspirations" (MOE, 2012). There are eleven shifts to be implemented in three waves. The eleven shifts to transform the system are as follows:-

1. Provide equal access to quality education of an international standard
2. To ensure every child is proficient in Bahasa Malaysia, English and an additional language
3. Develop value-driven Malaysians
4. Transform teaching into the profession of choice
5. Ensure high-performing school leaders in every school
6. Empower JPNs, PPDs & schools to customise solutions based on need
7. Leverage ICT to scale up quality learning across Malaysia
8. Transform the Ministry's delivery capabilities and capacity
9. Partner with parents, community, and private sector at scale
10. Maximise student outcomes for every Ringgit
11. Increase transparency for direct public accountability

(Adapted from MOE, 2012)

Generally, MEB is a blueprint that evaluates the performance of the current Malaysia's education system with considerations of historical starting points against international benchmarks. It offers an idea of the education system and student aspirations that Malaysia both needs and deserves that would be required to achieve that vision (MOE, 2012). The First Wave (2013-2015) is on raising teacher quality and improving student literacy, the Second Wave (2016-2020) will focus on accelerating the improvement of the education delivery system and the Third Wave

(2021-2025) will be geared towards increasing operational flexibility to cultivate a peer-led culture of professional excellence (MOE, 2012). Based on the strategised shifts, the Ministry aims to achieve the main objective that is to transform the education system in the country and consequently improve the requirements of the international standard.

Transformation in education is a must in Malaysia because of the needs to prepare students with the abilities and necessary skills for successful adaptation to a changing world. To achieve this, the Ministry has cited the importance of 21st century education to the students. Learning strategies should not only focus on the possession of specific knowledge in certain subjects but also to include the mastery of processes, the understanding of concepts, and the ability to function in different situations in each domain. Therefore it is important for teachers to adjust the teaching strategies to suit the needs of 21st century education. As the country has to deal with the students of the age, 21st century teaching and learning has become the focus of the Ministry of Education. Students are taught with the skills of 21st century education so that they can master the learning process and enable them to direct the learning in their own way. In this way the goal of the 21st century education can be achieved that is to allow the students to master the information and understand the advanced use of technology in the society.

The conceptualisation of the Blueprint as a multidimensional measure in the educational reforms would manifest itself as a framework in understanding how coaching and mentoring has become the needs in the education system itself. Based on the strategised shifts, there is a need to transform the education system through the implementation of the Blueprint. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the initiatives

of the Ministry in implementing coaching and mentoring as an effective strategy to achieve the main objective of MEB.

2.4.3 District Transformation Program

The word transformation refers to the changes in the structures, values, and culture, and in this research, it refers to the changes in education, which is a necessity, not an option. In this contemporary world, the education institutions are one of the dynamic participants in the massive changes experienced by our society. The changes are vital to ensure the competitiveness of our society in the new world order. Furthermore, in order to chart the development of a single, integrated national education system, wholly transformed education arrangements are needed.

In the Malaysian context, the transformation of education in the national system and its institutions is an ultimate commitment of the Ministry of Education (MOE) so that it will be able to strive in the world. The transformation in the education system will involve the changes in the whole industry beginning at ministry, department, districts and school levels. In other words, in order to change, the organisation needs to be transformed into a complete new organisation and in this study, the organisation is the education system in Malaysia.

Thus MOE has come out with District Transformation Programme, an initiative to secure the transformation in education as planned by the Ministry. District Transformation Programme (DTP) is a feature of changing the national education system. New programmes and ideas are developed while new technologies are adopted to create a systemic impact for all students. It is one of the initiatives under the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MOE, 2012). In this initiative, the capacity of the *Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah* (PPD) will be developed so that the school improvement

will be escalated through systematic and districted programs across all states starting in 2014. Every PPD in the country will be empowered to adapt the support provided to schools on certain scope involving students' and teachers' matters (MOE, 2012). Education in Malaysia is managed at four distinct levels; federal, state, district and school.

