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Elementary-Level Instructional Coaches' Perspectives on Roles and Teacher Effectiveness

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Ed.S, Georgia Southwestern State University 2011

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Instructional coaches help improve teacher effectiveness to ultimately help improve

student performance. The roles of instructional coaches often vary depending on the

leadership or recent trends of a school district. This inconsistency impedes the

instructional coach's ability to improve teacher effectiveness. The purpose of this basic

qualitative study was to explore elementary-level Title I instructional coaches'

perspectives on their roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness.

Organizational role theory served as the conceptual framework for this study. This study

consisted of a convenience sampling of 7 Title I instructional coaches in one school

district in a Southern state. The research questions were used to identify instructional

coaches' perspectives on their roles and how their roles improved teacher effectiveness.

Qualitative data were collected using semistructured interviews. All data were analyzed

thematically using open and axial coding. The interpretation of the findings revealed how

instructional coaches perceive their role to be a classroom supporter; however, the

participants also found that their roles are undefined and inconsistent compared to those

of other instructional coaches in their school district. This study contributes to positive

social change by providing instructional coaches and school leaders a common language

on the roles of instructional coaches. Administrators can use the findings from the study

to create a job description including clear expectations on instructional coaches' roles.

Classroom teachers will benefit by becoming more effective educators through the work

with the instructional coach and students will benefit academically by having a more

effective teacher. This will change the role of the instructional coach by providing clear

expectations.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my incredibly supportive family. I would not have been able to complete this work without my husband's continuous optimism and encouragement to persevere through the process, my parents, sister and in-laws for always being willing to watch my children so I could write, and my children for reminding me that I need to be an example for them by finishing what I started. This labor of love was a challenge of determination and resilience; however, it has made me a better researcher and educator.

Philippians 4:13

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To my husband: for always being my rock and source of positive energy. Your optimism and continued belief in me were the fuel that keeps me going. Love you!

To my children: for being my light. I look at your two and beam with joy. Thank you for being so patient with me while I was working. This is for us.

To my parents: for always being willing to help in any way. From watching the kids to being a listening ear, you guys are always my support.

To my family: for being so supportive. Family is everything. I would not have been able to do any of this without my village.

To my principals and mentors: for modeling how to be a great leader. Thank you for your support.

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To Dr. Longo and Dr. Edwards: for guiding me through this process and providing feedback when needed.

To Walden University: for honoring me, as the 2015 Georgia Teacher of the Year, with a scholarship to their institution. It has been an incredible blessing to continue my education through this rigorous program. I believe the best gift we can give our students is continuous self-reflection and professional growth. When we are able to self-reflect, we are able to learn how to support and build relationships with students more effectively.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The focus of this study was to explore elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how their roles improved teacher effectiveness. Since the accountability measures of the No Child Left Behind legislation, federal mandates were implemented. These mandates required schools across the nation to strengthen teaching and learning. Schools in a Southern state in the United States were ranked by their College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) score to reflect how well their school was performing. At the elementary level, the following areas determined a school's CCRPI score: content mastery, progress, closing gaps, and readiness. Combined, these four areas yielded a maximum score of 100 points. Achieving 100 points reflected exemplary performance. Research suggested that the quality of teacher effectiveness was a critical component of student achievement (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015). Many school districts hired instructional coaches to work with classroom teachers (Walkowiak, 2016). While schools were rated using CCRPI scores, classroom teachers were evaluated using a tool known as the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). Because of the correlation between teacher effectiveness and student achievement, and the serious ramifications of CCRPI scores, many Title I schools in a suburban school district in the research state hired instructional coaches to improve teacher performance. Exploring elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness served as the foundation for this study.

The purpose of this study was to address the gap in practice regarding elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness. Jablon and Dombro (2015) explained that there is a gap in the research on the roles of instructional coaches because these roles are inconsistent and vary across the states. Artigliere and Baecher (2016) shared a gap in the literature on understanding instructional coaching roles and how they can support teachers with different needs. Reinke and Herman (2014) explained how instructional coaching could improve teacher effectiveness when coaches are given specific instructions and ample time to work with teachers; however, without consistent roles, instructional coaches are less effective in supporting teachers (Kane & Rosenquist, 2018). Studying this problem may provide principals, instructional coaches, and school districts a better understanding of instructional coaches' roles and the roles that improve teacher effectiveness. This study was exploring the gap in practice and the gap in literature on the roles of instructional coaches.

In Chapter 1, I will further explain the background of instructional coaching, the purpose of my study, and the problem that exists within instructional coaching. The research questions will be shared with an explanation of the conceptual framework and nature of the study. Definitions for unknown or unfamiliar terms will be provided. Chapter 1 will also include an explanation of the assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations.

Background

Increased requirements for student achievement have necessitated the hiring of instructional coaches. A brief historical overview of federal educational mandates that initiated the instructional coaching phenomenon begins with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) created under President Johnson's administration in 1965. This act was part of President Johnson's Civil Rights legislation and was designed to help provide educational equity for impoverished children (Wardlow, 2016). Over the years, ESEA evolved to include equity amongst other at-risk populations including migrant and neglected children. In 1988, ESEA added an accountability component that required schools to assess student achievement and report their effectiveness. Under President Bush, ESEA was reauthorized in 2002, and became known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Under this act, schools were required to demonstrate that all students were proficient in mathematics and reading (as evidenced by standardized assessments) by 2014. In 2011, states were allowed to apply for waivers that lessened mandates deemed by NCLB. In 2014, states were required to adopt the CCPRI standards. In December 2015, ESEA was reauthorized as Every Student Succeeds Act. This reauthorization gave much of the decision-making power back to the states; however, states were required to assess student performance in Grades 3-8 and publish their report cards showing student achievement. States were also given more control in the creation of their teacher evaluation systems (Wardlow, 2016). Educational leaders questioned how they could improve teacher effectiveness. The approach used by

many schools to improve teacher effectiveness was the implementation of instructional coaches (Knight, 2016).

Although more instructional coaches are now being hired, the position is not a new concept. Joyce and Showers (1983) researched the concept of peer collaboration and support in the form of coaching in the 1980s. Coaching is a collegial approach to improving instruction by creating a curriculum and setting goals (Joyce & Showers, 1981). Two years later, Joyce and Showers (1983) further defined the coaching process by explaining the importance of collaboration and feedback. After extensive research, Joyce and Showers (1996) published documents explaining the ineffectiveness of traditional professional development models compared to the effectiveness of peer coaching. Peer coaching was the seminal process of teachers observing one another and providing support and feedback. Their research noted that many teachers did not implement or apply the learning they received in a traditional setting; however, peer coaching allowed teachers the opportunity to apply learning consistently (Joyce & Showers, 1996).

Another name associated with extensive studies on the improvement of instructional coaching is Knight (2007) at the University of Kansas. Instructional coaches improve teacher practice and student learning by providing foundational support to teachers (Knight, 2010). Knight (2011) explained how the instructional coach helps teachers improve in vast areas within instruction including classroom management and the creation of formative assessments. The instructional coaching process helps improve the teachers' overall effectiveness (Knight, 2018).

Strong (2018) explained how teacher effectiveness is an obscure concept due to the definition being subjective. Some define teacher effectiveness according to student achievement, whereas others base effectiveness on administrator observations. The Intensive Partnership for Effective Teaching completed a study at seven sites across the nation and found that measures of teacher effectiveness included a classroom observation rating and a measure of student achievement growth (Garrett & Steinberg, 2015). Classroom observations are used to provide instructional support and serve as a means to assess performance (Garrett & Steinberg, 2015).

Instructional coaches exist to support teachers and positively influence student achievement (Knight, 2018). In this study, I addressed the gap in research about the practice of elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness. A national survey of literacy coaches shared the many different titles and responsibilities of literacy coaches including resource provider, collaborator, and supporter (Bean et al., 2015). Instructional coaching roles are not clear to the instructional coach or consistent; therefore, the coach's ability to improve teacher effectiveness is lessened (Woulfin & Rigby, 2017). There is a need for this study because elementary-level instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and their impact on teacher effectiveness should be understood. Results from this study can help inform more elementary instructional coaches and better prepare them to improve teacher effectiveness. This research could inform administrators, professional development leaders, and central office personnel on elementary-level instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles and how these roles improve teacher effectiveness. This

knowledge may help provide clearer expectations for instructional coaches' roles and may also show how instructional coaching improves teacher effectiveness.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this study concerns the inconsistent instructional coaching roles (Morel, 2014) in a school district within a Southern state. The inconsistency of elementary-level instructional coaches' roles impedes the instructional coach's ability to increase teacher effectiveness (Mudzimiri, Burroughs, Leubeck, Sutton, & Yopp, 2014). When instructional coaches do not understand their roles, they struggle to support teachers (Kane & Rosenquist, 2018). Although many school districts and schools employ instructional coaches, Neumerski (2013) and Wolpert-Gawron (2016) explained that the roles are not consistent within the coaching field. Desimone and Pak (2017) explained how instructional coaches are less effective in supporting teachers when they do not have clear expectations of their roles. When instructional coaches have clear roles, their support can improve teaching effectiveness and increase student performance (Tanner, Quintis, & Gamboa, 2017).

There is little research stating the specific roles of instructional coaches (Tanner et al., 2017), and almost no research specifically addressing the perspectives on instructional coaches' roles according to instructional coaches (Calo, Sturtevant, & Kopfman, 2015). This basic qualitative study addressed the gap in the literature about the practice on instructional coaches' roles and may contribute to the body of knowledge on instructional coaching by exploring elementary-level instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles and how these roles improve teacher effectiveness.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to explore elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness. The University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning, Learning Forward, and Public Impact (2016) noted that instructional coaches need specific roles to help them stay focused on their purpose of improving teacher effectiveness. My research addressed the gap in the literature about the practice regarding elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles and the roles that improved teacher effectiveness. The knowledge gained through my study may assist principals, instructional coaches, and school districts to describe the roles of instructional coaches and the roles that improve teacher effectiveness. The study took place at seven elementary schools in a school district in a Southern state. I used a basic qualitative design consisting of seven semistructured interviews to gather information regarding the phenomenon of elementary-level instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles and how these roles improve teacher effectiveness. Thematic analysis was used to determine themes within the data. To help minimize biases, a research journal was used to document reflections, decisions, and questions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- RQ1: What are elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles?

- RQ2: How do elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perceived roles improve teacher effectiveness?

Conceptual Framework

Instructional coaches are tasked with the responsibility of helping teachers become more effective in their practice so students can become more successful (Knight, 2018). An instructional coach is a person who partners with teachers to help him or her become more effective (Knight, 2007). Instructional coaches serve in many capacities. Bean and Ippolito (2016) explained how some instructional coaches support teachers in a one-on-one capacity, whereas other coaches focused more on planning whole group professional learning opportunities. Bean and Ippolito continued to explain how instructional coaches could become inundated with the managerial tasks of organizing and facilitating assessments or gathering and organizing materials. Defining the roles of the instructional coach is often inconsistent because some instructional coaches serve as consultants, but others may be more of a facilitator of strategies (Morel, 2014).

Organizational role theory served as the conceptual framework for this study. Katz and Kahn (1978) developed organizational role theory based on the premise that employees enact specific roles in their organization in order to perform their required tasks effectively. Huse (1980) defined a role in an organization as "the set of activities that the individual is expected to perform and constitutes a psychological linkage between the individual and the organization" (p. 53). An organization is a network of employees enacting specific roles that they are expected or required to perform (Katz & Kahn, 1978). For an organization to perform effectively, the roles must be clearly

communicated to the employee and accepted by the employee (Katz & Kahn, 1978). In the school setting, instructional coaches are given roles and responsibilities by their administrator and school leaders.

Organizational role theory has four basic assumptions associated with role-taking, role-consensus, role-compliance, and role-conflict (Parker & Wickham, 2007). Role-taking assumes that the employee will accept the role given to them by their employer. Role-consensus assumes there is an understanding of the expectations and roles between the employee and employer. Role-compliance assumes the employee will adhere to the specific and consistent roles outlined by the employer. Role-conflict assumes conflict will occur when the expectations of one role conflict with another role (Parker & Wickham, 2007).

