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Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Instructional Coaching

Judith Salazar
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Judith Salazar

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Review Committee
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Dr. Philip Adu, Committee Member, Education Faculty
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Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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by

Judith Salazar

MEd, University of North Texas, 2018

BESS, Texas State University-San Marcos, 2017

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Instructional coaching focuses on increasing the effectiveness of instructional practices.

However, little is known concerning the perceptions of teachers and administrators

regarding the role of instructional coaching related to student performance. This basic

qualitative study was conducted to analyze the perceptions of administrators and teachers

within one region in Texas. Semistructured interviews were conducted with 16

participants—eight administrators and eight teachers—using a researcher-designed

questionnaire regarding the effectiveness of instructional coaching in addressing

achievement gaps among African American, Hispanic, and European American students.

Fullan's coherence framework provided the basis for data analysis. Data collected from

the interviews were analyzed and four categories emerged: (a) partnership,

(b) consistency, (c) support, and (d) building capacity. Potential implications for positive

social change that could arise from the findings in this study include a focus on

increasing student achievement through partnerships among instructional coaches,

teachers, and administrators. Consistent partnership may result in teachers developing a

supportive perception and capacity. Teachers may then be able to best implement

instructional strategies. Collaboration among coaches, teachers, and administrators can

then build coherence and support the targeted student groups. This could lead to a

positive impact on student achievement.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my parents, Rosa and Arnulfo Salazar, who have encouraged me and pushed me throughout my educational journey. I want to set an example for my brothers, Ezequiel and Aaron, that they can also accomplish anything they set their whole heart and mind to. I want to thank my fiancé, Andres, who has showed me unconditional support throughout this journey. Thank you to all my friends who have supported me. I could not have done it without you all by my side. I love you all.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The early 2000s marked a new era in the United States as federal policies increasingly promoted accountability for student performance on standardized assessments (Close et al., 2020). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, an educational reform measure, focused on increasing accountability for schools to improve teaching practices and increase student achievement (Hayes & Urbanski, 2008). With the implementation of NCLB, school systems were required to improve teacher quality. NCLB represented a step toward increasing high school graduation rates and decreasing dropout rates. NCLB was enacted to improve multiple aspects of education, such as increasing student progress and providing additional support, regardless of race, ZIP code, income, disability, language, or background (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). However, after revisions to NCLB, the reform was deemed unworkable for schools and educators. The Obama administration then had the task of developing a better law with a clear goal of preparing students for college and careers (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

In efforts to continue working toward increasing student achievement and making education equitable for all, Congress enacted the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA mandated that teachers provide quality education to low-income and diverse students to make education equitable for all students across the United States (Knight, 2019). ESSA is critical in ensuring that students with disadvantages and high-needs students are protected through equitable education for all. For the first time, ESSA

requires that all students be taught at a high standard, so they are prepared to succeed in college or in a career (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Annual statewide assessments are required through the enactment of ESSA to measure student progress toward meeting high standards set for them (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). To meet expectations, instructional coaching was implemented as an intervention for teacher growth and student achievement. According to Marzano and Sims (2013), growth opportunities aid teachers through use of research-based practices to increase teacher growth and student achievement. Instructional coaching aims to augment teacher knowledge, skills, and effectiveness.

Student achievement continues to be the subject of a national dialogue focused on the success of all students and the growth of all teachers. ESSA set the tone for this dialogue by stressing the need to implement accountability, equity, and high, but attainable, standards for students. The key driver is to ensure that every student is successful in public school, college, and the workforce, regardless of their background. Texas addressed ESSA by implementing more rigorous accountability standards. The expectations of students in Texas increased after implementation of the College and Career Readiness Standards in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The standards outline the knowledge and skills students should possess to be successful in entry-level college courses or in the workforce (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Standards were created to address these educational gaps and provide guidance for teachers in identifying defined goals for student progress.

Background

The problem that led to the focus of this study was the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to the disparity between African American, Hispanic, and European American students in state assessments in Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Texas's annual academic rating is based on state standardized tests, graduation rates, and college, career, and military readiness outcomes (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The ratings given to schools consider student achievement, school progress, and district and campus progress in closing gaps among groups (Texas Education Agency, 2020). If a district or school is not meeting proficiency, the state will order an intervention to facilitate improvement.

The 2019 Texas Academic Performance Report Card (TAPR) for secondary schools in Region 10 reported the following percentages for students who met proficiency at grade level: English I 52%, English II 52%, Algebra I 64%, biology 64%, and U.S. history 74% (Texas Education Agency, 2020). In four of the five content areas assessed, students were failing to meet proficiency at grade-level mastery of 70% or above (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The figures provided in Appendix B were created using the demographic data from the TAPR based on subjects for African American, Hispanic, and European American students (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The highest performing students in all subjects with a percentage of 71% or higher were European American, and the lowest performing students in 4 of 5 subjects were African American with the highest percentage at 63% in U.S. history (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

The inability to meet proficiency for Region 10 schools is also evidenced in the 2018 TAPR. Region 10 data for *meets proficiency* at grade level for 2018 is reported to be: English I 47%, English II 50%, Algebra I 57%, biology 62%, and U.S. history 72% (Texas Education Agency, 2018). The student achievement gaps between African America, Hispanic, and European American students are seen throughout the 2018 TAPR. African American and Hispanic students did not meet proficiency in all assessed content areas (Texas Education Agency, 2018). European American students met proficiency in 4 of 5 content areas. In English I, European American students met proficiency at 67% while African American students met proficiency at 32%, and Hispanic students met proficiency at 37% (Texas Education Agency, 2018).

The current model of the district in Region 10 under study has an instructional coach in each department of secondary campuses. One of the potential districts for participation had 10 total high schools operating in the district with 19,438 high school students enrolled and 63,015 students total, based on 2020 data from the district. The ethnic groups comprise the following categories: 39% European American, 31% Asian, 13% Hispanic, 11% African American. There are 4,296 teachers employed in the district. There is little research available documenting the perceptions of teachers and administrators toward the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to student performance (Lowenhaupt et al., 2014). According to Elish-Pier and L'Allier (2011), little evidence exists concerning an effective coaching model and the importance of perceptions provided, which may impact instructional coaching for improved student performance. The perceptions of administrators and teachers as they relate to

achievement gaps among student ethnic/racial groups may confirm whether instructional coaching is working.

