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### **Schooling for success / Liz Hall**

Describes a study on coaching head teachers in Israel

Coaching can help head teachers translate their knowledge about education into practical skills, says research in Israel.

Coaching, as opposed to mentoring, is the ideal way to help head teachers to develop the management skills they lack, says the study of 30 head teachers in Israel.

“Head teachers of educational organizations reported feelings of isolation...they are in need of management skills, the kind they didn't acquire during their early training days as teachers. Coaching offers a solution for the translation of knowledge to practical skills,” says the report.

The research was carried out in Israel by Gilli Beskin, a doctoral student at the University of Derby's Faculty of Education and senior coach with the KATOM Institute. She said the quality of learning outcomes had dropped over the last decade in Israel and Ministry of Education attempts to address this has not yet achieved much. “The slide in learning outcomes quality has steadily continued in spite of the fact that Israeli students study more "school days" than their European and American counterparts.”

“We feel and the study's results indicate that the solution is coaching, not mentoring. Coaching practice requires different skills than mentoring practice,” said Beskin.

Commenting on the research, Shaun Lincoln, programme director, coaching and action learning at the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, which works closely with a number of further education institutions in the UK, agreed that coaching can be a huge addition in education.

He said: “The people management side of things often gets neglected by head teachers and coaching is a way to return to listening to people. It can help them formalize all the excellent stuff which they often leave behind in the classroom.”

“Coaching reminds people of things they use in different situations. It’s actionable awareness,” he said.

Beskin’s report identified the need to define a common clear vision from which to define goals and objectives, along with the need to improve managerial skills such as time management and team leading.

Beskin carried out the research under the supervision of Professor Michael Kreindler, part of the University of Derby’s Faculty of Education and founder of Karmiel College, a post graduate training facility in Israel.

Of the 30 head teachers who participated in the research, 14 had undergone coaching and 16 of were interested in using coaching in the future, either for themselves or for other employees.

The definition of coaches that emerged was: “professional facilitators of learning, someone who works with the “coachee” to bring out what is latent but not being effectively used to achieve his or her vision.”