Organizational role theory served as the foundation for the two research questions. The first research question referred to the instructional coach's perspective on the roles of instructional coaches. The second research question referred to the instructional coach's perspective on the roles that improve teacher effectiveness. The development of the interview protocol was created from the two assumptions of organizational role theory: role-taking and role-compliance. The basic qualitative approach was most appropriate for the study, because the interviews provided an opportunity to understand participants' perspectives on their roles and their experiences with role-taking and role-compliance. The data were thematically analyzed to determine if themes existed in relation to the framework.

Nature of the Study

Through my research, I conducted a basic qualitative study to explore elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained,

A basic qualitative study would be interested in (1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences. (p. 24)

A purposeful sample of seven instructional coaches participated in one open-ended interview. Each interview was audio recorded to ensure accuracy in their responses in regard to my notes. Interview data were transcribed using NVivo software. Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, and Terry's (2019) six-phase guide was used to analyze data thematically. The six-phases of thematic analysis are (a) familiarization of data, (b) generating codes, (c) determining themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) writing the report. All data were analyzed using open coding and axial coding. Member checking was used to increase the credibility and validity of the data. After collecting and analyzing the data, the results were presented in a two-page summary.

Definitions

The following definitions are listed to provide a consistent understanding of terms used throughout the study. Each term is defined from educational research.

Effective feedback: Feedback that specifies which strategies a teacher does well, which strategies a teacher could improve upon, and which strategies a teacher could implement into their lessons (Marzano & Simms, 2013).

Instructional coach: A person who partners with teachers to help improve classroom instruction by providing professional development, utilizing research-based instructional practices, modeling instructional strategies, co-teaching, observing teaching, and providing timely feedback on performance (Knight, 2007).

Nonevaluative feedback: Feedback that helps teachers realize and improve their instructional weaknesses in a confidential and supportive environment (Marzano & Simms, 2013).

Peer coaching: Teachers coaching one another to implement new teaching strategies (Joyce & Showers, 1996).

Professional learning community: An ongoing collaborative process in which teachers analyze data and conduct action research to meet the needs of all students (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, & Mattos, 2016).

Teacher effectiveness: For this study, effectiveness is measured by how well a teacher scores on their TKES evaluation. A score of IV or III indicates that teachers are proficient, while a score of II or I indicates that they are not effective (Department of Education, 2018).

Teacher Keys Effectiveness System: "A common evaluation system designed for building teacher effectiveness and ensuring consistency and comparability throughout the state" (Department of Education, 2018).

Assumptions

Creswell (2018) explained how researchers must be aware of their assumptions, because these assumptions can shape the research questions and how the researcher approaches the research. The important assumption in my study was that instructional coaches would answer the interview questions honestly. This assumption was necessary because the responses provided by the participants were used for data analysis.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of my study was on the perspectives of elementary-level Title I instructional coaches on their roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness in one school district in a Southern state. This focus was chosen due to a school district's focus on employing instructional coaches in Title I schools. Seven instructional coaches were interviewed in a school district in a Southern state. Students, teachers, or administrators were excluded from this study, because the focus of the study was on instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how the roles improved teacher effectiveness. Organization role theory was most appropriate for this study because it explained how individuals perform a role based on their expectations (Biddle, 1986). The sociocultural theory of andragogy was not an appropriate framework for this study because this study was centered on perspectives of roles rather than an understanding of how adults learn (Finn, 2011). Knight's (2010) partnership philosophy was also not appropriate for this study, because this study was focused on the instructional coaching roles rather than identifying the instructional coaching process.

My study was not intended to determine whether instructional coaches were effective in their role as an instructional coach; rather, my research was focused on understanding instructional coaches' perspectives on their role and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness. The results may be useful in informing instructional coaches, administrators, and district leaders on instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles. To establish transferability of the findings, thick description of the data collection process and the research setting were completed.

Limitations

The findings and conclusions were based on the perspectives of seven elementary-level instructional coaches. The convenience sample of seven Title I instructional coaches limited the transferability of the research; however, the thick description provided a detailed account of the research to help minimize the limitations (Anney, 2014). As a former instructional coach, I was vigilant about potential confirmation bias. Confirmation bias is when the researcher has a preconceived belief and uses the data to confirm or support his or her belief (Sarniak, 2015). To minimize confirmation bias, I challenged my beliefs and reevaluated my impressions by documenting ideas in my research journal. To address possible biases, each participant took part in a semistructured interview that allowed me to better analyze participant perspectives. I also used member checking to ensure that data were accurate.

Significance

My research may provide a deeper understanding of elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improve teacher

effectiveness. Educators considering the job of an instructional coach may benefit from this research because they may have a clearer understanding of the roles of an instructional coach (Artigliere & Baecher, 2016). As instructional coaches improve their ability to understand and ultimately complete their roles, they may be able to help increase teacher effectiveness (Tanner et al., 2017). My study may contribute to social change by changing the perception of the roles of instructional coaches. The instructional coaches, administrators, and teachers would benefit from this change. The greatest benefit would be in the improvement of teacher performance through the guidance and support of their instructional coach.

Summary

Instructional coaches are responsible for helping improve teacher effectiveness. The focus of this study was to explore instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness. For this basic qualitative study, semistructured interviews played a vital role in gathering data to help answer the research questions addressing instructional coaches' perspectives. The data collected were analyzed to determine codes and themes within the interviews.

In Chapter 1 of this study, I explained the purpose of the study and emphasized how instructional coaching is useful in today's schools. The conceptual framework of organization role theory was explained as the foundation for my research questions. I provided definitions of key concepts and clarified assumptions. The focus of the study was expressed in addition to the delimitations and limitations. Finally, I explained the

significance of this research and how the research could create positive social change by helping to improve teacher effectiveness.

The following chapter consists of the literature review. The literature review begins with an explanation of the position of an instructional coach and how researchers have defined the roles. While completing my review of the literature, I found a gap in practice and in the literature on identifying consistent definitions of the roles of instructional coaches and the roles that improve teacher effectiveness.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to explore elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness. The problem addressed in this study was that the inconsistency of instructional coaches' roles hinders their ability to increase teacher effectiveness (Mudzimiri et al., 2014). The knowledge gained through this study may help instructional coaches better prepare for their roles.

Killion (2017), a senior advisor to Learning Forward located in Oxford, Ohio, explained how coaching helps improve teacher performance and student achievement. Instructional coaches help teachers by providing feedback with strategies to increase effectiveness (Spelman, Bell, Thomas, & Briody, 2016). Mangin and Dunsmore (2015) noted how instructional coaches have expressed frustration on not having consistent roles as an instructional coach and how their roles vary on the support they are provided by their administrator. Instructional coaches are often tasked with additional duties including tutoring and substitute teaching (Kane & Rosenquist, 2018). There is a gap in research regarding the lack of consistency in understanding the role of the instructional coach (Heineke & Polnick, 2013).

In the following section, I describe the iterative search process used to locate research on instructional coaching, instructional coaching roles, challenges of instructional coaching, and teacher effectiveness. Primary writings of key theorists and researchers will be synthesized and key concepts will be reviewed and explained.

Literature Search Strategy

A majority of the research I review in this chapter was completed between 2016 and 2019. Some of the references are older; however, they were only used due to their significance to the study. The following are some of the key terms used during the literature search: *instructional coaching, instructional coach, teacher effectiveness, exemplary teaching, student achievement, professional learning,* and *organizational role theory.* I used a variety of research databases from Walden University's online library, including Education Research Complete, Educational Resource Informational Center, ERIC, ProQuest, and SAGE Journal Online. Each database was used and each of the key terms were utilized to find information on the perspectives of instructional coaches and their roles.

During the literature search in Education Research Complete, the term *teacher effectiveness* was narrowed to *exemplary teaching*. Educational Resource Information Center had literature on instructional coaching and the search was narrowed to *instructional coach*. The main key terms used with ERIC, ProQuest, and SAGE Journal Online were *instructional coaching, instructional coach, teacher effectiveness,* and *organizational role theory*. Additionally, there was little research on how instructional coaches improve teacher effectiveness.

Conceptual Framework

School leaders are utilizing instructional experts to help improve student performance (Nappi, 2014). Instructional coaches are able to support achievement by reinforcing rigorous instruction and assessment that is appropriate for the learners while

also aligning to the administrator's goals (Medrich & Charner, 2017a). However, the roles of instructional coaches vary from school to school based on the school or administrator's needs (Tanner et al., 2017). This study explored instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness.

I used organizational role theory as the conceptual framework for this study. Organizational role theory is a framework that defines how individuals behave in social situations (Huse, 1980). This theory was developed in the 1960s to gain knowledge on how the workplace affects the physical and mental state of employees and how these states influence behavior (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Katz and Kahn (1978) further explained how organizations were comprised of employees enacting specific roles that are "expected" and "required" by the organization. For this study, the workplace is the instructional coaches' school within the district and the organization is the district's administration. Huse (1980) explained how a role is the totality of expectations placed on a person by another. Within the school setting, roles are the activities or responsibilities an individual is expected to perform according to the organization (Huse, 1980). Rogers and Molnar (1976) noted how a person performing a certain role is expected to carry out the appropriate tasks and make decisions appropriate to the role. Biddle (1986) suggested that people are social actors motivated by their social identities and believed expectations. For instructional coaches, the activities or responsibilities and decisions are determined by the administrator's expectations appropriate to their role. Katz and Kahn (1978) explained how the employer sends or explains the role to the employee based on their perceptions of what their role should be.

The employee then receives the role; however, the perceived role is based on the employee's perspectives on what the employer shared.

Organizational role theory has four basic assumptions associated with role taking, role-consensus, role- compliance, and role conflict (Parker & Wickham, 2007). The role-taking assumption is centered on an individual "taking" the role that is given to them by their employer (Biddle, 1986). In the organizational setting the employer assumes the employee is accepting or "taking" the role once they are hired (Katz & Kahn, 1978). For this study, the role taker is the qualified teacher who accepted the role of the instructional coach. The role taken by the employee can be experienced differently or perceived differently than how the employer explained the role (Katz & Kahn, 1978); therefore, role consensus may not be consistent (Parker & Wickham, 2007). The second assumption of role-consensus is between the employer and the employee (Parker & Wickham, 2007). Biddle (1986) explained that role-consensus reinforces the commonly held norms of an organization's culture. The organization's norms for this study would be outlined by each building principal where the instructional coach was employed. The third assumption is role-compliance. This assumption states that the roles are clearly defined and followed by the employee (Parker & Wickham, 2007). The roles are often listed in the job description. The final assumption is role conflict. Role conflict takes place when an employee understands the expectations but is unable to fulfill the roles (Huse, 1980). Ebbers and Wijnberg (2017) explained that role conflict occurs when employees are given inconsistent or conflicting roles or demands. Role conflict causes similar effects as role ambiguity, including low job satisfaction, increased stress, low

self-confidence, and a sense of uselessness (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Huse (1980) explained how decreasing role conflict could help employees work more effectively and improve their job satisfaction.

For the purpose of this study, I only used role-taking and role-compliance assumptions from the framework to answer the research questions. The framework of organizational role theory benefited the study by providing a foundation on the importance of instructional coaching roles being understood and performed according to the expectations outlined by administration. The framework also informed the development of the interview protocol, which included questions centered on role-taking and role-compliance. The data collected through interviews were thematically analyzed.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variable

Instructional Coaching

Heineke and Polnick (2013) explained how more schools are using instructional coaches due to the increase of school accountability. To meet the demands of improving student achievement, many initiatives regarding educational reforms have focused on improving teacher quality (Huguet, Marsh, & Farrell, 2014; Wilder, 2014; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017;). One method of meeting this challenge has been to hire instructional coaches to spur changes in teaching and learning (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Walkowiak, 2016). Instructional coaches serve as specialists focused on improving teacher instruction (Teemant & Berghoff, 2014). Anderson and Wallin (2018) explained how some instructional coaches work in the school district's central office and visit schools a few times a month, whereas other instructional coaches work in the schools and provide

more intimate support to the teachers. Schools are providing high-quality professional learning for teachers through the work of instructional coaches (Heineke & Polnick, 2013). Lowenhaupt, McKinney, and Reeves (2014) noted that instructional coaching has been used to increase student achievement by improving teaching strategies in the United States.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (2011) explained how coaching is a relationship-based process geared to helping a teacher improve his or her skills by focusing on goal-setting and achievement. Joyce and Showers (1996) explained how the need for instructional coaches evolved in 1970 from the national movements to improve instruction. The traditional forms of professional development were not creating results with teacher effectiveness or student achievement. Joyce and Showers (1981) found that modeling, practice, and feedback were necessary for teachers to improve their practice; therefore, coaching was birthed.