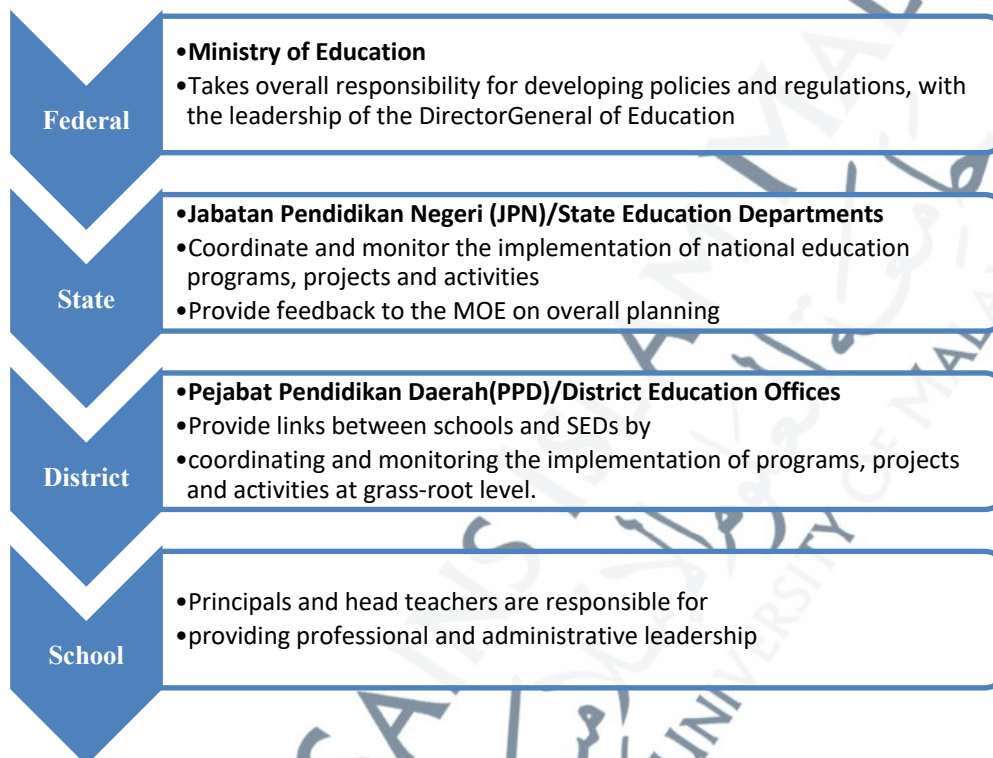


Figure 2.2: Levels in the Ministry of Education in Malaysia

Figure 2.2 signifies the four distinct levels of the MOE. The tiers are shown to highlight the different levels of the Ministry. Each entity of the different levels at Ministry level has the responsibilities to be carried out to ensure the initiatives of the DTP endure success. Hence, to provide teachers with support and help, the job of SISC+ was created and located at the district level with the responsibilities of upgrading the teaching quality of teachers in the district. Among the tasks of these SISC+ is to coach and mentor the teachers in their districts in terms of pedagogies,

curriculum and assessment.

Consequently, the idea of the Ministry to create DTP is indeed essential for students nowadays. DTP is a well-planned and systematic initiative that aims to help achieve the vision of the Ministry to improve the performance among teachers, and it will continuously be an effective tool to upgrade students' achievement. Thus, this study is relevant to look at the significance of district transformation in education to explore the initiative made by the Ministry to achieve the targets and objectives set.

To conclude, it is essential to accentuate on the transformation of education in this study because these initiatives were meant to put into practice and find practical relevance in this research. To allow an assessment of the extent to which matters related to transformation in learning and education, this study was performed, and implemented. In the next, the researcher provides literature on the key players of school improvement programme.