Hammond et al. (2018) conducted a study at a primary school in Western Australia and measured the impact of a professional development model with direct coaching on the instructional practices taking explicit instruction. Participants were interviewed about the coaching program and the program's impact on student learning and teachers' feelings toward self-efficacy and attitudes about being coached. Hammond et al. found that explicit instruction design and delivery changed positively after five observed lessons. Also, directive coaching had a positive impact on teachers' competence and confidence (Hammond et al., 2018). Teachers found the coach's tone of voice, written feedback, specifics, directness, and suggestions all positive. Although this study did not take place in the United States, the findings may help identify useful strategies that instructional coaches can implement when coaching.

In a qualitative study conducted by Israel et al. (2018) at diverse schools with school-embedded and district-wide instructional coaching in K–8 computer science, two instructional coaching models were designed to support teachers so they could meet the needs of diverse learners and students with disabilities. A school-embedded coach model and a district-wide coach model were deployed in various schools. Two school districts with different instructional coaching participated. Israel et al.'s findings indicated that the coaching models, co-planning, and coteaching play a role in teachers' being supported and able to meet the needs of students. Both models focused on trust building and increasing teachers' instructional skills. Israel et al.'s study provides insight into how

instructional coaching models may affect building trust between teacher and instructional coach and the skills teachers should implement in their classrooms.

In a multiple case study, Lackritz et al. (2019) focused on understanding public charter school principals and their participation in the development of leadership coaching. The researchers used sampling and collected data through interviews, documents, and artifacts. Coding and grouping of the following themes took place: coaching process, the impact of coaching, and principal leader identity (Lackritz et al., 2019). The findings indicate that an inconsistency of participant experiences and coaching literature exists, perceived competencies shape coaching, and participants' identities were supported through coaching. This study serves to explore principal perceptions of instructional coaching. The focus problem of this study pertains to the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to the disparity between African American, Hispanic, and European American students in state assessments in Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

Problem Statement

The Texas College and Career Readiness Standards function as a baseline to enhance students' ability to succeed in college and in the workforce. The standards serve to strongly align public school and higher education curricula to ease the transition for students, reduce remedial courses for high school graduates, and grow the overall number of Texans who graduate college (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2009). To address educational reforms with the goal of closing performance gaps between student groups, instructional coaching has been implemented to support student achievement

(Kane et al., 2019). The primary purpose of instructional coaching is to collaborate with teachers, listen purposefully, ask powerful questions, paraphrase, and empower teachers to maximize their own performance in the classroom to impact student achievement (Knight, 2019).

Instructional coaches are teacher partners who serve to improve teaching for a positive impact on student learning and overall well-being (Knight, 2018). Knight (2007) encouraged instructional coaches to build an emotional connection with teachers through their coaching, help teachers implement research-based practices and strategies, collaborate with colleagues, observe colleagues, provide feedback and interventions, and partner with an administrator through coaching. While instructional coaching serves to address educational gaps, little is known concerning teacher and administrator perceptions of the effectiveness of instructional coaching. In their study Hassan and Yusoff (2019) found that instructional coaching serves to equip, guide, and support teachers.

Instructional coaching can improve instruction by assisting in student progress through teacher reflection and learning (Zepeda, 2018). Schools rely on instructional coaches to cultivate the professional growth of teachers to maximize student performance (Miller et al., 2019). Principals serve to establish and maintain an atmosphere that encourages the adoption of coaching, working with coaches, and facilitating coaching (Ippolito & Bean, 2019). Instructional coaching has emerged as a solution for improved student outcomes and as a sustainable model for teacher support (Lee et al., 2018). The benefits of instructional coaching are evident in research, yet schools still struggle to

overcome performance gaps between African American, Hispanic, and European American students (Zugelder, 2019). Little was known about the perceptions of teachers and administrators toward the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to closing group performance gaps. Performance gaps in student groups such as African American, Hispanic, and European American students have led to the increased adoption of instructional coaching. Matsko et al. (2020) indicated that little research related to this issue creates the lack of knowledge regarding teacher and administrator perceptions concerning the effectiveness of instructional coaching. My study served to explore administrator and teacher perceptions of instructional coaching. The focus problem of this study pertains to the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to the disparity between African American, Hispanic, and European American students in state assessments in Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

Purpose of the Study

In this qualitative study, I sought to analyze the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding the effectiveness of instructional coaching in addressing achievement gaps among student ethnic/racial groups. Schools are implementing instructional coaching, and I conducted this qualitative study to analyze perceptions of administrators and teachers toward instructional coaching as it relates to improved student performance on state assessments. The findings of this study will help close the gap in literature, which has little documentation of perceptions of administrators' and teachers' implementation of effective instructional coaching practices, which has the potential to lower barriers working against instructional coaching (Lowenhaupt et al., 2014). The

categories that emerged from this study can facilitate progress in identifying effective instructional practices in the classroom.

Research Question

What are administrator and teacher perceptions of instructional coaching as it affects student achievement gaps between ethnic groups?

Conceptual Framework

The framework that informed this study was Fullan's (2016) coherence framework. Four components comprise the coherence framework: (a) focusing direction, (b) cultivating collaborative cultures, (c) deepening learning, and (d) securing accountability (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). At the center of change, Fullan suggested that the dynamic whole and leadership play an integral part in changing the people around them and their beliefs (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). The whole system approach then serves to engage teachers in a role larger than themselves to further develop their expertise (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). The coherence framework shifts away from improving one teacher at a time and instead focuses on the coherence of an entire system.

The long-term goal presented by the coherence framework is the ability to build internal capacity with a responsibility of increasing student achievement (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). The component of focusing on direction relates to student achievement and setting small but ambitious goals to mobilize the entire group with a purpose of improving the educational system (Fullan et al., 2017). Once goals are met for mobilization, a cultivating collaborative culture focuses on instructional improvement with schools (Fullan et al., 2017). The local educational agencies foster and interconnect

to support cultures toward instructional improvement. Through deeper learning, administrators and teachers are able to improve teaching at all levels of the system with a more detailed understanding of what the learning process requires and how it influences others (Fullan et al., 2017). In addition, securing accountability increases internally to promote a value of external accountability measures (Fullan et al., 2017). The coherence framework works toward developing at all levels of leadership through common interests, such as improving student success. This framework helped inform this study and assist in data analysis.