The roles of the instructional coach are often found in the job description created by the school district or school (Knight, 2010). Often, instructional coaches help teachers reflect upon their strengths and weaknesses, analyze student data, and determine next steps to improve student performance (Bean & Ippolito, 2016). Instructional coaches can make an impact with teacher instruction and student learning (Knight, 2016). Instructional coaching helps provide differentiated support to teachers where teachers can learn to implement research-based instructional practices into their daily lessons (Devine, Houssemand, & Meyers, 2013).

The University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning, Learning Forward, and Public Impact (2016) collaborated to create *Coaching for Impact*, which broadly defines coaching as professional support, taking place in the classroom, which helps teachers become more effective in lesson planning, self-reflection, and data analysis. Sailors and Price (2015) explained, through their study on a coaching model used to improve reading instruction and reading achievement, how teachers need time and concentrated support from the instructional coach to improve upon their practices. Marzano and Simms (2013) highlighted five main goals of coaching which include: (a) helping teachers improve in their teaching practices, (b) providing examples of exemplar teaching, (c) supporting teachers to maintain effective teaching, (d) helping teachers achieve consistency, and (e) allowing teachers opportunities to take risks. These goals help coaches determine how they can further support teachers.

The Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching, in addition to three other authors, explained how instructional coaching should be nonevaluative and confidential and all activities should be focused on helping teachers become more effective in high-quality instructional practices (Medrich & Charner, 2017b). Knight (2018) noted that effective instructional coaches treat teachers with respect and consideration. These coaches use the Partnership Principles as their professional guide on how they should approach their role as an instructional coach. The Partnership Principle is a philosophy of coaching that allows the teacher to be the ultimate decision maker. Knight (2018) explained the seven Partnership Principles as follows:

1. Equality – Instructional coach and teacher work together to share ideas and make decisions.

2. Choice – Instructional coach encourages the teacher to choose his or her own professional goals.

3. Voice – Instructional coach creates a safe environment where they can learn from the teacher, and where the teacher can share their concerns.

4. Dialogue – Instructional coach and teacher openly discuss ideas as partners.

5. Reflection – Instructional coach provides opportunities where the teacher can reflect on their practice by having reflective conversations.

6. Praxis – Instructional coach applies their knowledge and skill to ensure the coaching is meaningful and useful to teachers.

7. Reciprocity – Instructional coach shares in the learning process and grows from the instructional coaching experience.

Researchers found that instructional coaches help increase a teacher's awareness of best practices, and foster conversations that help teachers self-reflect on their practice and determine next steps to improving student performance (Tanner et al., 2017). Bean and Ippolito (2016) explained that the goal of coaching is to improve student learning, which requires coaches to provide the very best educational experiences for all of its students by improving teacher practice. When the instructional coaching process is implemented appropriately, instructional coaches can improve teacher effectiveness and increase student performance (Anderson & Wallin, 2018).

Instructional Coaching Roles

Polly, Mraz, and Algozzine (2013) found that instructional coaches have the ability to improve teacher effectiveness when they have a clear understanding of their roles. Instructional coaches have been considered change agents whose influence may transform school culture (Aguilar, 2013; Wolpert-Gawron, 2016). Instructional coaches support teachers by listening to their concerns, keeping their relationship and conversations confidential, and providing instructional support as needed (Eisenberg, Eisenberg, Medrich, & Charner, 2017). Instructional coaches help encourage teachers to support the organization's vision and mission, which helps the overall school culture improve (Bean & Ippolito, 2016). Although there has been tremendous growth in the use of instructional coaches to improve student achievement, Rogers (2014) noted that few actual studies have been conducted to help educators better understand what instructional coaches should be doing, and how best it can be done.

Knight (2018) explained how instructional coaches should be using a coaching cycle of three stages: identify, learn, and improve. The first stage, identifying, is often done while the instructional coach and teacher watching a video of the teacher in action. As a team, the instructional coach and teacher determine the area in need of improvement (Bean & Ippolito, 2016). Next, the instructional coach helps the teacher "learn" strategies to help him or her strengthen the area of needed improvement. This can be done through sharing resources, modeling, co-teaching, and providing feedback (Knight, 2016). Finally, the strategies are implemented, and study data and/or self-reflections help the teacher realize their improvement (Knight, 2018).

Jablon et al. (2016) suggested a coach's role includes building an honest and respectful relationship with the teacher where goals can be created. The relationship is created through ongoing conferences and conversations on the teacher's needs (Hathaway et al., 2015). Killion and Harrison (2017) noted instructional coaches' roles could include mentor, data coach, learning facilitator, and instructional specialist. The role of mentor is often needed for new teachers to the profession because the instructional coach provides ongoing support and guidance (Knight, 2016). As the learning facilitator and content expert, the instructional coach provides resources and support to strengthen the teacher's performance (Bean & Ippolito, 2016). The data coach role helps teachers learn how to use their classroom data to create lesson plans (Wang, 2017). Knight (2016) explained that instructional coaches help teachers by providing instructional resources, planning collaboratively, giving feedback, and modeling lessons when appropriate. The literature has consistently discussed six roles of an instructional coach: (a) relationship building, (b) data coach, (c) classroom supporter, (d) mentor, (e) learning facilitator, and (f) school leader.

Relationship builder. The most common instructional coach role found throughout the literature is building relationships (Anderson & Wallin, 2018). Relationship building starts with the instructional coach earning the teacher's trust (Walkowiak, 2016). Building trust with teachers is vital for the coaching process to be successful (Knight, 2018). Aguilar (2013) suggested 10 ways an instructional coach can build trust: (a) plan and prepare meetings, (b) cautiously gather background information on the teacher, (c) establish confidentiality, (d) listen without judgment, (e) ask questions,

(e) share personal connections, (f) validate the teacher's experiences, (g) be open about who you are and what you do, (h) ask permission to coach, and (i) keep commitments. Building trust helps teachers feel more comfortable taking risks in the classroom. (Lowenhaupt, et al., 2014).

Planning and preparing for the meeting helps the instructional coach identify a clear reality of the teacher's performance (Knight, 2018). The coach collaborates with the teacher to determine a convenient time for them to meet (Foltos, 2015). Once a meeting time is set, the instructional coach begins gathering background information on the teacher by video recording the teacher during a lesson (Knight, 2018). Being recorded can cause some teachers to feel a sense of vulnerability (Knight, 2007). It is imperative for the instructional coach to create an environment of trust, support, and confidentiality (Eisenberg et al., 2017). A supportive environment is established by the instructional coach having a nonjudgmental approach to the conversations and feedback (Lowenhaupt et al., 2014). The instructional coach prepares reflective questions that guide the teacher through the self-reflection process (Knight, 2018). Additionally, the instructional coaching and teacher relationship is strengthened when the instructional coach finds opportunities to share their personal experiences of teaching (Thomas, Bell, Spelman, & Briody, 2015) as a part of a supportive environment. These shared personal experiences coupled with effective communication can result teachers experiencing validation of their beliefs and being understood by the instructional coach (Walkowiak, 2016). This honest relationship includes the instructional coach being forthcoming on their plans of working with the teacher (Tanner et al., 2017). The instructional coach can

then ask the teacher if they agree to working, as a team, towards achieving a specific goal (Aguilar, 2013). This commitment is sealed by the instructional coach consistently working with the teacher through the coaching cycle of identifying the problem, learning how to improve, and applying strategies to improve overall effectiveness in the classroom (Knight, 2018).

Instructional coaches build a relationship with their teachers by providing support, actively listening, and encouraging teachers to reflect (Sanstead, 2016). Pletcher (2015) noted instructional coaches build trust with teachers by not sharing the teacher observations and discussions with administrators. Medrich and Charner (2017a) noted how coaching conversations are most effective when teachers are guaranteed confidentiality and given opportunities for self-reflection. Gurgur (2017) found instructional coaching conversations were most effective when the coach was a guide rather than an enforcer of rules or ideals. Instructional coaches can help teachers realize their potential by first building a trusting relationship then by motivating teachers to implement strategies that could improve their instruction (Jablon et al., 2016). Coaches can also build relationships by inquiring about the teacher's personal life and sharing challenges the coach experienced while in the classroom (Walkowiak, 2016). Once positive relationships are created, a domino effect can occur with other teachers (Pletcher, 2015). When an instructional coach is able to build trust with teachers, the teacher is more willing to collaborate with the coach (Knight, 2018).

Data coach. Researchers found that teachers understand the purpose of data; however, they struggle to understand how to use data to make instructional decisions

(Huguet et al., 2014; Polly et al., 2013). One of the best uses of an instructional coach's time is helping teachers make instructional decisions based on data (Anderson & Wallin, 2018). Researchers discussed how instructional coaches could help mediate a teacher's response to data. The skill of data analysis was taught, modeled, and then supported by the instructional coach. (Marsh, Bertrand, & Huguet, 2015). The instructional coach teaches the educator how to analyze data and use the data to make instructional decisions (Range, Pijanowski, Duncan, Scherz, & Hvidston, 2014). Huguet et al. (2014) explained:

> Coaches are in a position to affect teacher practice on a wide scale. With an increased demand for teachers to use data to guide their instruction, coaches are a potential lifeline to building requisite skills and knowledge that help teachers access, interpret, and respond to data in ways that yield improvements in teaching and learning (p.21).

Instructional coaches help teachers use data to create measurable professional goals (Knight, 2018). Teachers use observation notes, anecdotal notes, common assessments, student work samples, and standardized assessments to help them make informed decisions on how their students are performing and areas where they could improve within their instruction (Williams, 2013). Formative assessments are analyzed to help teachers monitor student progress, provide feedback, and create lesson plans (Bean & Ippolito, 2016). DuFour et al. (2016) shared the importance of teachers analyzing data in a collaborative setting. The collaborative meeting should be centered on discussing effective interventions and strategies to support learning and how to modify learning when appropriate.

Classroom supporter. Instructional coaches provide learning opportunities to strengthen the instructional practices performed by teachers (Devine et al., 2013). The learning opportunities can be in the form of one-on-one coaching or small group coaching (Knight, 2018). The one-on-one approach to instructional coaching helps tailor support to meet the needs of the specific teacher (Desimone & Pak, 2017). Joyce and Showers (1981) found that one-to-one coaching was much more effective than traditional professional development, because teachers were able to practice and implement the strategies with support of a peer, which is absent in traditional professional development. Ma, Xin, and Du (2018) explained how teachers receiving support from a peer significantly helps teachers improve their performance. Instructional coaching helps teachers transfer what they learn in the coaching setting into the classroom (Joyce & Showers, 1996).

Medrich and Charner (2017a) noted teachers working with an instructional coach reported improving their performance and using more research-based strategies due to the instructional coach's feedback and guidance. Instructional coaches must have a deep knowledge on strategies that can help improve student learning (Knight, 2016). It is vital for instructional coaches to be proficient in past and current pedagogical knowledge to fully support all teachers (Johnson, 2016). Instructional coaches provide curricular and classroom management resources for teachers (Desimone & Pak, 2017). The resources can include teaching strategies, current research on best practices, and new techniques that will help improve the teacher's performance (Range et al., 2014). The teachers use the resources to help improve their areas of weakness (Tanner et al., 2017). The

curricular and classroom management resources, provided by the instructional coach, can help teachers create lesson plans that meet the needs of all their students (Marzano & Simms, 2013). Instructional coaches share instructional strategies to support the teacher's professional improvement (Hathaway et al., 2015). Instructional coaching has a positive effect on the instructional practices of teachers by providing high quality professional development (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018; Piper & Zuilkowski, 2015).

Many instructional coaches perform teacher observations and then provide feedback on their performance (Knight, 2007). The teacher observation is a tool that helps coaches understand the strengths and weaknesses of a teacher's instructional practice. While the teacher is teaching, the instructional coach writes observation notes, which are shared with the teacher and are used to help determine goals the teacher would like to accomplish while working the coach (Aguilar, 2013). Instructional coaches should observe teachers in a nonevaluative environment (Jaquith, 2013). Feedback should be specific and honest to what has been seen through the observation (Marzano & Simms, 2013). Observations are grounded in a person's perspectives; therefore, Knight (2018) suggested using a checklist to help minimize the amount of biases. Marzano and Simms (2013) shared the importance of instructional coaches providing feedback to teachers in a timely manner that provides specific areas of growth.