2.5 Key Players of the school improvement program

This section describes the participants involved in the DTP. However, since this study centres on coaching and mentoring by SISC+, the review of School Improvement Partners (SIP+) is excluded. As stated in chapter 1, the SIP+ job scope includes coaching the school leaders while the SISC+ coaches the teachers. The descriptions in this section focus on the SISC+ and the teachers or the coachees.

2.5.1 School Improvement Special Coaches/SISC+

The term 'coach' refers to an individual who is regarded as a highly skilled person with the aim of providing essential support to enhance the performance and reach a new level of achievement. It is applied across many life activities such as

football coach, drama coach and executive management coach. In the context of educational institutions, a coach is an individual who provides forms of assistance to help the low-performing school to achieve better performance in terms of academic achievement (MOE, 2012). The outcomes include the levels of achievement and performance within an education culture striving for continuous improvement. The selected coaches are skilled communicators, or relationship builders, with a repertoire of excellent communication skills that enable them to empathize, listen, and build trusting relationships (Knight, 2008).

This form of external support to struggling schools is not new. It is an inclusive effort to motivate low performing schools to increase their students' performance. In the last two decades, the work on the knowledge and skills required of effective educational leaders has consistently called for more attention to directing instruction. For this reason, improving what a school does is essential to all school improvement efforts. Thus, it is highly required to have an efficient, competent, knowledgeable school improvement coach who is able to outline and manage the curricula and is capable of getting the most out of student achievement by shaping the daily practices of the teachers. It is a big challenge for a coach to help any individuals to recognise the need to improve their practice as well as to know how to do it. Therefore, selected coaches with positive characteristics play vital roles in improving instructions, where they provide professional support to teachers to improve their practice.

As for the Malaysian context, the initiatives to use external consultants to facilitate, affect change and help low-performing schools can be seen through the continuous efforts of the Malaysian government to improve the nation's system of education. The initiative of strengthening the nation's mission to boost Malaysian

education standard, is evident in the formation of the post; School Improvement Specialist Coach (SISC+) in the Ministry of Education. SISC+ focus on instilling pedagogical skills in forming higher-order thinking skills within teachers, teaching children of different abilities, and assessing students effectively (Mohamad et al., 2016). SISC+ was introduced to provide on-the-ground training to teachers. It also aims at supporting teachers in translating the written curriculum into classroom teaching. SISC+ roles and responsibilities include coaching teachers on the new curriculum, pedagogy skills and assessments in the classroom and monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation (MOE, 2012).

This SISC+ act as a coach aiming at providing external support to the teachers who are in need of guiding, coaching and mentoring in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore teachers act as SISC+ clients and SISC+ act as coaches to the teachers. The aim is to improve the performance of low-performing schools throughout the nation with the help of instructional coaches, namely SISC+ (MOE, 2012). These SISC+ are regarded as Subject Matter Experts specialising in their particular subject - Bahasa Malaysia, English Language and Mathematics (MOE, 2012). Their job specifications are outlined in the *Buku Pengurusan DTP 3.0* as the guideline to the people involved. These are stated as follows:

Pegawai Perkhidmatan Pendidikan yang dilantik sebagai SISC+ bertanggungjawab kepada KPPD/Pengarah JPN. Mereka berperanan sebagai pembimbing dan pakar rujuk mata pelajaran pada peringkat daerah.

4.3.3.1 Tiga tanggungjawab utama:

a) Mengadakan lawatan bimbingan guru

Memberikan bimbingan P&P kepada GDB serta melakukan intervensi untuk peningkatan pedagogi.

b) Melaksanakan program yang diluluskan oleh pusat.

i. Memantapkan kefahaman dan pelaksanaan dasar/program baharu dalam

- kalangan guru (keutamaan kepada guru yang dibimbing).*
- ii. *Membimbing guru untuk melaksanakan program baharu dalam P&P*
- c) *Membuat laporan, tindakan susulan dan intervensi guru.)
Melapor kepada KPPD/Timbangan Pengarah JPN dan mengambil
tindakan susulan serta intervensi.*