Nature of the Study

In this study, I took a basic qualitative research approach that involved interviewing administrators and teachers individually. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) defined a basic qualitative research approach as being philosophical from constructionism, phenomenology, and symbolic interaction to determine the manner in which people interpret their experiences, construct their worlds, and make meaning from their experiences. Gaudet and Robert (2018) suggested qualitative research for defending and evaluating research questions based on lessons learned through lived experiences. The insight provided came from eight administrators and eight teacher participants. All participants came from secondary campuses within the same district. Administrators and teachers were selected using purposive sampling from several high schools within one district in Texas. Interviews were conducted with eight administrators and eight teachers from the 10 high schools in the same district. The number of participants selected was helpful in addressing the research questions and acquiring a more in-depth analysis.

Definitions

The following terms were used throughout the study and require clarification for better understanding:

Instructional coach: An educator who serves as a facilitator of professional learning and supports teachers by providing relevant and important guidance for teacher instruction in the classroom (Knight, 2019).

Instructional coaching: A model used to develop and grow teachers in their instructional approaches (Knight, 2019).

Texas Academic Performance Report Card (TAPR): A yearly report card used in Texas with a wide range of information of student performance in schools and districts (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

Significance

This qualitative study contributes to the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to student performance by providing the perceptions of administrators and teachers concerning the effectiveness of instructional coaching. The data collected from the interviews of administrators and teachers help to address the effectiveness of instructional coaching in helping to reduce achievement gaps. In Texas Region 10, European American students are the only group to have met proficiency on state assessments, while African American and Hispanic students score below average. The highest percentage for African American students on a state assessment was U.S. history with 63%, and Hispanic students with 67%. European American students scored the highest on all state assessments but more specifically in U.S. history with 87%.

Region 10 students struggle to reach proficiency with state assessments. As a whole, Region 10 students can benefit from the findings associated with the perceptions provided in this study regarding effectiveness of instructional coaching. In creating positive social change, educators have the opportunity to develop strategies to strengthen effective instructional coaching practices. The results of this study can lead to positive social change that affects the way instructional coaching is viewed and may transform the role instructional coaches play in developing instruction focused on effectively closing performance gaps among student groups. Additionally, to review instructional coaching as it relates to student achievement among ethnic/racial groups, I conducted an analysis of studies from 2018 to 2020.

Assumptions

Instructional coaching requires that teachers and instructional coaches create a partnership for implementation of effective instructional practices in the classroom. More than any other approach, instructional coaching is a partnership between educators to facilitate an opportunity to learn. However, negative assumptions exist surrounding instructional coaching. The first assumption is that only one right answer can be provided by an instructional coach to direct a teacher's growth (Knight, 2009). That assumption then forces a teacher to listen only to what the instructional coach has to say rather than being a part of their own instructional growth. Another assumption that accompanies the one right version assumption is that an instructional coach who gives feedback is the only one thinking (Knight, 2009). This assumption does not allow for the growth of a teacher because it does not promote a partnership between instructional coach and teacher.

Scope and Delimitations

I conducted this study with a focus on Region 10 in Texas. There are certain delimitations within the study due to the selected participants. The study was delimited to administrators and teachers from secondary schools. The research was delimited to only one district. Therefore, a generalization of results will also be limited. Perceptions of the participants in this study could prove different from the perceptions of those who did not participate. The challenges of generalization of those who did participate in the district can impact how instructional coaching is perceived in other districts.

Limitations

The participants were virtually interviewed due to COVID-19. This circumstance limited face-to-face interactions between participants and researcher. To minimize limitations, participants were volunteers and were selected from purposive sampling. Purposive sampling includes participants who can provide the best information for the study. This selection included participants who have experience with instructional coaching and teaching in racially/ethnically diverse schools. Complete confidentiality was maintained for all participants.

Summary

Instructional coaching has been used to grow, develop, and guide teachers in the classroom. There has been limited research regarding the perceptions of administrators and teachers toward the effectiveness of instructional coaching (Matsko et al., 2020). In this study, I explored the effectiveness of instructional coaching by addressing the disparity of student assessment scores between African America, Hispanic, and European

American students (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Exploring teacher and administrator perceptions related to racial/ethnic student performance on state assessments is important. The impact instructional coaching has on teacher performance as it relates to student performance is an issue for African American, Hispanic, and European American students in Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

In this chapter, I focused on a discussion of the problem and the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to student achievement within ethnic groups. Chapter 2 includes recent literature regarding student achievement issues, equity, and best instructional practices. I also cite literature regarding the relationship between instructional coaching and student achievement.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

NCLB was an educational reform that initiated a movement to increase student achievement. However, with the increase of accountability, significant pressure was put on schools and specifically on teachers to meet educational demands (Hays & Urbansko, 2008). Teachers are required to increase student achievement within their classrooms. Instructional coaches are key drivers in helping teachers achieve this goal by ensuring that every student is successful in public school, college, and the workforce, regardless of their personal situation. Fullan (2016) highlighted that teachers are at the forefront of effectively implementing sustainable change. Instructional coaching is among many educational reforms put in place to address low performance of students. Instructional coaching is a partnership between teachers in which one is helping develop and grow the other through collaboration and reflection (Knight, 2018).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding the effectiveness of instructional coaching in addressing achievement gaps among student ethnic/racial groups. The focus problem for this study pertained to the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to the disparity between African American, Hispanic, and European American students in state assessments in Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The Texas College and Career Readiness Standards set an expectation of public schools to serve students by providing a curriculum that aligns with that of higher education (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2009). The goal is to ease the transition for students from secondary

to higher education, reduce students graduating from high school and having to take remedial college courses, and ultimately increase the number of Texas college graduates. In addressing student achievement gaps instructional coaching has been implemented to support students through teacher collaboration with a coach (Knight, 2019). Instructional coaches partner with teachers to build pedagogical practices through research-based practices and strategies (Knight, 2007). This qualitative study was conducted to address the effectiveness of instructional coaching by analyzing administrator and teacher perceptions. Data were collected through interviews using open-ended questions for participants to provide data regarding their own experiences with instructional coaching and its effectiveness.

Literature Search Strategy

Walden University's online library was the primary database used for searching literature on the perceptions of administrators and teachers and the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to achievement gaps among student ethnic/racial groups. While using Walden University's library, I was able to access literature related to instructional coaching guided by perceptions and student achievement. I was also able to set specific publication requirements, such as relevancy and year of publication. Literature in this review was limited to that dating five years from 2021.