Mentor. Russell (2015) explained how being a mentor is a distinct role of instructional coaches, because new teachers need guidance with their instructional strategies and overall professional knowledge. As a mentor, instructional coaches function in the capacity of helping new teachers, which includes anything pertaining to

instructional and classroom management strategies (Killion & Harrison, 2017). Mentors also support teachers that may not be new to the profession but are new teachers to the school (Chien, 2013). A mentor advises new teachers through difficult professional decisions, provides emotional support, and supports the teacher as they become acclimated to their new position (Artigliere & Baecher, 2016). Crossley and Silverman (2016) noted how mentors provide emotional support by build relationships with their mentees and by being trustworthy and sharing their insights. Mentoring is a collaborative process that requires the instructional coach and teacher to have honest conversations about the teacher's practice (Cramer, 2016). Instructional coaches can mentor teachers in different areas including but not limited to understanding how to engage students in the curriculum, differentiating lesson plans, and analyzing data to inform instruction (Callahan, 2016).

One way that instructional coaches support new teachers is through modeling lessons (Artigliere & Baecher, 2016; Hathaway et al., 2015). Stefaniak (2017) explained how modeling and scaffolding provide support for novice teachers in improving their skillset. Modeling is when a teacher or instructional coach shows an example of how to do a specific skill (Knight, 2007). Anderson and Wallin (2018) explained modeling can occur in two different ways. One way an instructional coach can model a lesson is during a professional development session where the lesson is simulated without students present. Another way modeling can occur, which is often more popular with teachers, is where the instructional coach models the lesson with the teacher's students. Instructional coaches must be strong teachers in order to model lessons and provide resources in

various instructional areas (Johnson, 2016). Marzano and Simms (2013) noted the importance of instructional coaches modeling how to teach a lesson, because modeling provides an authentic example to the teacher of what quality teaching should be. Sanstead (2016) added that modeling may not always go as planned; however, teachers benefit from seeing an instructional coach struggle, reflect, and reteach when needed. Hammond and Moore (2018) explained how instructional coaches modeling instructional strategies, observing lessons, and providing feedback helps to improve instructional practice. As a mentor, instructional coaches must cultivate a positive professional relationship with their mentee centered on research-based instructional strategies (Thomas et al., 2015).

Learning facilitator. As a learning facilitator, instructional coaches are tasked with creating and facilitating job-embedded, standards-based professional development according to the needs of the school and the teachers (Range et al., 2014). The professional development, provided by the coach, is determined by the administration team and school needs (Knight, 2007). Norman and Nordine (2016) explained how continual professional development, provided by the learning facilitator, could promote more effective instruction and improve student achievement. Ma et al. (2018) also added how learning facilitators could provide specific opportunities for teachers to develop proficiency within the curriculum, instruction, and assessment resulting in increasing student outcomes. When instructional coaches are cognizant of their role as learning facilitators, they can transfer their proficiency to the classroom teacher, resulting in positive student outcomes. Spelman et al. (2016) found that instructional coaches

providing consistent professional development created a positive impact on teacher performance evidenced by the increase in student achievement. Jacobs, Boardman, Potvin, and Wang (2018) noted instructional coaches could improve classroom instruction through professional development. Traditional professional development in a large group setting can be less effective than having an instructional coach come into the classroom and model appropriate instructional techniques that are tailored to meet the needs of a particular teacher (Knight, 2007). The instructional coach should support the interventions and strategies outlined by the administrator for positive impact to occur related to student and teacher performance (Devine et al., 2013). Teachers found the learning facilitator's professional development workshops to be meaningful and useful when the strategies taught are specific to the needs of the teacher (Bayar, 2014). Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, and Hardin (2014) found teachers were able to make greater improvements with differentiating classwork for students when specific professional development was provided. White, Howell Smith, Kunz, and Nugent (2015) investigated the effects of instructional coaching in science for rural science teachers. The teachers appreciated the professional development provided by the learning facilitator, because it helped change their perspectives on teaching.

Professional development is not restricted to the methods described in previous paragraphs. Many schools use professional learning communities as a professional-development opportunity for teachers (Williams, 2013). Instructional coaches serve as learning facilitators in the professional learning environment. Professional learning communities are ongoing collaborative teams that work towards improving student

achievement (DuFour et al., 2016). Williams (2013) noted how teachers feel more comfortable learning with a team or partner rather than learning in isolation. The teachers can work with their peers and the instructional coach on creating lesson plans and analyzing data to drive instruction (DuFour et al., 2016). When instructional coaches collaborate with principals to implement professional learning communities, teacher classroom practices and student learning can improve (Bean & Ippolito, 2016).

School leader. Instructional coaches are to think like leaders by considering the school's purpose in the instructional decisions (Bean & Ippolito, 2016). Coaches should work with the principal to create leadership teams and set goals for the school (Anderson & Wallin, 2018). The work of the instructional coach is challenging, because they must support teachers while following through with the goals established by administrators (Johnson, 2016). Having a growth mindset is crucial for an instructional coach to fulfill their role (Anderson & Wallin, 2018). Dweck (2015) explained the growth mindset, how someone perceives his or her abilities, plays a role in the person's ability to improve or achieve a certain goal. Instructional coaches are tasked with the challenge of motivating teacher and helping improve teacher effectiveness; therefore, they must first believe in their abilities to create positive change (Knight, 2016). Instructional coaches function as a positive force, focused on the vision of the school, and dedicated to making necessary improvements (Killion & Harrison, 2017). Coaches help serve as school leaders, by establishing and maintaining a culture of collaboration to improve instruction and student performance (Foltos, 2015). Instructional coaches are providers of information and resources for the school (Kurz, Reddy, & Glover, 2017). The instructional coach serves

as a liaison between county departments and the teachers by sharing information with the teachers from county meetings (Artigliere & Baecher, 2016). Instructional coaches are unique school leaders who are catalyst for change because they do not have formal authority over teachers (Bean & Ippolito, 2016).

Challenges of Instructional Coaching

Artigliere and Baecher (2016) discussed how the instructional coaching roles are inconsistent and need to be researched further in order to support instructional coaches more effectively. Coaches often lose sight of their purpose due to the amount of additional duties they are asked to perform outside of their coaching responsibilities (Anderson & Wallin, 2018). Heineke and Polnick (2013) found coaches served a myriad of roles including administrative tasks, administering tests, analyzing data, teaching students, and serving as a teacher resource. These inconsistent roles and expectations challenge the instructional coach's ability to increase teacher effectiveness (Aguilar, 2013). Heineke and Polnick (2013) explained how instructional coaches could experience conflict when an administrator asks them to evaluate a teacher's performance, because the coach's dynamic with the teacher changes from a supporter to an evaluator.

Jablon et al. (2016), consultants to early childhood instructional coaches, found instructional coaches were overwhelmed by the amount of people and programs they had to support. The instructional coaches became stressed by the lack of time allotted to complete their responsibilities and the need to continuously shift gears to new tasks. Kane and Rosenquist (2018) found school level instructional coaches spent less than half of their time working with teachers, because they were often given additional roles and

responsibilities including but not limited to being a substitute teacher, tutor, Title I

coordinator, or building assessment coordinator. Heineke and Polnick (2013) also found

that many of the responsibilities of instructional coaches would not be considered

instructional coaching.

Aguilar (2013) found most instructional coaches are chosen based on their own

teaching abilities; however, they were not clear on their roles as an instructional coach.

Research showed that the role of an instructional coach was often different than what he

or she had expected (Kane & Rosenquist, 2018). Instructional coaches find their work

challenging, because they are not familiar with the content area or are not prepared to

meet the needs of their mentee teachers (Aguilar, 2013). Lowenhaupt et al. (2014)

researched three different literacy coaches in a public school district. Each literacy coach

had a different level of experience and skill sets. When the county posted the job

description of the literacy coach on the county website the following roles were listed:

- Assist in identifying successful intervention strategies with struggling
  students;

- Demonstrate and model intervention strategies with struggling students for
  classroom teachers;

- Model the components of the Balanced Literacy framework in classrooms for
  classroom teachers;

- Provide technical support for professional learning communities in schools;

- Collect and analyze information on research-proven practices in Literacy;

- Submit weekly log to Literacy Specialist;

- Deliver school-based professional development as requested;

- Reinforce strategies that support Family Literacy; and

- Provide direct and ongoing support to teachers. (Lowenhaupt et al., 2014, p. 744)

The roles of each coach were dependent on what the principal felt was the school's greatest need at that time. One instructional coach served as a resource for helping teachers differentiate the instruction; whereas, another instructional coach implemented the Accelerated Reading Program within the school and supervised the reading program's success. In the conclusion of the study, the researchers found that the literacy coaches had numerous roles that were completely unrelated to their work as a literacy coach (Lowenhaupt et al., 2014).

Coaches need a structured schedule throughout the day to help eliminate the risks of the coach taking on too many roles and responsibilities, because those additional roles can weaken their effectiveness as a coach (Killion & Harrison, 2017). Kane and Rosenquist (2018) substantiated that it is difficult for instructional coaches to reach maximum capacity in improving student achievement when their time is limited because of miscellaneous tasks that rob the instructional coach's time of working with students. While the definition of instructional coaching has been inconsistent, Wolpert-Gawron (2016) explained how having inconsistent definitions on the roles for instructional coaches gives the instructional coach more flexibility in the work they do to support teachers and improve overall teacher performance. However, the Hanover Research Report (2015) emphasized the importance of instructional coaches having clearly

established non-evaluative roles to foster more effective and positive relationships between the teacher and instructional coach. The Hanover Report was created to support and train instructional coaches. This report was determined from interviews of instructional coaches conducted by a state educational agency and from available literature on instructional coaching.

Teacher Effectiveness

Harvard University Center for Education Policy Research (2019) concluded that teacher quality was the single most important factor for increasing student performance. Goldhaber (2016) noted how the Coleman study, which concluded that teacher quality was essential to helping students make academic gains, which is evident today. Teacher quality matters because it significantly influences student achievement (Goldhaber, 2016).

Loeb, Soland, and Fox (2014) found that effective teachers are effective regardless of the students they teach. Chetty, Friedman, and Rockoff (2014) reported that students taught by an effective teacher are more likely to attend college, live in better areas, save for retirement, and make more lifetime income than students taught by ineffective teachers. Researchers and practitioners have varying definitions of what constitutes an effective teacher.

Jensen (2016) explained how effective teaching is embedded in the four different mindsets that can prepare the teacher for success. He further explained how the relational mindset builds relationships between the teacher and their students, the achievement mindset improves a student's cognitive processing, the rich classroom climate mindset

creates a culture of goal-setting and resilience, and the engagement mindset established a commitment to personalize learning for each student. However, Danielson's Framework for Teaching (1996) rated teacher effectiveness according to four areas: (a) planning and preparation, (b) classroom environment, (c) instruction, and (d) professional responsibility. Strong (2018) provided another perspective on effective teaching through the Framework for Effective Teaching. This framework contains a "performance portrait" of the jobs and responsibilities of effective teachers. The Framework for Effective Teaching was comprised of six components a) professional knowledge, b) instructional planning, c) instructional delivery, d) assessment, e) learning environment, and f) professionalism. Strong further defined each of the framework components into subdomains, and the subdomains were also decomposed into indicators.

Instructional coaches provide professional learning tailored to teachers' strengths and weaknesses to help improve their effectiveness (Bean & Ippolito, 2016). Hill (2017) explained schools must provide current and effective curriculum materials and ample amounts of support for teachers to help them become more effective in their practice. Darling-Hammond (2013) explained how an effective evaluation system helps teachers create goals for areas of improvement and ultimately become more effective in their practice.

Ittner, Helman, Burns, and McComas (2015) explained how effective teaching can be supported by strong systems including evidence-based tools to improve teaching practice and ongoing support to implement new strategies. Anderson and Wallin (2018) explained how effective teachers were asked to become instructional coaches with the

purpose of coaching other teachers to become more effective. Instructional coaches then

become a central strategy to help build teacher capacity and improve student achievement

(Huguet et al., 2014). On average, teachers that receive higher evaluation ratings also

produce higher student performance (Garrett & Steinberg, 2015).