Source: *Buku Pengurusan DTP 3.0, 2015*

In the book the roles and responsibilities of the SISC+ are listed under Section 4.3.3.1. Under 4.3.3.1 (a), it states that the SISC+ have to visit the selected coachees in the selected schools. The coaches are also responsible for coaching and mentoring the coachees and at the same time for intervening to improve pedagogy. SISC+ also need to implement a new program approved by the PPD. It is also the responsibilities of the SISC+ to enhance the understanding and implementation of policies and new program among teachers (coachees). Finally, it is the duty of the SISC+ to report about their coaching and mentoring and take necessary follow-up and intervention. Overall, these are the roles and responsibilities of SISC+ as stated in the book and the SISC+ have to observe these.

This support by the SISC+ is intended to help the low-performing school to achieve better performance and eventually secure the success of the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025). With the big task given, the SISC+ as an agency has bigger responsibilities that will require a transformation in the nation's educational systems. Thus, it is necessary to carry out a research to investigate the transformation of the education system which involves the establishment of SISC+ as well as the issues derived from the transformation in education and consequently promotes student achievement and improve the performance of schools.

2.5.2 Teachers

Understanding the role of teachers in educational change demands that we understand the nature of teaching and of the change process itself. With various tasks to perform, teachers not only serve as educators to disseminate information, but also as managers, planners, facilitators and role models to the community. In addition, various composite tasks to be performed by the teachers may make them lose focus on the classroom teaching and learning (Sharifah et al., 2014).

Mohamad et al. (2016) in their study, claimed that teachers in the 21st century are recommended to deliver the current syllabus critically in a manner that highlights skills and competencies (MOE, 2012). Like other professions, teachers also need to learn continuously. Therefore, teachers need continual assessment process and rejuvenation of practices. The DTP, as declared in Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 located SISC+'s accountability in supporting teachers' continual professional development. Thus, SISC+ do not judge, evaluate nor assess teachers' behaviour in classrooms.

As a coach, one of the job descriptions is to observe teachers' methodology in classrooms. These observations do not mean that teachers are degraded or stressed out. In Malaysia, the school inspectorate, senior teachers, head of department and principal would enter a teacher's class and evaluate teachers' capabilities in carrying out the teaching and learning process. The observations by this inspectorate would invite uncomfortable feelings among the teachers. In terms of educational coaching, often the coachees cannot feel comfortable enough because of the formal observations done by the superior, principals, principals, or the inspectorate board. Thus, a coach should be the person with whom the coachee or teachers feel safe, or with whom they can share feelings and thoughts about particular experiences within the classroom.

Productive communication can only occur in an environment that eases an atmosphere of "equality and freedom, trust and understanding, acceptance and warmth" (Rogers & Farson, 1984, p. 281).

Teachers, like other professions, require continuous learning (Sullivan & Glanz, 2000). Therefore, teachers need a constant process of assessment and renewal of practices. Coaching can assist with fostering relationships between colleagues by organising and leading grade-level meetings and by providing small-group professional development activities that focus on an area chosen by colleagues.

Teachers are regarded as an essential agent of change. It has been broadly known that teachers are one of the variables that need to be developed when it comes to improving the education systems (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Many hardworking teachers and educators need professional development opportunities, not only because they endorse the credit of their work, but also because they allow for growth, exploration, learning, and development (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). This dual role of teachers in educational reforms makes the field of teacher professional development a growing and challenging part, and one that has received significant attention during the past few years (Rashid, 2016). In this regard, as an agent of change, the teaching quality undertake high quality teacher professional development programmes to ensure effective instruction in the classroom. It is important to place students with high-performing teachers because these students are likely to progress better as those placed with low-performing teachers.