I also accessed Google Search, SAGE Journals Online, and Educational Resource Information Center. The following terms were key in guiding the literature search: *instructional coaching*, *perceptions*, *instructional practices*, *student achievement*, and *equity*. Specific findings from the literature found in the databases were guided by the

previously mentioned terms that show the effects of perceptions toward instructional coaching as it relates to student achievement. Research used had been published from 2016–2020. Several older references relevant to the study are also presented. The studies provide an in-depth description of key concepts for this study, such as student achievement issues, equity, defining instructional coaching, best instructional practices, and resistance to instructional coaching.

Conceptual Framework

The coherence framework is defined as "the shared depth of understanding about the nature of the work" (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 30), making it fully and only subjective. Coherence occurs in the minds of people and therefore must be developed across groups. For this study, the coherence framework served to understand Region 10's approach regarding the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to student achievement. I was focused on secondary schools within Region 10. I looked at the directional vision as it comes to live through collaborative culture in a system focused on transformation.

Collaboration serves to create strong groups and purposeful individuals within each group. Therefore, the coherence framework helped me to better understand the implementation of instructional coaching through collaborative practices. Leaders can achieve a shared understanding through purposeful interaction among groups over time. Effective coherence is cumulative and ongoing with a shared understanding. Coherence relates to the whole system's (the district) focus, what effective pedagogy looks like, and measurable progress. Fullan and Quinn (2016) focused on moving from practice to theory

and determining what effective leaders do and then testing it in different circumstances. Through workshops and consultancies, administrators are taught coherence trends. The whole system environment includes 100% of schools within a district or all districts within a state. The focus in pedagogy that relates to the approach to teaching and learning practices applies to the effectiveness of current instruction. Effective pedagogy can lead to academic achievement and gaining academic and social–emotional skills necessary for the contribution of each student in society.

In the process of effective pedagogical practice, learning outcomes and academic achievement are to be measured when trying to monitor ongoing development. The coherence framework addresses accountability by connecting instructional core practices within the district and strategy for improvement. This can either support or highlight gaps within implementation (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Gaining coherence within a school, district, and region can support choosing a strategy that scalable and sustainable. The coherence framework includes responsibility and accountability of results and how decisions influence coherence. An encouraged practice uses measurable progress of all students to track outcomes of students. With instructional coaching being a method to address low student performance, a coherence framework has the possibility to develop a shared understanding among people.

Fullan and Quinn's (2016) coherence framework is focused on direction, cultivating collaborative cultures, deepening learning through innovation, and securing accountability. Since the beginning, urgency has existed to have a clear purpose of the specific goals that best impact the strategy by leadership to mobilize people. The impact

of these goals can be fluid and build coherence. The purpose identifies distractions and organizes strategies leading to the end goals. A specific goal that best influences this study will change leadership to mobilize people toward improving student outcomes. In cultivating collaborative culture, leaders can build capacity. This component has an essential focus on direction and establishing a culture of growth. Participation created through collaborative work is established by creating a place where people feel good when cultivating expertise of all members and focusing on a collective purpose. For example, in Peters K–3 Elementary School in Garden Grove, California, staff worked on underachievement by mobilizing collaborative groups (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). The principal at Peters focused on push factors and pull factors by acknowledging low performance data and urgency to make improvements. The principal valued listening to teacher ideas, and within 5 years, Peters was able to gain double digit increases in literacy by having clear goals for improvement and determining what role staff play in the contribution for change.

Leadership focuses of direction, valuing input, and promoting learning for culture change (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). The deepening of learning accelerates improvement and innovation. This component in schools and systems influence student learning and deepen the commitment to teaching and learning. Additionally, this component requires deeply examining instructional practices and their impact on students. In a global partnership, 800 schools in seven countries shifted their pedagogy to deepening learning to develop essential student skills. The shift transformed the roles of students, teachers, and families. Researchers found that early evidence supported the conclusion that

students became change agents, influencing pedagogical practice and the organization within schools for societal change (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Lastly, securing accountability based on capacity built from inside out acknowledged the wrong-minded external accountability. Therefore, the approach focusing on internal accountability will lead into external accountability. Strengthening the internal capacity of an organization takes self and collective responsibility for its performance.

Internal accountability takes ownership of collective responsibility and then engages in the external accountability framework. In internal accountability, the conditions recommended are specific goals, including transparency of practice, results, nonjudgment, commitment to assessing impact, and use of state accountability evidence. The goal with the coherence framework is to build a coherence collaborative culture for 5 or more years. Coherence is an ongoing conundrum and can be used by leaders who are focused on developing change within their schools. This issue has the potential to impact the study as it relates to instructional coaching perception and the impact it has in student achievement. In this study, I dove into learning to lead through achieving coherence includes focusing on direction, cultivating a collaborative culture that focuses on change, deepening learning as a core strategy to affect student results, and ensuring measurable accountability is occurring for growth.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

In the literature review, I discuss student achievement issues based on the support teachers receive with the implementation of instructional coaching. Instructional coaching has become a method of implementation in education to address student

achievement gaps. In this literature review, I focused on the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to student achievement within specific ethnic groups. In this section, I also discuss equity due to the disparities in student performance within various ethnic groups. In the current study, I focused on biases within ethnic groups that impact their ability to perform well in the classroom and how instructional coaching can potentially impact student performance. Also included are various instructional coaching definitions. For example, Knight (2007) explained instructional coaching as a practice in which instructional coaches provide teachers with evidence-based practices for them to incorporate in the classroom. Instructional coaching is also seen as a job-embedded strategy for teachers to learn to reflect on their practice and commit to implementation of change (Tanner et al., 2017).

Within the literature review there's also a focus on current instructional coaching practice within schools. Best instructional practices are highlighted in the literature review addressing intervention in the classroom as it relates to instructional practice impacting student achievement (Crawford et al., 2017). Progress monitoring for teacher instructional practice development is encouraged to address student gaps (Desimone et al., 2017). Resistance to coaching is detailed to address the challenges found within studies regarding instructional coaching. Teacher resistance derives from high expectations that teachers describe as burdensome, and at times, there's a lack of autonomy of pedagogical practice in the classroom (De Lima & Silva, 2016). Instructional coaches can impact instruction through reflection and redirection of pedagogical practice (Fisher et al., 2017). In the literature review, I analyze the potential

impact instructional coaches have on instructional practice as it relates to student achievement.