Summary and Conclusions

Federal law mandates that states implement a teacher evaluation system and

professional development that improve teacher performance and student outcomes (Every

Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Many schools are utilizing instructional coaches to provide

job-embedded professional development strengthening teacher effectiveness (Knight,

2018). Due to the inconsistencies of instructional coaches' roles, some instructional

coaches experience stress (Artigliere & Baecher, 2016). Instructional coaches strive to

refine and enhance a teacher's overall performance and effectiveness (Bowman, 2017).

Effective teaching is the greatest in-school factor that improves student achievement

(Strong, 2018).

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature on instructional coaching, instructional

coaching roles, challenges of instructional coaching, and teacher effectiveness. There is a

gap in practice and in the literature of the roles of instructional coaches and how their

roles improve teacher effectiveness. In this study, I explored elementary-level

instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improved teacher

effectiveness. In Chapter 3, I explain the specific details of the research design and

methodology. The instrumentation and procedures for participant recruitment are

described in length along with a thorough explanation on how the researcher created an

ethically sound and trustworthy study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to explore elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness. This section provides explanations on how the research design was determined and describes the role of the researcher. I discuss the setting, population, and participant selection to help provide a clear understanding on the methodology. The type of coding and analysis are also shared. Trustworthiness is a vital component to this study; therefore, all strategies to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are explained. Finally, the ethical procedures used throughout the study are described.

Research Design and Rationale

A basic qualitative study was most appropriate for this study due to the purpose of examining the participants' perspectives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Basic qualitative research supports gaining the perspectives of a person's experiences, how they created the perspectives of their world, and the meanings they created for their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In a basic qualitative study, data are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For this study, a basic qualitative design was appropriate due to the data collection being interviews. The interviews addressed the problem statement and research questions. A quantitative research method would not have been appropriate for this study because it would not have allowed me to explore the perspectives of instructional coaches. Narrative and ethnography research could be used to understand

perspectives of individuals; however, narrative research is focused on individual stories and on the setting within the context of the participant's culture (Creswell, 2018), which was not the focus of my study. The conceptual framework of organizational role theory supported the research questions because the research questions required the instructional coaches to reflect on their roles.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- RQ1: What are elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles?

- RQ2: How do elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perceived roles improve teacher effectiveness?

Role of the Researcher

My role in this study was to explore elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles and how these roles improve teacher effectiveness. I served as an observer. Presently, I serve as an administrator for two elementary schools, because my district employs one assistant principal per two schools. The first school I work in is identified as a Title I school due to the number of students receiving free and reduced lunch. This school has employed an instructional coach for the past 5 years using Title I funds. The second school I work in is not a Title I school and does not have an instructional coach due to the lack of funds. Before becoming an administrator, I served as an instructional coach for one year, during which I served as professional development facilitator, teacher mentor, substitute teacher, and I analyzed data.

As the researcher, I realized there were biases that formed through my experience as an instructional coach and consciously I was committed to disregard my personal experiences in order to fully examine and understand the position of the participants. As a former instructional coach, I realized confirmation bias could occur. I challenged my beliefs to ensure that preconceived ideas did not become part of the research. To address research bias, I documented ideas in a research journal and used member checking. I did not have a personal relationship with any of the participants and never served as the assistant principal for any of the participants.

All of the participants worked in the same school district where I was employed; however, none of the participants worked in my school. I did not serve as a supervisor for any of the participants. I was familiar with some of the participants; however, the familiarity was only from interacting during county training events. All the participants volunteered for the study and were not given an incentive to participate.

Methodology

Through my study, I explored elementary-level instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improved teacher effectiveness. Instructional coaches helped teachers foster a deeper understanding of teaching and learning (Ittner et al., 2015). The roles of instructional coaches include other responsibilities; however, the main purpose of an instructional coach is to improve teacher performance and student achievement (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). I conducted a basic qualitative study to gain insight into the roles of instructional coaches and their perceived roles that increase teacher effectiveness. Each school's instructional coach was

interviewed in a semistructured interview. All data were coded with open and axial

codes. Braun et al.'s (2019) thematic analysis framework guided the data analysis

process.

Participant Selection

The participants in this basic qualitative study included seven elementary

instructional coaches. Creswell (2018) suggested basic qualitative studies have at least

five to 25 participants. Each instructional coach worked at a different elementary school

within the same school district. I used convenience sampling to select participants from

Title I schools in a specific county. Convenience sampling, also known as available

sampling, is based on a researcher selecting a specific sample due to the participants who

were conveniently available to participate in order to gain insight on a particular

phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The criteria for choosing the participants were as follows: (a) being employed

full-time as an elementary instructional coach at their school and (b) having had at least 3

years of teaching experience prior to becoming an instructional coach. To determine

whether each instructional coach met these requirements, I emailed each instructional

coach asking if they were currently employed full time and had at least 3 years of

teaching experience. When the instructional coaches confirmed that they met the criteria,

I asked if they would like to participate in the study. The email address was located on

the school's website. Instructional coaches who met these two criteria were invited to

participate in the study and were sent the consent form.

All the instructional coaches within the school district were invited to participate in my study. After receiving Walden's Instructional Review Board (IRB) approval and approval from the school district, I emailed the seven school principals a letter about the study and asked them to provide the email address for their instructional coach. I emailed each instructional coach the two criteria questions. If they qualified, each instructional coach was emailed an invitation to participate in the study. After receiving consent from each participant, I scheduled an interview. The interview protocol aligned with the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) and was reviewed by the instructional coaches' supervisor. I used the research journal to document whether there were any issues with the questions or sequencing of questions (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Instrumentation, Procedures for Recruitment, and Data Collection

Before selecting participants, I received approval from Walden University's IRB (11-15-19-0592303). The school district superintendent was sent an email about the study, requesting for the research to take place in the school district, and I received permission to conduct the study at various schools. To recruit participants, I determined which schools had an instructional coach employed. After identifying nine schools that had an instructional coach listed on their staff directory website, I contacted the principals of these schools by email to receive permission to conduct the interview with the instructional coach. Principals who agreed replied to the email with the words, "I consent." The principal also provided the name and email of the instructional coach. If the principals did not respond, I was prepared to send more emails. The principal's email was listed on the school website. After the principal sent me the instructional coach's

email address via email, I contacted the instructional coach through email with a letter of invitation to secure the coach's participation. Along with the letter of invitation, the instructional coach received a consent form stating that participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The participants were encouraged to email a response within a week. If they did not respond, I sent them a follow-up email. Once the participant agreed to participate in the study, an email was sent to determine a time for the interview.

The interviews took place in a location of the participant's choosing. Since the interview questions presented minimal risks, the participants could choose to have the interview at their school, a public location, or in a private meeting room. However, the location could not take place in anyone's home. Before each interview, the participants were given a consent form to ensure that they understood their rights as a research participant. The participant also received the interview protocol (see Appendix A) with example interview questions. Before the interview began, I tested the recording device to ensure it was working. I also used the voice recording application on my iPhone as a back-up recording for the interviews.

Each participant was interviewed in a semistructured interview with open-ended questions. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained how interviews are often used in qualitative studies to understand a phenomenon. The semistructured interviews were guided by the research questions, but the questions would not be exact in their wording (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interview questions were aligned to the research questions to determine the perspectives of the roles of instructional coaches.

The interview started with a brief overview of the study's purpose and research questions. The participant was also reminded of the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The participant was asked a few background questions and then the interview questions began. I took notes in a research journal during and after the interview. Doing so helped create an ongoing and structured record of reflections, questions, and ideas (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). If I needed clarification or further explanation on a response to an interview question, I used probes during the interview when necessary. To ensure the participant's responses were transcribed accurately, I recorded the interviews using a recording device and a back-up recording device through an IPhone. The most common method of recording interview data is to audio record the conversations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I transcribed the audio recordings using Microsoft Word and then uploaded the transcript into the NVivo software, within 24 hours, to provide a verbatim transcription of each interview. At the end of the study, participants were emailed a two-page summary of the study's results to check if their data was accurate. I emailed the instructional coaches to determine a time to conduct an exit interview by phone. The one-on-one exit interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. During the exit interview the participant and I discussed the final results.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis was centered on making sense of the data found within the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The first step of data analysis was to transcribe each interview using the NVivo data software. I transcribed the audio files within 24 hours of

the interview. I used thematic analysis to analyze the data based on the six-phase process

by Braun et al. (2019). The steps include (a) becoming familiar with the data by reading

and then rereading the transcripts, (b) determine codes by reducing the data into smaller

chunks called codes, (c) generating themes; (d) reviewing themes; and (e) defining

themes.

To become familiar with the data, each interview and accompanying notes in the

research journal was read at least two times. The goal of this phase was to become

intimately familiar with the text by reading and re-reading the data (Braun et al., 2019).

The data were not coded yet; therefore, notes were more casual than strategic. The

research journal noted reflections, questions, and ideas. The second phase of determining

codes by reducing the data into smaller chunks was a systematic approach. Information

that was potentially relevant to the research questions was given a code. Saldana (2016)

explained how coding using words or phrases to apply a specific or symbolic meaning to

a comment or response. I assigned open and axial codes appropriately.

As the researcher, I was open to the findings within the text; therefore, the coding

was in the form of open coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Saldana (2016) explained

how open coding was the process of breaking down data into parts or codes (Saldana,

2016). Codes were not necessarily given to each line of the transcripts (Braun et al.,

2019). Significant information was tagged and included in a master-coding list.

After the initial coding process, axial coding took place. Axial coding is a process

of looking for relationships between the open codes (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Axial

coding was used to compare and classify the open codes into categories based on the relationship of the open codes (Charmaz, 2017).

The third phase was generating themes by finding a patterned response. I searched for patterns among the axial categories. In the fourth stage, I reviewed the potential themes and asked myself the following questions provided by Braun et al. (2019):

1. Is this a theme (it could be just a code)?

2. If this is a theme, what is the quality of this theme (does it tell me something useful about the data set and my research questions)?

3. What are the boundaries of this theme (what does it include or exclude)?

4. Are there enough (meaningful) data to support this theme?

5. Are the data too diverse and wide ranging (does the theme lack coherence)?

   (p.65)

In the fifth phase, I named the theme, summarized the theme, and provided specific examples. In the final phase of data analysis, I provided a description of the findings to answer the research questions that were aligned to the framework and related to literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The findings and themes were presented for each research question. Each research question was grounded in the participant's perspective of their roles of instructional coaching. The open-ended interview questions and probing questions allowed for an in-depth conversation on the instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles. Through the interview, each instructional coach had the opportunity to discuss the

roles they performed and any conflict they experienced due to their roles. Finally, instructional coaches discussed their perspectives on the roles that improved teacher effectiveness.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Korstjens and Moser (2018) explained how qualitative researchers must use specific criteria to determine if the findings of the research can be trusted. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained the five criteria used to determine trustworthiness in qualitative research: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, (d) confirmability, and (e) reflexivity. To ensure trustworthiness in my research, I explained the criteria used to establish trustworthiness.

Credibility

Credibility established the truthfulness in the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In qualitative research, credibility was the counterpart of validity in quantitative research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To establish credibility and dependability within the interview data, I used member checking. Member checking was used to help ensure participants' meanings were accurately understood by the researcher and without bias from the researcher (Maxwell, 2013). After the data were analyzed, each participant was sent a two-page summary of the findings and was asked to email any questions or concerns they had with the accuracy of their data within one week. After a week, I did not receive any emails about the findings; therefore, I called each participant. All of the participants agreed with the accuracy of their data and did not have any questions or concerns on the findings.

Transferability

Transferability was more difficult to accomplish within qualitative research; however, the use of thick description helped the results to "transfer" to another study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Thick description refers to a deep and detailed account of the setting and research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In my study, I identified and explained research questions to help make the participants' perspectives meaningful for the reader (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I described the participants and the setting in detail to help the reader transfer the data (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Each theme included excerpts from the transcripts to provide support.

Dependability

Dependability ensured the consistency of the data over time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of member checking also strengthened the dependability of my research by allowing the participants to review a summary of the results and provide feedback for accuracy of their data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained, "An audit trail in a qualitative study describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (p.252). To maintain an audit, I kept a research journal. The journal included my reflections, decisions, questions, and provided a detailed account of how the study was conducted (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Confirmability

Confirmability ensured data were not biased and could be confirmed by other researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To establish confirmability, all biases or

assumptions of the researcher were clearly stated in the study to provide a transparent researching process that helped the reader understand how the researcher came to certain conclusions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). My assumptions were clearly stated in the research to safeguard the confirmability of the research. An audit trail was also used to provide confirmability.