Therefore it is important to put high quality teachers in terms of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment as teacher quality is a significant school-based factor in determining student outcomes. One of the initiatives in MEB is to transform the teaching profession into a highly effective and competent teaching force by increasing

opportunities for professional development. Thus, the existence of SISC+ is significant to provide the teachers with opportunities for professional development. The teachers need to have the opportunities so that the classroom teaching will be more effective. Performance-based career progression is the measures intended to encourage greater teacher involvement in students' learning as well as emotional and cognitive development, and thus it makes classroom teaching more effective (MOE, 2012). Based on the importance of support given to the teachers, this research is needed to evaluate the influences of coaching and mentoring by the coaches (SISC+) towards the teaching and learning of the coachees (teachers). It is important, hence to examine the influence of coaching and mentoring as the scaffolds towards improving the performance among teachers as it will be a useful tool to upgrade the students' achievement. Eventually, it will help to improve teacher performance or student achievement over the long term and the issues derived from the coaching and mentoring among the teachers, especially in the Malaysian context.

To sum up, all the reasons provided in this section explain why SISC+ (or coaches) as well as their teachers (or coaches) are directly involved in this study. The coaching and mentoring phenomenon, then are closely attributed to the participants in this study – the coaches and the coachees. This makes it important for the researcher to gather information about the participants in this study. In the next, the researcher proceeds with an explanation on the roles and responsibilities of the SISC+.

2.6 Roles And Responsibilities

In this section, the researcher will provide the core of the roles and responsibilities of SISC+. It begins with the roles and responsibilities and then followed by coaching and mentoring and finally, the professional development of the

teachers. These information are significant to the study because the knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of SISC+ is a great value to this study.

As a coach, the SISC+ plays an important role in improving the quality of teaching and learning among teachers through coaching and mentoring and to identify the strengths and opportunities of teachers, and all these can be achieved through the assistance given by them in coaching the teachers. Killion and Harrison (2007) and Chin Wen Chien (2013) named the roles and responsibilities of coaches such as classroom supporters, instructional specialists, curriculum specialists, professional developers, data analysers, change agents, mentors and resource providers. The coaching support can lead to significant educational change and improve student achievement. This is supported by the findings of studies by Joyce and Showers (1998), Swartz, Shook and Klein (2001), Killion (2003), Lyons and Pinnell (1999) and Norton et al. (2001) where the coaching support can impact teacher reflection, action research, collaboration and informed decision making. Coaches meet the teachers and help them to apply what they learn from professional development experiences such as courses, workshop series, or study groups to their work with children. Coaches will share the knowledge, skills and ideas with their teachers. Thus, coaches help teachers plan the curriculum and build their capacity to use children and classroom data (Skiffington, Washburn & Elliott, 2011). In relation to the SISC+, they are required to coach and mentor the teachers in terms of the pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. The roles of SISC+ are to help teachers improve their teaching and learning and this can be done in many forms such as helping them to develop the required 21st century teaching and learning. In a nutshell, as SISC+, one of the most central qualities is that they want to help the person they are coaching to learn, and this can be done by

supporting the process of learning among teachers. The review of their roles and responsibilities is discussed in the next section.

2.6.1 Coaching

According to Palmer and Whybrow (2008), there is a consensus on the critical building blocks of effective coaching which lies in effective rapport building, excellent listening skills, creative questioning techniques, effective feedback, setting clear goals, the ability to utilise previous experience and expertise to comprehend the present and predict future actions. Coaching has been the choice of many organisations to improve the performance of their employees (Lesley et al., 2015). Nevertheless, it is a challenging endeavour because the truth is that people do not simply want to change, and they prefer to hold on to what they have been doing even though coaching can help people to improve their way of living, working performance or improve their decision making as well as improve their relationships (Davies, 2016).