Student Achievement Issues

Instructional coaching has become a method implemented on school campuses to address low student performance (Close et al., 2020). Kraft et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analysis on the effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement. Empirical literature was reviewed on teacher coaching throughout the study. The meta-analysis findings in the study indicated that instructional coaching is a developmental tool, but also indicated that further analysis is needed to address the challenges of instructional coaching programs and the effectiveness these programs have on increasing student achievement (Kraft et al., 2018). Instructional coaching has emerged as a solution to educational reforms as it relates to improving student outcomes through teacher support (Lee et al., 2018).

The expectations set for Texas students after the implementation of the College and Career Readiness Standards in all core subjects outline the importance for student college preparation (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The Texas Academic Performance Report Card indicates students' current proficiency levels throughout elementary, middle, and high school (Texas Education Agency, 2020). After the enactment of NCLB and the ESSA, which more stringently addressed student achievement gaps, schools were required to make changes in teacher roles and increase accountability for closing the achievement gaps (Knight, 2019). The enactment of ESSA modified federal guidelines regarding the allocation for state and local educational agencies and called for states to

create accountability plans (Hope, 2017). The ESSA also highlighted the importance for all students, regardless of their background, to receive equitable education. ESSA was a vital part of preparing teachers properly and addressing topics regarding student support for 21st century learning (Hope, 2017). However, student achievement in Texas Region 10 continues to fall below proficiency. European American students in comparison to African American and Hispanic students score higher in all subjects. Kane et al. (2019) suggested implementation of instructional coaching to address educational gaps but with little to no guidance on how to implement a coaching model that is effective and how to address student needs on a campus.

Teachers, like students, learn in different ways. Instructional coaches must find differentiated ways to reach each teacher through an environment that encourages their instructional growth in the classroom. Day et al. (2016) studied successful school leaders using transformation and instructional strategies to make a difference and suggested that the principal's leadership style helps diagnose school needs for articulated application. Then embedding the organization's shared values and context-sensitive strategies into the school's culture will foster achievement. Glover (2017) suggested a data-driven instructional model to support teachers in guiding their classroom practice for early interventions.

In a qualitative study conducted by Israel et al. (2018), schools with a diverse student population embedded an instructional coaching approach to support science teachers in meeting the needs of diverse learners and students with disabilities. Coaching models such as co-planning between an instructional coach and teachers, and co-teachers,

a model in which there are two teachers in the classroom, supported the needs of students (Israel et al., 2018). The focus of the study was on building trust and increasing instructional skills as school campuses address student performance gaps. In a collaborative strategic reading approach study by Jacobs (2018) factors influenced responsive coaching on less receptive teachers in 71 middle schools comprising 28 teachers with three years in the classroom and 43 teachers with four years in the classroom. Teachers who were the least receptive were not accepting of collaboration with coaches because of new practices being implemented in the classroom. Complexities in addressing student achievement through the coaching process indicated that one-on-one models were not effective for the teachers and instead, an ongoing instructional method for teachers was recommended in overcoming barriers (Jacobs, 2018).

In a Western Australian primary school, teachers took explicit instruction as they measured the impact of instructional coaching as a developmental model for increasing student achievement (Hammond et al., 2018). Participants were interviewed concerning the coaching program and the impact it had on student learning, teacher feelings toward self-efficacy, and teacher attitudes about being coached. Teachers indicated that explicit instruction design and delivery positively impacted their instruction after five observed lessons (Hammond et al., 2018). It was also indicated that directive coaching had a positive impact on teacher competence and confidence in addressing student achievement. Teachers found the coach's tone of voice, written feedback, specifics, directness, and suggestions all positive. According to Zugelder (2019), collaborative coaching is less different; the instructional coach and teacher conducted co-constructed

solutions and conversations. In facilitative coaching, the teacher leads the conversation while the coach probes for problem solving and in developing better conversation skills teachers can positively impact student achievement (Zugelder, 2019). Kim and Seo (2018) conducted a meta-analysis to explore whether a relationship exists between teacher efficacy and student academic achievement. A total of 16 studies involving 4,130 teachers were synthesized. The results showed a significant relationship existed but with a small effect size. Results of the study also indicated that teacher experience played a role. Using the approach indicated in *Leading Coaching in School* by Creasy and Paterson (2005), application of rapport and trust achieves a relationship with teachers that helps them work on their own craft as it relates to student achievement.

Even though schools have increasingly implemented current coaching approaches, limited generalizations apply to students and their situations (Coffee & Kratochwill, 2013; Riley-Tillman & Eckert, 2001). Most of the current approaches are individualistic rather than taking a whole classroom approach. Fabiano et al. (2018) investigated wait-list controlled student teacher coaching with an emphasis on formative assessment and visual performance feedback to enhance teaching practices. The study aimed to improve Tier 1 classroom instructional strategies as an extension of targeted students and thus improve the whole classroom (Fabiano et al., 2018). Tier 1 students are those who receive core instructional interventions through the adoption of evidence-based curriculum. Instruction is differentiated to meet the specific needs of each student through retention to intervention. Participants in Fabiano et al. (2018) included 89 elementary teachers from 15 different schools with all teachers showing an interest in

improving their instructional strategies. The Classroom Strategies Assessment System was used to observe teachers and measure their performance. In the observations, teachers made improvement in behavior management, but not instructional strategies.

Moody (2019) mentioned Harvard's Center for Education Policy Research which is challenging the field of education to transform by thinking deeply of reflection, improving feedback, and changing the culture of educators by effectively supporting them through video observations to further engage coaches and teachers. Nine school districts that participated in a study by Leithwood et al. (2019) explored the characteristics that contributed to the understanding of leaders in their efforts to improve student achievement. The data gathered from 2,324 schools and district leaders provided a multigrade provincial measure of math and language achievement. Additional studies with a larger focus on the impact instructional coaching has on student outcomes are necessary (Fabiano et al., 2018.