Ethical Procedures

Walden University's IRB process ensured that my research was in compliance with the ethical and legal protocols of the university. To safeguard the ethical protocols in my research, I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative Program. No research was conducted prior to receiving approval from the Walden University's Instructional Review Board. Each participant was given the informed consent form to remind them of the study's purpose and their rights as a research participant. I explained that they could refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. The participants were also informed that the study would not cause physical or physiological risks. None of the participants worked in the same school as the researcher, which eliminated the conflict of interest of conducting research with colleagues or friends (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

The one-on-one interview setting was warm and inviting. I started the interview by reviewing the research protocol. By doing so, the participant gained a better understanding of what would take place during the duration of the interview. During the face-to-face interviews, I remained objective to the responses provided by each participant. Each participant was treated with respect and ensured confidentiality. To

help ensure confidentiality, each participant was given a number. The numbers were used in place of their names to ensure their identity remained confidential. No participant or school identity was shared. The transcripts were saved in NVivo and printed. All printed documents were kept in a locked file cabinet. I am the only person with a key to the file cabinet. All data would be kept secure for five years upon completion of the study, and all printed transcripts will be shredded in that same time frame. Each participant was given ample time to answer questions or take breaks if needed. All participants and schools remained confidential.

Summary

In this section, I reviewed the study's research design and methodology to explore elementary-level instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improve teacher effectiveness. The basic qualitative approach was used to research the problem. Thematic analysis, using open and axial coding strategies, was used to analyze interview data. I explained how participants were recruited and selected, how data were collected, and how data were analyzed. Chapter 3 contained an explanation of how I ensured trustworthiness and implemented ethical procedures. The study took place in seven Title I elementary schools where each instructional coach was interviewed to determine their perspectives on the roles of instructional coaches. Careful consideration was taken to ensure the study was credible and dependable. Other ethical procedures were stated to safeguard the safety and confidentiality of the participants. Chapter 4 provides the results of the study. The setting and data collection are described thoroughly. All data analysis and results are reported and presented to support and

address the research questions. In Chapter 5, all key findings are summarized and

recommendations for further research are suggested.

Chapter 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improve teacher effectiveness. According to Amyett (2019), instructional coaches support schools by providing quality professional development opportunities for teachers. However, the role of the instructional coach is often not consistent, and the direction provided by the administrator varies (Kane & Rosenquist, 2018). To address the gap in practice found in research and literature on instructional coaches' roles, I investigated instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles using the following research questions:

- RQ1: What are elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles?

- RQ2: How do elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perceived roles improve teacher effectiveness?

In Chapter 4, I discuss the findings from the data analysis. The study's setting, participants, and data collection process are explained in detail.

Setting

The study took place in a southern state with seven Title I instructional coaches. Each interview took place at the participant's school or a local coffee shop. I sent invitation emails to nine instructional coaches. Seven agreed to participate, but two declined. One instructional coach shared that she was too overwhelmed by her work schedule to participate in the study. Another instructional coach did not reply to the invitation initially and later shared that the Christmas season was too busy for her to

remember to reply. The seven instructional coaches who agreed to participate in the study were sent the consent form. Each participant replied to the email with the words, "I consent." Interview locations and times were communicated through email.

Demographics

A total of seven instructional coaches agreed to participate in the research study. Demographic information is displayed in Table 1. The participants' teaching experience before becoming an instructional coach ranged from 9 years to 23 years. The years of experience of being an instructional coach ranged from 1 year to 9 years. All participants had at least one educational endorsement; however, only five participants had the coaching endorsement. All of the instructional coaches were female, and all of them worked in Title I schools in the same school district.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant number	Highest degree	Educational endorsements	Years teaching	Years as instructional coach
P1	Specialist degree	Tier 1 leadership endorsement, Coaching endorsement	15 years	1 year
P2	Specialist degree	Science endorsement, STEM endorsement	10 years	1 year
P3	Specialist degree	Reading endorsement, Coaching endorsement, ESL endorsement	10 years	9 years
P4	Specialist degree	Coaching endorsement	21 years	8 years
P5	Master's degree	Coaching endorsement, Support specialist endorsement	9 years	1 year
P6	Master's degree	Coaching endorsement, Gifted endorsement, Tier I leadership endorsement	23 years	2 years
P7	Specialist degree	Mathematics endorsement	26 years	2 years

Data Collection

A total of seven elementary-level instructional coaches from the same school district participated in one face-to-face, semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. The interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. The data collection process took approximately three weeks. I recorded each interview using a hand-held audio recorder. As a back-up, I also used the Voice Memo App on my IPhone to record each interview. The interviews started with a review of the study's purpose and research questions. I reminded the participants that if they wanted to stop the interview at any time, they were permitted to do so. The participants were asked background questions and then questions that went along with the research questions (see Appendix A). I used follow-up prompts to help the participants give more descriptive responses (see Appendix A). Research notes were kept in a research journal during and after the interview. At the conclusion of the interview, I thanked the participants for their time and explained that I would send a two-page summary of the results at the end of the study for the purpose of them reviewing the accuracy of their data and emailing any questions or concerns they may have had with the findings.

I transcribed the audio recordings using Microsoft Word and uploaded them into the NVivo platform. The NVivo software program helped organize all the data. A printed copy of each transcript was kept in a locked filing cabinet. The data collection process took a little longer than anticipated due to the scheduling conflicts of the Christmas holidays.

Data Analysis

After transcribing each interview in Microsoft Word and uploading the document into NVivo, I followed the five-step thematic analysis process of Braun et al. (2019). The steps include (a) becoming familiar with the data by reading and rereading the transcripts, (b) determining codes by reducing the data into smaller chunks called codes (c) generating themes, (d) reviewing themes, and (e) defining themes.

Step 1: Familiarity With Data

First, each transcript and all accompanying notes in the research journal were read at least two times. I actively read the transcripts and research journal notes to understand the data (see Braun et al., 2019). While reading the interview transcripts, I wrote notes in the margins about key concepts or phrases that were relevant to instructional coaches' perceived roles and instructional coaching roles that improve teacher effectiveness. This step helped me become familiar with the data and determine significant parts related to the research questions.

Step 2: Determine Codes

The second step included determining codes from the data by reducing the data into smaller chunks (see Braun et al., 2019). While reading the transcripts for the third time, I applied open coding to the raw data by highlighting repeated words or phrases and assigning a code word or phrase for the highlighted text. The code word or phrase was then circled to help differentiate it from the margin notes written earlier in the data analysis process. Then I created a list of the codes created within the text.

Table 2

Open Coding Sample for Instructional Coaches

Code	Participant	Excerpt
Data coach	Participant 4	We look at results to see if it worked.
	Participant 6	If students are improving, that is due to the teacher becoming better.
Relationship builder	Participant 1	I try to help them feel good about what they're doing...
	Participant 4	I work alongside my teachers so they can become better.
Learning facilitator	Participant 7	Help them find the unit guides.
	Participant 3	We have labs where they practice a technique...
Modeling lessons	Participant 6	I model for them...
	Participant 1	Modeling and observing lessons is primary...
Feedback provider	Participant 2	Watch them teach and giving feedback.
	Participant 7	Give her feedback on what she had done well and an area where she can improve.

Step 3: Generating Themes

I searched for a relationship among the open codes. When I found open codes that were similar, I highlighted the open codes with the same color to create a new category. Each new category was given a code name. Four axial codes were found within the open codes. I used the NVivo platform to organize and store the data. The axial codes were inputted into the NVivo platform as nodes. Each node included the excerpt from the transcript, which helped me organize the data from the seven interview

transcripts. I returned to the axial categories to search for patterns within the categories.

I found two main patterns within the axial categories: (a) instructional coaches support

teachers, and (b) instructional coaches have undefined roles. Table 3 identifies the four

axial categories with the patterns that emerged.

Table 3

Axial Coding Sample for Instructional Coaching Roles

Category	Excerpt	Patterns
Learning facilitator	Work with grade levels	Provides information and resources
Classroom supporter	Co-teaching	Modeling, observes lessons, and provides feedback.
Relationship builder	Teacher is comfortable making a mistake	Builds a trusting relationship
Data coach	Analyze data	Collects and analyzes data to create lessons.

To move the patterns into themes, I analyzed the patterns to develop the theme.

Two themes emerged: (a) instructional coaches' main role is as a teacher supporter and

(b) instructional coaches have undefined and inconsistent roles.

Step 4: Review Themes

During this step, the themes were analyzed to determine whether they should be

collapsed into one theme. I used the thematic analysis questions provided by Braun et al.

(see 2019) to further analyze the themes:

- Is this a theme (it could be just a code)?

- If this is a theme, what is the quality of this theme (does it tell me something

  useful about the data set and my research questions)?

- What are the boundaries of this theme (what does it include or exclude)?

- Are there enough (meaningful) data to support this theme?

- Are the data too diverse and wide ranging (does the theme lack coherence)?

  (p. 65)

Through this phase, I determined that the themes had enough support and were not too diverse or wide ranging.

Step 5: Defining Themes

The two themes that emerged from the data analysis were (a) instructional coaches' main role is as a teacher supporter (b) instructional coaches have undefined and inconsistent roles. After careful analysis of the data, I was able to answer the following two research questions:

- RQ1: What are elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles?

- RQ2: How do elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perceived roles improve teacher effectiveness?

All the participants referenced how they supported the teacher by being a learning facilitator inside the classroom and during professional learning workshops or collaborative planning times. The participants also mentioned how they guided teachers through the data analysis process. All participants also mentioned the importance of building relationships with teachers to create a trusting working relationship. There was one discrepant case where one of the participants did not find her role as an instructional coach as undefined. She explained how she was mentored by the previous instructional

coach who was promoted, within the same school, to the assistant principal position. Therefore, she felt her role as an instructional coach was consistent and clearly defined.

Results

The findings of this study were organized by themes that emerged from the seven face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The data collected and analyzed from the interviews answered the two research questions and gave insight into future recommendations. Two themes emerged (a) instructional coaches believe their main role is a teacher supporter and (b) instructional coaches have undefined and inconsistent roles.

Theme 1: Instructional coaches' main role is a teacher supporter

The first theme answered the two research questions:

- RQ1: What are elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles?

- RQ2: How do elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perceived roles improve teacher effectiveness?

All of the participants expressed how they believe their role was to provide support to teachers. The participants shared how their role included four main activities: (a) learning facilitator, (b) classroom supporter, (c) relationship builder, and (d) data coach. These four activities will be explained in detail as subtopics. The participants also discussed how the four activities improved teacher effectiveness. Examples of how the activities improved teacher effectiveness were explained in detail within each of the four subtopics.

Learning facilitator. The participants discussed how as a learning facilitator they provided support for teachers by organizing and facilitating learning opportunities. The learning opportunities helped to improve teacher instruction through professional development faculty meetings, grade level labs, or grade level workshops. The participants discussed how the professional learning faculty meetings were always tailored towards helping teachers become more effective in their practice. Participant 1 and 3 explained how they worked with grade levels to provide professional development on topics that everyone needed. The teachers took the skills learned through the professional development meeting and applied them to their teaching which enhanced their instruction. Participant 6 discussed how she provided professional development within the reading and writing instruction because it was a school-wide focus. She modeled for teachers how to teach within the reading and writing workshop and taught teachers how to create lessons to improve student vocabulary.

Participant 5 provided grade level professional learning on creating effective lesson plans. The instructional coach helped the teachers break down the assessment data to create small group lesson plans. These lesson plans helped the teacher provide interventions for struggling students. Participant 4 stated how the teachers can see if their teaching is improving by monitoring student performance. Participant 2 explained how teachers needed time to learn how to create differentiated lesson plans based on student needs; therefore, she incorporated this learning in her professional development. Participant 1 noted how she worked with grade levels to improve their phonics

instruction through a new school-wide curriculum. This professional learning was needed because the teachers were not familiar with teaching phonics in this new way.

As a learning facilitator, the participants provided resources for teachers. Participant 4 stated how she researched materials based on the teacher's needs. She explained, "If the teacher is in a narrative writing unit, I work hard to provide them with the exemplars or charts they need." Participants 1, 3, and 5 all shared how they use books to help support teachers through the reading and writing curriculum. Participant 7 explained how she sits with teachers to go through the online resources provided by the county. Providing learning opportunities and learning resources help teachers learn new strategies or techniques for effective teaching.