Garet et al. (2001) identified aspects of professional development that significantly correlated with changes in teachers' knowledge and practices. They posited that effective professional development should focus on specific content knowledge; provide on-going training at the school site; integrate training with teachers' daily work; promote the collective participation of teachers; align with instructional goals, instructional practices, and local standards; and provide opportunities for active participation and learning (Garet et al., 2001)

Basically, coaching is a central component of successful professional development. According to Whitmore (2002), coaching refers to unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance. Du Toit and Reissner (2012) posited

that coaching is the ability to increase and improve the sensitivity and awareness that the client has within himself or herself, and for others. To develop self-awareness, an individual must have access to honest feedback and this is sometimes difficult to obtain within the organisation, particularly if the client is in a senior position within the organisation. Coaching is an enabling process aiming at enhancing learning and development with the intention of improving the performance in a specific aspect of practice (Lord et al., 2008). Therefore, coaching is an important professional learning process to enhance the specific aspects of performance by providing support to augment the skills, resources, as well as the creativity that the client already has.

Coaching and mentoring were utilised by individuals and organisations to help facilitate the change process, as it provides an opportunity to design a personalised program of development which can help an individual to 'learn how to learn' (Parsloe & Wray, 2000). Whitmore (2003) posited that in this approach to learning, the individual acquires the learning from within themselves with the help of a coach, rather than being taught through hints and facts, and this is what separates coaching from the traditional teaching. In addition, Means et al. (2009) believed that coaching has become a central strategy in the district and school efforts to build teachers' capacity.

Coaching is an external professional support which is concerned principally with the performance and the development of definable skills and it is preferred for its individualisation and adaptability. It usually starts with the identification of the learning goal. Then, it will be followed by problem-solving. The coach will not provide the solutions for the coachee, instead the former will provide support to the latter to develop their strength and reinstate their weaknesses. Furthermore, the term 'coaching' by Robertson and Murrehy (2005) in educational literature is a metaphor

used to explain a supportive, working relationship between two or more persons for the purposes of forming changes in practice through the development of individual capacities. Robertson and Murrphy (2005) assumed that the two partners will gain equal benefits from working with each other as they develop and implement their professional and personal goals. The premise of coaching and mentoring is the recognition of their need to grow and develop as leaders and educators as well as the recognition that they can assist each other in the coaching process.

Hence, coaching and mentoring can get the very best out of someone and it allows the coachees to make decisions that will eventually improve their quality of teaching and learning towards enhancing the students' achievement and performance. Therefore, coaching can be defined as the ability of coaches to offer additional professional support in helping the coachee to exploit and increase their performance in certain subjects, refocused instructions, on-going collaboration, and support for lesson planning and set up teachers so that 21st century teaching and learning in the classroom becomes the focus of their teaching. In relation to this the coaching offered by the SISC+ is an essential part of professional development for the teachers to improve their performance in the three main subjects mainly English, Mathematics, Bahasa Malaysia. Hence this study is very significant in identifying the issues with regards to the coaching by SISC+ and consequently to ensure the realisation of DTP.

2.6.2 Mentoring

Mentoring is a process which involves a mentor and a mentee. The term 'mentoring' comes from the word mentor itself. It is a process whereby a person serves as a mentor to someone who is recognised as a mentee to the mentor. The process of mentoring is almost the same as modelling. As a mentor, he or she must be

able to serve as a model of the teacher's role in education (Martschinke et al. 2003). The process includes modelling because the mentor must be able to model the messages and suggestions being given to the novice teacher (Gay, 1995).

According to Lord (2008), a mentor is characterised as an 'expert-novice' (e.g. van Kessel, 2006; McDonnell & Zutshi, 2006; Foster-Turner, 2006), and as such the role is essential at the start of a professional career for instance in the initial teacher training. Besides, Simkins et al. (2006) justified mentoring as "a process to help and support people to manage their own learning in order to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance, and become the person they want to be."

Von Krogh, Ichijo, and Nonaka (2000) emphasised on the importance of knowledge sharing. Similarly, DeLong and Storey (2004) stressed on knowledge transfer as a crucial mechanism for an organisation's success. Becerra Fernandez and Sabherwal (2001) pointed out that social processes played an essential role in the transfer of implicit knowledge among the members of any group. Nonaka and Nishiguchi (2001) mentioned that workplace relationships such as mentoring should be fostered to encourage the transfer of implied knowledge. The nature of mentoring is a collaborative and mutually beneficial approach between mentor and mentee, as Lim (2005) revealed. Thus, mentoring is a factor that promotes guidance on career development and role modelling where both contribute significantly to employee's development. Scandura, Gayin and Williams (2009) emphasised that mentoring relationships can significantly affect individual career development and advancement with both the mentor and the mentee benefiting from the relationship.