Equity

An identity emerges when teachers and administrators understand working with students of various ethnicities. Teachers understanding their own racial identity and biases can be a large variable in how and why students are able to achieve in the classrooms. According to Aguilar (2020), an equitable condition of education beliefs changed when people understood how the belief was created. In the first phase of Transformational Coaching, coaches empower teachers by having them learn to recognize where their belief was created and therefore take responsibility for how it impacts those around them. Meaning was usually based on personal experiences and

cultural backgrounds. Instructional coaches working with teachers must engage by assuming the teacher wants to learn, grow, and refine those teaching practices that impact their beliefs. While new data is presented, the inaccurate beliefs toward racism can be distorted. Coaches also need to be intentional in their own growth in educational equity by engaging in difficult conversations, utilizing data to support their growth, and refining coaching practices. Coaches confronted with resistance can then become curious as to why resistance exists because it can create a space of compassion and growth.

Coaching for equity required that coaches acknowledge what inequalities look and look like so that coaching takes places with teachers and administrators (Aguilar, 2020). Depending on the life experiences of teachers and administrators, learning barriers may exist which must be overcome. Aguilar (2020) suggested cognitive understanding with a balance of psycho-social and spiritual healing. Without a balance of each of these factors, coaches, teachers, and administrators may become exhausted as racism can be a difficult topic to address for those who struggle with their own identity of understanding. Through the principals of transformational coaching the following takes place: (a) compassion, (b) curiosity, (c) connection, and (d) courage.

At each level of coaching an opportunity for transformation exists which may apply to all areas of growth. Conceptualizing gaps through transformational coaching anchors those participating to a growth mindset. Perceptions toward students of color changed when educators understand from the origin of the belief (Aguilar, 2020). Chris Argyris created the Ladder of Inference to depict how individuals' beliefs are formed.

The ladder began with observable data and experiences, selected data, added meaning, assumptions, conclusions, and beliefs. It culminated in actions.

According to Senge (1994), this model was used to describe how individuals unconsciously climb through the mental ladder of increasing abstraction which produced misguided beliefs. The human brain was exposed to experiences and data which added meaning to lived experiences creating awareness of cultural background assumptions. The assumptions led people to then create their own beliefs. Actions recommended by Aguilar (2020) to educators ask where the identify of belief come from, how it was acted out through behavior, and how different the behavior can be if this belief doesn't exist. The benefit of changing an identity may help educators understand themselves and others around them. In Transformational Coaching, teachers are invited to change a belief to manifest a version of themselves in which they feel better emotionally and consider how student outcomes may be impacted.

Definitions of Instructional Coaching

A need exists to define instructional coaching and what it looks like on school campuses (Lowenhaupt et al., 2014). Schools face enormous pressure to close student achievement gaps and increase student performance on state assessments (Range et al., 2014). Knight (2007) explained instructional coaching as a practice in which professional developers known as instructional coaches provide teachers with evidence-based practices for them to incorporate in the classroom. Coaching is a teaching strategy used to hone best teaching practices in the classroom. The goal is to create a plan for teachers to grow and meet their professional goals. One purpose for instructional coaching as an

educational reform derived from the goal of closing student achievement gaps (Close et al., 2020). Instructional coaches focus on growing a professional coaching relationship with teachers and school leaders. Depending on the developmental stage a teacher is in, their learning coaches may then move forward in the coaching cycle.

Instructional coaching is a job-embedded strategy in which teachers are encouraged to reflect on their practice and commit to implementation of change (Tanner et al., 2017). One of the practices instructional coaches use is having a preobservation conference with a teacher and a postobservation conference to review and enhance teacher instructional quality (Kho et al., 2018). Instructional coaches build relationships founded on trust and rapport with teachers. The instructional coach provides feedback and guides the teacher through the planning phase of implementing best teaching practices in the classroom. The implementation of instructional coaching has driven schools to use their current-state data to develop higher teaching standards and increase teacher accountability (Knight, 2006). When planning implementation of new instructional practices, coaches must remember that it is important to reflect on what is currently going on in the classroom and engage in conversations that encourage growth for teachers.

Best Instructional Coaching Practice

The Texas School Ready project is comprised of five major components concerning coaching competencies and how they are contextualized to best support teachers as a form of intervention (Crawford et al., 2017). One of the components encouraged face-to-face introduction of foundational coaching, Progress Monitoring

Training to track student progress, and a 100-hour video-based demonstration of best instructional practices. Desimone et al. (2017) synthesized five key features of instructional coaching with a research-based framework in which teachers become more successful through frequent opportunities to practice. The findings which support active learning include observing expert teachers followed by interactive feedback and discussions of student work. Resources and curricula from the Texas School Ready project encouraged utilization of a high-quality curriculum to meet state learning expectations and a collection of more than 300 activities for teachers to use in the classroom. Through the utilization of the materials, teachers received feedback provided by their coaches. Coaches played a vital part in campus buy-in and sustainability. An encouraged practice is providing routine communication, hosting meetings, and discussing program aims. Coaching structured to provide teachers with feedback encouraged reflection and motivated change.

Anderson and Wallin (2018) examined key features of effective instructional coaching from empirical strategies. A professional learning community fostered collaboration within teachers and can be used by the coach to model a strategy to the group (Anderson & Wallin, 2018). However, a perceived flaw in this strategy is that students might not understand a lesson in which the focus is on the teacher. Therefore, a deepened student comprehension is encouraged through scaffolding and providing resources. San Martin (2018) examined how a supervisor scaffolded student teachers' learning to teach and found that scaffolding can provide contingent help to address specific student needs and difficulties.

Ajani (2019) explored concepts related to adult learners and reflected on these concepts by enhancing classroom practices. The findings also indicated that adult learners wanted to be actively engaged but also wanted to be able to have individual differences and self-direction in their own classroom. Gaowei's (2020) study proposed visual learning analytics (VLA) by using video-based professional development. The experiment included 46 secondary mathematics teachers who were randomized and who integrated academic talk in their teaching. Teachers participated in conventional knowledge-based workshops. In the posttest, results showed that teachers from the treatment group had more positive beliefs and higher efficacy, while the control group did not have significant change.

Knight (2019) studied coaching the past twenty years and recognized the importance of teacher autonomy as teachers reflect on traditional practices. Instructional coaches must honor teachers' choices to increase motivation. Deci and Ryan (2000) conducted extensive research on motivation referred to as self-determination theory. They found that individuals have three needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness that will either increase motivation if met or will decrease motivation if not met (Deci & Ryan, 2000). People are motivated when they feel competent about what they are doing because they have more control over their lives and can build positive relationships. When a relationship is strained, such as teachers' not feeling that they have autonomy, motivation decreases. Knight (2019) mentioned that teacher autonomy decreased from 2003 to 2012 and as a result, coaches should focus on engaging teachers by motivating them in the decision-making process inside their classrooms. In a 2019 workshop, Texas

teacher Jim Knight addressed what not to do as an instructional coach in situations in which choices are not given to teachers and in which teachers instead become compliant. Humans are defined by the choices they make. Taking away their rights to choose dehumanizes teachers and results only in their compliance (Block, 1993). Connor (2017) studied common elements of effective coaching models as a special issue and found rigorous coaching models help close achievement gaps and ensure that students' social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs are all supported.