Classroom supporter. The participants explained how they work with teachers in a one-on-one setting to help provide support that is based on the teacher's individual needs. Participant 4 shared how she meets with teachers first to discuss instructional areas they would like to focus on during their coaching cycle. These focus areas would then be changed into specific instructional goals. The participants stated how they improved teacher performance by observing a teacher in the classroom and providing feedback on areas of strengths and weaknesses. Participants 1,3, 4 and 5 shared the importance of providing feedback in the moment. Participant 3 mentioned how she whispered suggestions in the teacher's ear while the teacher was teaching a small group. She explained how this immediate feedback allowed the teacher to make prompt adjustments, which improved her overall effectiveness. Participant 4 also explained how she found co-teaching with the teacher helped provide more structured support for the

teacher. Participant 4 claimed how shared responsibility allows the teacher to be more willing to take risks.

As a classroom supporter, the participants explained how they modeled effecting teaching. Participant 3 explained, "I teach them and then let them try. While they teach, I watch and then we come together and reflect on their teaching." The participants noted how important the modeling process was for teachers because it took professional development to a deeper level. Participant 4 stated how teachers needed to see what good teaching looked like with real students because seeing the teaching allowed the teacher to take the learning into her classroom. Participant 1 shared how she modeled a phonics lesson for a teacher. The teacher started to use the same strategies in her teaching and the students showed noticeable improvement. The teacher was able to improve her instruction by implementing the strategies she saw modeled by the instructional coach. Participant 6 explained how modeling effective teaching and then providing time for teachers to practice the strategy helped teachers improve their instruction within a targeted area. She stated, "If you don't know a better way to teach, you just keep doing it the same way."

Relationship builder. All of the participants discussed the importance of building relationships with teachers and establishing trust. Participant 7 explained, "I let the teachers know that I am not an administrator, I am your advocate. I think that develops the relationship. I tell them our conversations are confidential and only for us." Participant 4 and 6 stated how teachers were more willing to try new strategies and make mistakes when the instructional coach created a safe and accepting environment.

Participant 6 created a safe environment by hosting a coffee bar once a week. The coffee

bar allowed the teachers to relax and build a relationship with the instructional coach

through casual conversations. Participant 2 shared how instructional coaches must learn

about teachers on a personal level by first sharing about themselves. She explained how

each year she brought goody bags to new teachers and introduced herself. She found this

small gesture helped establish a relationship with the teachers. Participant 7 shared how

during her required lunch duty she would take time to collaborate with teachers and

create open communication with them. Participant 6 explained how building a

relationship of trust and open communication is important because teachers are more

open to ask for help from someone they believe genuinely wants to help them.

While some coaches found it easy to build relationships with teachers, others had

to put forth more effort. Participant 5 explained how she would try to create a positive

relationship with teachers; unfortunately, some teachers did not want to be coached. She

explained how teachers would ask for lessons to be modeled and observed however when

the teacher was asked to modify their teaching style, they would not comply. Participant

3 shared how some teachers did not want to work with an instructional coach because

they thought the instructional coach would share their conversations with the

administration. She had to ensure teachers understood the norms for their relationship.

Participant 4 explained how building a relationship with teachers helped the instructional

coach know how to approach them. She noted how a novice teacher would be coached

differently than a veteran teacher. A novice teacher could be given suggestions on how

to improve instruction whereas a veteran teacher may need to "come to their own

discoveries." These relationship-building strategies helped teachers work with instructional coaches more effectively and improved their instruction.

All of the participants discussed how providing positive reinforcement to teachers helped build the relationship. Participant 1 explained how she gave teachers complimentary notes and shared what the teacher did well before giving constructive feedback. Participant 3 shared how she gave teachers numerous positive comments and then always gave the teacher something they could do to improve their teaching. Providing positive comments first helped the teacher build confidence. Then, the teacher was more willing to make instructional changes. Participant 1 commented: "I just feel that I am there to touch my teachers in any way and help them improve in their practice. Ultimately, when they improve the children benefit." Instructional coaches building relationships with teachers supported the framework. Relationship building was a role that was expected by administration; therefore, the instructional coach acted on that expectation.

Data coach. The participants stated how they supported teachers by helping them determine professional goals and then supported the teachers through the process of achieving their goals. Participant 6 explained how she encouraged teachers to have their students also set personal goals. The data helped the teacher and student determine if they were improving. For example, Participant 4 stated: "Data helps us determine where we are and what we need to do to get better. Then we can look at the results and see if it worked." The instructional coaches explained how they work with teachers to look at assessment data to determine which students needed further remediation or interventions

on specific skills. After looking at the data, the instructional coach helped the teacher

create a plan to implement the necessary remediation lessons and interventions. Then,

the instructional coach guided the teacher through the process of keeping data records to

determine if her teaching strategies were improving student performance.

Participant 1 noted how she reflects with teachers after looking at the data to determine if

their strategies helped improve her instruction. If the student data showed improvement,

then the instructional coach could assume the teacher's effectiveness was also improving.

Participant 2 explained how data analysis was something many teachers struggled to

understand. She worked closely with teachers to model how to use data to inform

instructional decisions. Data analysis is necessary for teachers to create effective lesson

plans. Participant 3 explained how the administrators used data to determine areas where

teachers needed further support. The instructional coach was required to improve teacher

effectiveness according to specific data.

Theme 2: Instructional coaches have undefined and inconsistent roles.

The second theme answered the two research questions:

- RQ1: What are elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives of

  their roles?

- RQ2: How do elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perceived roles

  improve teacher effectiveness?

Six of the participants explained how their roles were not clearly defined or they

described their roles to include activities that were not directly supporting teachers.

Participant 3 shared,

There was no job description for me. You pretty much do whatever the principal

asks. Sometimes I would have to fill in for an absent teacher to cover her class

and sometimes I had lunch duty. But I found myself reminding my admin of my

roles and telling them what I should be doing. They eventually came around and

would allow me to skip out on those other things.

Participant 5 explained how the school district did not provide her with duties and

responsibilities; however, the assistant principal of instruction gave her specific roles and

responsibilities. The roles given by the assistant principal served as the instructional

coach's guidelines; however, more roles and responsibilities were added throughout the

year. In March, Participant 3, 5, and 6 had to assist with testing; therefore, their coaching

schedules were cancelled during that month. Participants 2, 5, and 7 explained how they

were responsible for other duties and responsibilities including lunch duty or serving as a

substitute teacher for classes. Participant 2 stated that she would serve in her regular

coaching roles unless she was needed as a substitute teacher or test administrator.

Participant 7 stated,

I find through talking to other instructional coaches, that our role is being defined

as we go. There is no job description. A lot of administrators don't know how to

use their coach. I do help teachers, but I also have other responsibilities like

being in charge of our Growing Readers Program. I have to make the schedules

and go to all the trainings. That takes time from my time with teachers.

Unfortunately, the lack of consistency within the instructional coaching roles hindered

some of the instructional coaches with their ability to improve teacher effectiveness. All

participants, except for Participant 1, gave examples of having to fulfill roles that did not directly impact teacher effectiveness. While an instructional coach was substituting a class, administering a test, or performing lunch duty they were not able to directly impact the effectiveness of the teacher's instruction. In addition, the instructional coaches were not able to fulfill their perceived role as a teacher supporter by being a learning facilitator, classroom supporter, relationship builder, or data coach. The instructional coach's ability to improve teacher effectiveness was reliant on their administrator's expected roles at that time.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

According to Ravitch and Carl, (2016), credibility must be established by the researcher by using at least two validation strategies to ensure accuracy of data. To ensure credibility of the research findings, I collected data through semi-structured interviews and a review of a research journal. The research journal kept a record of my reflections, decisions, and questions. Member checking was used to establish credibility. At the end of the study, each participant was sent a two-page summary of the findings and was asked to email any questions or concerns they had with the accuracy of their data within one week. After a week, I did not receive any emails about the findings; therefore, I called each participant. All of the participants agreed with the accuracy of their data and did not have any questions or concerns on the findings.

Transferability

The use of thick description will help future researchers duplicate the study. The setting and participants were thoroughly described. Each participant was asked prompts to help them give descriptive responses. Research notes were taken during and after the semi-structured interviews and kept in a research journal. The data collection and data analysis process were described in detail to help provide other researchers with the support needed to duplicate the study. Each theme included excerpts from the interviews to support the participant's responses.

Dependability

Member checking was used to help ensure dependability. At the end of the study, each participant was sent a two-page summary of the findings and was asked to email any questions or concerns they had with the accuracy of their data within one week. After a week, I did not receive any emails about the findings; therefore, I called each participant. All of the participants agreed with the accuracy of their data and did not have any questions or concerns on the findings.

Thick description was used to help provide a thorough description of the setting and participants (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To establish a thick description, I kept an audit trail during and after the interviews in my research journal. The research journal helped to keep a record of my reflections, decisions, and questions.

Confirmability

Confirmability requires that the research findings are unbiased (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Being objective and openly stating all biases or assumptions established

confirmability. The confirmability of the study was addressed when I shared my experience as an instructional coach. I explained how I served as an instructional coach for one year; however, I was mindful to record the results of the interview without personal bias. I used audit trail to help keep a thorough record of data. I used a research journal to record all personal reflections, decisions, and questions during and after each interview.

Summary

Interpretation of the results of my research demonstrated that instructional coaches do have some specific roles and those roles help improve teacher effectiveness. Instructional coaches are able to help teachers create lessons that are tailored to student needs. However, instructional coaches also have roles that are undefined or inconsistent. These inconsistent roles hinder the instructional coach's ability to improve teacher effectiveness.

Through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, I was able to use a basic qualitative design to seek a thorough and deep understanding of the participants' perspectives on their roles. Results of the data were presented in this chapter. Two themes emerged from the data analysis (a) instructional coaches' main role is a teacher supporter and (b) instructional coaches have undefined and inconsistent roles. These themes allowed me to answer the two research questions:

- RQ1. What are elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles?

- RQ2: How do elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perceived roles improve teacher effectiveness?

All of the participants believed that instructional coaches have many roles. The participants explained most of the roles they performed were in relation to supporting the teacher. The instructional coaches were in agreement that they complete four main activities: (a) learning facilitator, (b) classroom supporter, (c) relationship builder, and (d) data coach. Through these four activities, instructional coaches were able to improve teacher effectiveness. As a learning facilitator, the participants stated how they provided professional development opportunities for teachers and resources. To support teachers in the classroom, the participants discussed how they model effective teaching and provide feedback. All participants discussed how building a relationship with teachers was necessary for teacher improvement. Participant 3 explained how she worked hard to establish trust with teachers, because she wanted the teachers to openly listen to her suggestions. Finally, guiding teachers through data analysis is vital for teacher improvement. Participant 1 shared how data shows if the teacher's strategies are improving.

Through the interviews six participants shared how their roles were undefined and a job description was never provided. Participants also commented that they had additional roles that did not directly support teachers. The additional roles and inconsistent job descriptions were found with six of the seven participants. While the instructional coaches fulfilled the additional roles, they were not able to improve teacher effectiveness. One participant did not find her role as an instructional coach to be

undefined or inconsistent. The participant shared how the previous instructional coach trained her.

Again, all of the participants described their goal as one to improve teacher effectiveness. The participants explained how they supported teachers to help the teachers improve their overall instruction. In Chapter 4, I presented the results from the study according to the themes generated from the thematic analysis. The participants shared their perspectives of their roles and how their roles improved teacher effectiveness. In Chapter 5, the interpretation of the findings, limitations, recommendations, implications, and conclusions are addressed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how these roles improve teacher effectiveness. A qualitative design allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives through the face-to-face semi-structured interviews (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

This study was relevant and necessary because few researchers had specifically researched the roles of instructional coaches as perceived by instructional coaches. The purpose of this study was to fill the gap in practice found in the literature on instructional coaches' roles (see Pletcher et al., 2019). The research questions that guided my research were the following:

- RQ1: What are elementary-level instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles?

- RQ2: How do elementary-level instructional coaches' perceived roles improve teacher effectiveness?