Ganser (2006) stated that mentoring was a tool which had remained very significant in improving management skills and staff development. Hence, mentoring

is a dynamic relationship that leads to the creativity, professional growth and mastery over problem-solving techniques. Ultimately, this information is relevant since this study will provide awareness to the Ministry of Education in planning a more comprehensive and integrated program to ensure the success of the Malaysian Education Blueprint which aim is to empower the national education system.

2.6.3 Professional Development

Competence and quality teacher is vital to nurture student's capabilities (Harweel, 2003). Previous studies on the teacher's effect on student achievement show a strong relationship between the professionalism and quality of teachers and the performance of their students (Desimone, 2009; Yoon et al., 2007; Wei, Andree & Darling-Hammond, 2009). Hence, it is crucial for all teachers to keep well-informed of changes that take place in the education system domestically and internationally. Therefore, in order to truly change the practices, professional development should be expected over time. Teachers' professional development was recognised as one of the ways to improve the teaching profession (Jamil et al., 2011).

Glatthorn (1995) viewed professional development as the professional growth of a teacher as he or she gains expanded experience. These professional developments could be formal experiences or intimate experiences. Examples of formal experiences are attending workshops or professional meetings or mentoring; while informal experiences are reading professional publications, or watching television documentaries related to any academic disciplines (Ganser, 2000; Jamil et al., 2007)

In an effort to raise teacher's quality in Malaysia, the Ministry of Education encourages Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to equip teachers with good practices. The term 'Continuing Professional Development' (CPD) refers to the on-

going education and training for the professions (Blandford, 2000). Teacher development, professional development, and staff development are associated with concepts related to continuing professional development. CPD is defined as a growth that occurs through the professional cycle of a teacher (Kedzior & Fifield, 2004). The experiences and ideas that teachers have about their career, working conditions, prestige and achievements have a significant impact on their actions, as well as on the quality and effectiveness of their teaching (Grion & Varisco, 2007). The continuous and gradual formation of CPD may serve as an influential tool in the hands of policy-makers to improve the effectiveness of teaching (Alsup, 2006; Ross & Bruce, 2007). Teaching is said to be effective when there is the improvement of the teaching skills and practices of educators, based on their work experiences, the constant and systematic examination of their own teaching, as well as their participation in formal and informal development activities.

On the other hand, Professional Learning Community (PLC) is defined as collaborative initiatives by a group of teachers who work as a team to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, for example, doing action research to create an intervention that will give a positive effect towards students' learning and enhancing their academic achievement (DuFour, DuFour & Eaker, 2008). PLC is a good practice that should be cultivated in school to enhance teachers' teaching and learning quality. Hord (2009) suggested that if a school wanted a capable PLC team, they need to share the same vision and value, while other scholars suggested one more characteristic, which is a collective responsibility for students' learning (King & Newmann, 2001). Hord (1997) added that schools that practice PLC should have five dimensions – (1) sharing vision and mission, (2) leadership sharing and supportive leadership, (3) collective learning and learning application, (4) sharing of personal

practice, and (5) organisation support. For Toole and Louis (2002), PLC means a group of teachers who critically investigate and evaluate their teaching practice by doing reflection and collaboration, and it must also be student-learning oriented. They added that the primary perception towards PLC is that teachers who are actively involved in PLC will enhance their professional knowledge, leading to enhancing students' learning quality.