A best practice encouraged is to document sound practice. Documentation of tasks in various formats for transparency when meeting supervisors and having reflective feedback is a process that makes instructional coaching effective (Amyett, 2019). Another practice was to have quantitative measures presented to teachers taking the coaching practice. A qualitative example was provided by a survey regarding instructional coaching. Hasbrouck (2017) provided student-focused coaching (SFC) because the delivery was cooperative, engaging the coach and teacher with better services to students. Common mistakes are prevented through SFC for teachers who struggled or for those who were less competent (Schachter et al., 2018).

Instructional coaches are drivers of change and have multiple roles they play at a campus to impact change and ensure that teachers are meeting students' needs for their success on state assessments and beyond (Fullan, 2016). Walpert-Gawran (2016) defined the instructional coach's role as: (a) mentor teachers, (b) conduct professional development at various levels, (c) research and curate resources, (d) publicize positive impact of instructional coaching, and (e) act as a change agent.

Knight et al. (2018) described instructional coaching as a partnership in which planning takes place for developing materials, refining curriculum, and honing specific strategies in the classroom. Mentoring required modeling of a lesson to help a teacher build instructional strategies in the classroom (Walpert-Gawran, 2016). Building trust with the teacher as a facilitator of change encouraged implementation of new strategies in the classroom. Knight (2006) discussed eight factors that can increase the possibility for instructional coaching to help a school improve the way teachers teach and the way students learn. The eight factors Knight (2006) identified were: (a) provide sufficient time to work with teachers, (b) use proven research-based interventions, (c) provide professional development for instructional coaches, (d) protect the coaching relationship, (e) ensure that administrators and coaches work together, (f) hire effective instructional coaches, (g) evaluate coaches, and (h) address coaching fixes.

The instructional coach instructs the teacher in the process of pacing themselves and making adjustments in the classroom to best-fit students' educational needs. In the discussion by Creasy and Paterson (2005) five key skills for effective educational coaches were presented: (a) establishing rapport and trust, (b) listening for meaning, (c) questioning for understanding, (d) prompting action, reflection and learning, and (e) developing confidence and celebrating success.

The roles of instructional coaches were comprised of various descriptors; however, insufficient data existed as to a universal acceptance of what functions the role entailed (Kho et al., (2018). A qualitative study conducted by Kho et al. (2018) composed of semi-structured interviews of ten instructional coaches, helped define the roles of

instructional coaches and the possibility for role shifts. The study by Kho et al. (2018) used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis approach: (a) familiarizing yourself with the data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) conducting a report.

Braun and Clarke (2006) created a six-phase thematic analysis approach used in qualitative studies to identify, analyze, and report data through a thematic analysis. Kho et al. (2018) indicated that the three major roles of instructional coaches were those of implementers, advocates, and educators. These roles may be influenced based on teacher readiness, coaching styles, and coaching qualities.

The study also indicated that the roles of instructional coaches shift, depending on the situation (Kho et al., 2018). Different situations encouraged a different approach to coaching and illustrated the need for individualization to address specific issues. Teacher needs and current instructional practice in the classroom vary from teacher to teacher. Instructional coaches should therefore reflect on their coaching practice to enhance and improve coaching implementation. A teacher reflected on their current practice and thought deeply about the teaching methods employed in the classroom and how to move forward to make their instructional practice more effective (Kho et al., 2018). It was suggested to identify the roles of instructional coaches based on the thematic analysis approach as a point of reference for pedagogical content knowledge that can be shared from instructional coach to teacher (Kho et al., 2018). Sam and Caliendo (2018) in their qualitative study found that coaches had to negotiate several roles within school context, including those of teachers, principals, and their own responsibilities as coaches.

Instructional coaching encourages teachers to be active learners and learn to solve problems without direct coaching, utilizing a coaching style that guides teachers to the solution and creates teacher autonomy. Building teacher autonomy helped the teacher become more independent in their own practice. Rogers et al. (2016) asserted that, given the demands of standardized assessments, teacher autonomy is an important aspect of teaching. Suriano et al. (2018) conducted a case study and highlighted instructional coaching as a meaningful strategy for teachers as it made them feel supported and empowered. Knight (2016) encouraged instructional coaches to adopt better conversations in their role of instructional coach for improved instruction. Knight (2016) suggested the following:

- I see conversation partners as equals.

- I want to hear what others have to say.

- I believe people should have a lot of autonomy.

- I don't judge others.

- Conversation should be back and forth.

- Conversation should be life-giving.

Resistance to Coaching

Frostenson (2015) described autonomy as an opportunity for an individual to influence contents, frames, and control of teaching practices. As they were at the core of teacher willingness to implement classroom instructional changes, teachers felt that they were a part of the decision-making process. De Lima and Silva (2016) studied teacher resistance in the classroom and found teachers had a specific reaction to the education

system as a whole due to increased expectations of accountability, describing their reactions as stressful and burdensome based on their experiences. Gibbons and Cobb (2017) conducted a conceptual analysis of learning activities to support mathematics and science teachers in their instructional practice. The study found that teachers were resistant to practice what they watched in videos as it appeared that there was no purpose or goal to the video. Effective instructional coaches used videos to provide questions, have the participants discuss key issues, and develop ideas on methods by which they can build a lesson.

Hunt (2016) took a microethnographic approach in her study to discourse analysis regarding ways literacy coaches' and teachers' emotions are impacted when negotiating issues. Findings in this study suggested that teachers benefited when their emotions were acknowledged at work through discussions that involved a shared vision of learning. In a study of school improvement by Mohamad (2016), teachers felt less resistant when there was an intent of improving dexterity and understanding of what the future activity or role involved. Savina (2019) conducted empirical research analyzing substantial factors that influenced teacher resistance to innovative activities in the classroom. The three factors that impacted teacher resistance in the study were social, professional, and psychological. The social factor was impacted by feeling disrespected or unvalued in the work environment. The professional factor that impacted resistance was teachers who were unwilling to update theoretical knowledge and as a result, failed to impact improvement of practice. Psychological factors related to a teacher's personal characteristics and

stereotypes relative to innovative activities, decreased the intent to implement and change.