Overall, the participants shared the perspectives of their roles. The participants commented that their main role is as a teacher supporter. The participants stated how they were able to support teachers through four activities: (a) learning facilitator, (b) classroom supporter, (c) relationship builder, and (d) data coach. As a learning facilitator, the instructional coach provided professional learning during faculty meetings, grade level meetings, or in a one-on-one setting. All of the professional learning was created to help improve the teacher's overall effectiveness. In addition, the instructional

coach provided resources for the teachers based on the teacher's instructional needs. As

a classroom supporter, the instructional coach provided examples of exemplary teaching

while also providing feedback. All of the participants commented on the importance of

building a relationship with teachers and gave examples of how they established a

trusting relationship. The participants also discussed being a data coach and helping

teachers use data to inform their instructional decisions. Finally, the roles participants

identified for an instructional coach included some noninstructional roles that took the

instructional coaches away from directly supporting teachers. These roles included

substituting for classes or serving as a testing administrator.

Interpretation of the Findings

My interpretations of the findings for this basic qualitative study were based on

seven face-to-face semistructured interviews, the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and the

conceptual framework of organizational role theory. The outcomes of this study were

determined by interpretations in the context of the literature and in the context of

organizational role theory, the conceptual framework examined in Chapter 2.

Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaches partnered with teachers to help teachers improve instruction

and help students become more successful (Knight, 2018). The participants shared how

they served as teacher supporters. As a teacher supporter they helped teachers by

modeling lessons or having another teacher model a specific strategy. Modeling is a

process that allowed the teacher to see a visual or expectation on how to implement a

specific strategy (see Killion & Harrison, 2017). The participants also commented on

how they supported teachers by observing the teachers in the classroom and then providing feedback. Instructional coaches gave nonevaluative feedback and helped teachers reflect on their goals (see Eisenberg et al., 2017). Effective coaching started with coaches helping teachers make decisions, solve problems, and achieve personal goals (see Bean & Ippolito, 2016). The participants confirmed this idea and shared how teachers needed support with using data to help teachers set professional goals to help them improve in a specific area.

The participants stated that, as a teacher supporter, they took time to build a relationship with their teachers. They gave multiple examples on how they created a nonjudgmental environment and provided positive reinforcement to build confidence. Coaches must have strong interpersonal skills to help them effectively communicate their thoughts and expectations with teachers (White et al., 2015). The participants commented how they believed building a relationship was imperative to help support teachers. They built trust with teachers by establishing trust and confidentiality. Trust was a critical characteristic for an instructional coach to possess (see Knight, 2018). The participants also mentioned how they supported teachers by providing information and resources. Instructional coaches collaborated with teachers and provided professional learning opportunities for teachers by teaching the content or organizing for someone else to teach the content (see Killion & Harrison, 2017). The participants gave examples on how they collaborated with teachers one-to-one or how they planned whole group professional learning for grade levels. Three of the participants shared how they led labs where teachers practiced a particular teaching strategy with students and then reflected on

the process after the lesson. Finally, as a teacher supporter, the participants commented on their work with guiding teachers through data analysis. Guiding teachers to make decisions based on data is a necessary role of an instructional coach (Anderson & Wallin, 2018). The participants explained how they taught teachers how to use data to improve instruction. Providing focused feedback helped teachers understand how they can improve their instruction (see Stefaniak, 2017).

The study confirmed the idea that the roles of instructional coaches are undefined (see Kane & Rosenquist, 2018). Six of the participants shared how they did not have a job description outlining their roles and responsibilities. Two participants explained how they went to their administrators asking for more guidance on their roles, and the administrator instructed the instructional coach of their expectations. Another participant commented that she had to remind her administrator of her roles according to the roles presented to her from the coaching endorsement she completed. Another participant explained that she believed the role of an instructional coach was still being developed by the county. Overall, six participants shared how they did not have defined roles and had to learn their role as they started working. The roles of an instructional coach are inconsistent and often vary depending on the school (Artigliere & Baecher, 2016). Six participants also shared additional roles they were responsible for that did not include supporting teachers. These roles included being a testing administrator, substitute teacher, and performing other required duties. The participants shared how they were not aware of their additional duties until they were asked to complete the additional roles. One participant explained that she believed she would be working with teachers all year

and was surprised to find out that she would not be working with teachers during the testing months due to her additional role as a testing administrator. The undefined roles did not keep the participants from determining their roles. Two participants asked their administrators for their instructional coaching roles, whereas the other participants learned their roles as they spent time with the teachers.

There was one discrepant case where a participant did not have a similar opinion compared to the other participants on her roles. Participant 1 believed her roles were clearly defined and consistent. The outgoing instructional coach trained her because the outgoing instructional coach was hired to serve as the assistant principal at the same school.

Conceptual Framework – Organizational Role Theory

Role theory is based on the idea that employees enact specific roles in order to perform what is expected of them effectively (Katz & Kahn, 1978). For an organization to perform effectively, the roles must be clearly communicated to the employee (Katz & Kahn, 1978). The participants confirmed the idea that roles needed to be clearly communicated. Some of the participants shared how they were able to perform certain duties once the administrators clearly expressed their expectations. Organizational role theory has four basic assumptions: (a) role-taking, (b) role-consensus, (c) role-compliance, and (d) role-conflict (Parker & Wickham, 2007). Role-taking assumes that the employee will accept the role once the employer shares the role with them. Role-consensus assumes that there is a common understanding of the roles between the employer and the employee. Role-compliance assumes that the employee will adhere to

the clear roles given by the employer. Role-conflict assumes conflict will occur when one role conflicts with another role (Parker & Wickham, 2007).

In this study, I explored elementary-level instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles. Within organizational role theory, I focused on two main assumptions: role-taking and role-compliance. The participants confirmed the assumption of role-taking. Three participants commented on the specific roles their administrators assigned to them and how they accepted those roles and fulfilled the roles without question. Two participants shared how they served as a testing administrator during the testing month; therefore, their role as an instructional coach paused. The participants did not question the roles given to them by their administrators. However, the third assumption of organizational role theory, role-compliance was disconfirmed. Role-compliance states that roles were clearly defined by the employer and followed by the employee (Parker & Wickham, 2007). The participants were not given a job description and the roles were not clearly defined for instructional coaches. Six of the participants expressed frustration with not clearly understanding their role as an instructional coach. The six participants also gave examples of additional roles they had to perform that did not directly impact teacher effectiveness.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation to trustworthiness that arose during data collection and data analysis was brevity of the interview responses. As the researcher, I was responsible for using follow-up and probing questions to elicit in-depth responses from the participants. The participants' brief responses limited the amount of data collected.

Recommendations

In this study, I explored elementary-level instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles and how their roles improve teacher effectiveness. When the study was completed, I realized that my research leads to several other topics for future research opportunities. I recommend a follow-up study with a different participant pool, which would include gaining administrators' perspectives on instructional coaches' roles. This study would help improve instructional coaching by bridging the gap between the instructional coaches' perspectives and the administrators' perspectives on the roles of instructional coaches.

I also recommend that instructional coaches, administrators, and central office personnel use the findings of my study to help create a common language of the roles of the instructional coach. The roles participants identified in my study can be used to create a job description, which would help prepare instructional coaches for their roles as an instructional coach. In addition, the job description should include a statement that explains how the instructional coach may be responsible for additional duties and responsibilities at the discretion of their principal.

Implications

This study may promote social change by creating more consistent expectations and practices for instructional coaches, thereby improving their ability to improve teacher effectiveness. I explored elementary-level instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how their roles improve teacher effectiveness with the expectation of promoting

social change. Improved teacher effectiveness may help create positive social change for learners by providing more effective and successful teaching.

There are positive social change implications specific to the administrators from the completion of this study. My research results indicated two common themes on instructional coaches' perspectives on their roles and how their roles improve teacher effectiveness: (a) instructional coaches' main role is as a teacher supporter, and (b) instructional coaches have undefined and inconsistent roles. To maximize the instructional coaches' abilities, their time with teachers must be spent on improving instruction (Kane & Rosenquist, 2018). Instructional coaches have the ability to improve teacher effectiveness (Knight, 2018). This study was significant because it allowed instructional coaches to express their perspectives on their roles as an instructional coach. The findings of this study may provide more insight into the roles of instructional coaches and help instructional coaches modify their work to help teachers become more effective. The ultimate goal of instructional coaching is to improve student performance (Bean & Ippolito, 2016).

Conclusion

Instructional coaches help teachers achieve professional success by providing support and guidance through the learning process (Anderson & Wallin, 2018). My study provides new knowledge on instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles. The data presented in this research may provide administrators, central office personnel, and instructional coaches a clearer consensus on the roles of instructional coaches. Having a clear understanding on the instructional coaches' roles could help instructional coaches

work more efficiently. Clear and consistent roles could also help instructional coaches

become more successful in improving teacher effectiveness.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewee:

Interview Opening Script

Hi, my name is _____ and I want to thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today. The purpose of today's interview is to understand your role as an instructional coach and how your role improves teacher effectiveness. As a researcher, I am here to collect information that represents your thoughts. As I explained earlier by email, this study is to explore elementary-level Title I instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles and how these roles improve teacher effectiveness.

Before beginning, I want to remind you of your rights as a participant. At any time during this interview you can withdraw participation. There are no perceived risks by participating; however, there are some benefits. Results from this study could be used to help instructional coaches, administrators, and central office personnel understand the roles of instructional coaches. I am the only person that will have access to the information collected today. To ensure confidentiality, I will assign each interview a number rather then using a person's name. The transcripts will be kept in a password-protected program. In order to ensure I have accurately gathered your thoughts, I am requesting to audio record our interview today. Is that okay? Once the data has been

analyzed, I will provide you a summary of the findings for your review. Do you have any questions? Since I have your permission, let's proceed with the questions.

Background Questions:

How long have you served as an instructional coach? How long did you teach before that?

What did you teach before becoming an instructional coach?

What is your highest degree? Do you have any educational endorsements?

How did you become an instructional coach?

Research Question 1: What are elementary-level instructional coaches' perspectives of their roles?

Role-Taking:

Why did you choose to accept the role as an instructional coach?

How did you learn about the role of an instructional coach?

What are the qualifications to becoming an instructional coach?

Role-Compliance:

What do you understand to be the school's mission, vision, and goal? How does your role fit these?

What were your expectations of the roles of instructional coaches when you first started the job? Have those expectations changed since you were employed as an instructional coach? If so, how? If not, what do you understand your expectations to be?

What activities or responsibilities are you expected to complete in your role as instructional coach?

What decisions do you make based on your activities or responsibilities?

Research Question 2: How do elementary-level instructional coaches' perceived roles improve teacher effectiveness?

Instructional Coach Roles:

What support do you provide for teachers if they have a concern?

What steps do you take to maintain trust in your relationship with a teacher you coach?

How do these steps improve teacher effectiveness?

What steps do you take to maintain confidentiality with your teacher? How do these steps improve teacher effectiveness?

How do you help teachers make instructional decisions based on classroom data? How does this assistance improve teacher effectiveness?

How do you help teachers transfer what they learn in the coaching setting with you into the classroom setting?

Describe some of the resources you use and shared with a teacher to increase student learning.

Describe how you helped a new teacher with instructional strategies.

Which activities or strategies do you find are most useful in helping teachers become more effective?

Do you have any additional information you believe is relevant to this study?

To help gain more information from the participant, I will use the following prompts:

Tell me more about..

You mentioned…, tell me more…

What do you mean by…?

Please give me an example of when…worked/didn't work.

At this time you have answered all of the questions. If you have any questions or concerns you can contact me at xxxx@xxxx.

Appendix B: Open Coding Sample for Instructional Coaches

Analyzes Data
Collects Data
Creates lesson plans collaboratively with teachers
Relationship Builder
Learning Facilitator
Modeling Lessons
Feedback provider
Undefined Roles
Motivator
Organizer of Peer Observations
Observer of Teachers
Communicator of Difficult Decisions
Liaison between Administrators and Teachers
Coaching-into the Teacher's Lesson
Co-teacher
Create Assessments Collaboratively with Teachers
Inconsistent Roles
Leader of Coaching Labs
Leader of Coaching Cycles
Guides teachers in creating professional goals
Professional Development for Staff/Workshops
Provides support for Grade Level Meetings
Leads Professional Learning Communities
Leads Reflective Conversations
Provides Behavior Management Support
Resource Provider
Mentor

Appendix C: Axial Coding Sample for Instructional Coaching Roles

Learning Facilitator
Classroom Supporter
Relationship Builder
Data Coach

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