Day (1999) explained the difference between professional development and continuing professional development. He argued that most professional development definitions stress on the acquisition of subject or content knowledge and teaching skills as the primary purpose. He stated that the strength should be on the nature of CPD as a continuing process for improvement in addition to the knowledge and skills gained. This on-going process can be of any kind; training, education, supportive or learning activities involved by teachers alone or with others. In short, CPD aims at enriching individual competence to improve practice and to facilitate dynamic changes in education (Blandford, 2000).

Teachers often resist change programmes that offer too little support (Knight, 2000). Previous studies found out that the most important thing is that quality teacher and teaching and must be supported by strategic teacher professional development (Ken Rowe; 2003; Joyce & Showers, 2002; John Hattie, 2003; Timperley et al., 2008). The most immense struggle for teachers is not learning new approaches to teaching but implementing those approaches in their teaching.

Professional development, on the other hand, is a formal process that a teacher has to undertake to improve teaching and learning, for example, a conference, seminar, or workshop. PLC is one of the activities in Professional Development. As we notice, teachers are an essential human capital for a succession of the Malaysian

education that aims at improving the education quality and forming the national human capital. PLC seems like a favourable concept for the training of professional development of mentor teachers (Westheimer, 2008). Another study by Vescio et al. (2008) concluded that PLC application caused important development as well as major strategy for developing teachers' teaching competency and students' quality in schools. It is supported in a study by Asanok and Chookhampaeng (2016) who found out that there was development in student and teachers in sharing the teaching experience, the shared value and vision in developing one's teaching competence.

Furthermore, as a coach, the roles and responsibilities of SISC+ are not limited in the classroom only, but it can also be done in the PLC. Therefore, in order to see the success of the DTP designed by the Ministry, it is necessary for the Ministry to provide ample and on-going support during the implementation. Based on the Malaysian Education Blueprint, the policy and practice of teacher training will be diversified to cater for the teachers' professional needs. As discussed previously, among the intended shifts designed in the Blueprint is to transform teaching into the profession of choice in which the CPD for teachers will be upgraded. This includes the continuous efforts to improve the teaching profession in order to attract a highly professional human capital into the teaching sector (Jamil, 2014). In relation to the 21st century education, amongst the topics to be covered in professional development is the dissemination of the new curriculum and new pedagogies to the teachers. All of these can be achieved through professional development or PLC. The transfer of knowledge from SISC+ to the teachers as well as the sharing of information among the teachers will expedite the process of transformation.

For the best outcome of the professional development, it is best to be delivered in the context of the teacher's subject area because the teachers need to be working

with the content they teach. Thus, through coaching and mentoring provided by the coaches (SISC+) we might see the changes in the teaching practice as demonstrated by the teachers (coachees). The individualised CPD program has been introduced to all teachers, in which there are predetermined training sessions required to be taken by all teachers and a selection of training that teachers can pursue out of their own interests. It is derived from various sources beyond formal training, such as workshops, seminars, monitoring, reflection, observation and performance of activities, each of which, is leading teachers towards the use of new methods, techniques and approaches in their practice. This policy of teacher's CPD embarks upon a holistic concept of teacher professional development which takes into account the position and role of subjective factors in teachers' learning process (Avalos, 2011) and the context in which the professional development occurs (Borko, 2004). For teachers who find the CPD courses irrelevant to their practices (Petras et al. 2012), this may be a worthwhile solution to the problem. This transformation of the CPD concept and policy for teachers helps to empower teachers to decide what they want to learn and improve. In conclusion, the review of professional development provides insight to see how coaching and mentoring serves as an essential source of support.

2.7 Concluding remarks for Chapter 2

In encapsulation, the review of the theories and models on coaching and mentoring aims at highlighting all the relevant tenets and notions that underpin this study. The researcher has also provided information about the poor performance of schools in Malaysia at international levels through PISA and TIMSS. Besides, the literature pertaining to coaching and mentoring by SISC+ presented in this chapter provides clarity and foundation to the whole research. This information are significant

because the existence of SISC+ is one of the strategies employed by the Ministry of Education to uphold the performance of the standard of education in Malaysia. The next chapter continues with a description of the methodology used in the study.