Cutrer-Parraga (2020) conducted a qualitative study that explored the relationship between literacy coaches' and kindergarten teachers' resistance in the United States. The data suggested that teachers who were low-implementing required intensive strategies to address cross cultural challenges and feel supported. Even though trust is necessary in relationships, in this situation, improved teaching skills required navigating through teacher resistance. In Brabham et al. (2016) a mixed-methods study investigated teacher perceptions of instruction as a professional development tool and found that teachers who received instructional coaching developed greater collaboration, collegiality, and awareness of their instructional practices. Phillips et al. (2016) found that coaching significantly impacted student reading scores when teachers not only participated in instructional coaching as a professional development activity but also received follow-up coaching sessions.

Studies on the Impact of Instructional Coaching

Along with the role of an instructional coach comes the coach's own pedagogical style. According to Fisher et al. (2017), direct instruction clustered into four categories was didactic, inflexible, judgmental toward teachers, and related only to surface knowledge. A nonauthoritative approach to coaching was designed such that instructional coaches were not judging and treating teachers in an authoritative manner, which resulted in teachers' putting up a wall (Kho, 2018). In Kho et al. (2018), found how participants who adopted a nonauthoritative coaching approach played more the role of an advocate

and educator. Analysis from the study revealed that those in the role of educator engaged in instructive and dialogical conversations to create a coach-teacher mutual understanding (Kho et al., 2018). Teachers were encouraged to become active leaders. According to Callahan (2016) who reviewed literature regarding mentoring and retention as it relates to increasing student achievement, the Texas Teacher Mentor Advisory reported seven key criteria for high quality mentoring programs to improve teacher ability. The criteria included: mentor selection, mentor assignment, mentor training, mentor roles and responsibilities, program design and delivery, funding, and accountability. When implemented effectively, these criteria enabled teachers to have a solid level of support.

In the study conducted by Kraft and Blazar (2017), "MATCH Teacher Coaching," the researchers analyzed a coaching model, focused on classroom management and instructional coaching at all grade levels and in subjects. The model consisted of three components: core materials and resources, summer institute training, and one-on-one coaching during the school year. The program consisted of 59 teachers in block randomized trials. The study-built evidence on coaching models created to improve both behavior management and instructional practices. Teachers who received coaching were rated higher by principals and students, and findings also improved teacher effectiveness the following year after teachers no longer received coaching.

Instructional coaching, as do many other educational reforms, served to improve student achievement with assisted instructional practices (Lee et al., 2018). Coherence served as a process for schools and districts to work together to continually collaborate to achieve demands of student achievement by strategizing goals and strategies (Honig &

Hatch, 2004). The craft of coherence requires schools to create school wide goals and strategies that best fit campus needs. School districts then are to support the school-level process in the crafting of coherence. School leaders represent a sustainable enhancement of better understanding on how to improve conditions affecting student achievement. In Texas, Region 10, European American students are the only group to have met proficiency on state assessments, with all minority groups falling below proficiency levels in four of five state assessments (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Fullan suggested that school leaders needed to be an integral part in implementing sustainable change to improve conditions affecting student achievement. Teachers' instructional practice was further developed with the assistance of coaches and administrators to improve student achievement at a campus (Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

Summary

In Chapter 2, I discussed instructional coaching roles, student achievement, instructional coaching practices, perceptions, resistance, and change. Instructional coaching continues to be a method used to grow teachers' instructional practice in the classroom. Literature details the role instructional coaching has played in improving teacher practices in their classroom as it impacts student learning. The enactment of NCLB and ESSA have served to address student achievement issues and require teacher development to increase closing the gaps (Knights, 2019). Major themes found in the literature review was the low student performance of African American and Hispanic students in comparison to their European American peers (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The implementation of instructional coaching requires guidance in how to address

student needs within schools (Kane et al., 2019). Another theme found was the leadership role principals play in transforming instruction in the classroom through the development of a school culture that fosters growth of teachers and students (Day et al., 2016).

Educational equity development starts from teachers and administrators understanding student backgrounds and how equitable conditions impact student achievement (Aguilar, 2020). Another theme found was resistance to instructional coaching due to the lack of understanding of impact. Resistance can be confronted through the growth of equitable understanding and learning how to overcome barriers for specific ethnic groups. The ladder of inference suggests observing data and experiences. The collection of data creates meaning to the importance of instructional practice and addresses resistance by culminating possible actions within schools.

The accountability system has been enhanced due to the enactment which brings equity to the forefront of the discussion as there is a large disparity within ethnic groups in performance. However, little research exists concerning teacher and administrator perceptions of instructional coaching as it impacts student achievement. In Chapter 3, I discuss the research method for this basic qualitative study with a social constructivism approach. In conclusion, teacher and administrator perceptions as they relate to student achievement were analyzed in further detail.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding the effectiveness of instructional coaching in addressing achievement gaps among student ethnic/racial groups. In this chapter, I present the research design and rationale for this basic qualitative study and explain the selection behind the study. Included are the purposeful sampling regarding the participants, data collection methods, and the process by which I analyzed the data. This section is followed by a discussion of the role of the researcher; the study methodology; the procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; the data analysis plan; issues of trustworthiness; and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

A basic qualitative research approach was the design for this study as it allowed a social constructivism approach. A basic qualitative research approach is determined by the way people interpret their experiences and derive meaning from those experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Qualitative research can be used to examine lessons learned through lived experiences from study participants (Gaudet & Robert, 2018). The participants bring insight during analysis to common themes that emerge within the study.

Qualitative studies are helpful in constructing meaning from what people have lived and experienced (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This study allowed participants to provide perceptions concerning instructional coaching to help determine its effectiveness

as it relates to student achievement. However, qualitative research relies on the experiences of the participants, which can be limited if the participants do not have a body of experience on the topic or do not provide enough details on what they have experienced through the interview process.

For this study, I sought to investigate the perceptions of participants and not restrict their ability to provide insights into their lived experiences. The use of open-ended questions allowed for instructional coaching to be explored in-depth and to address achievement gaps among student ethnic and racial groups. In a basic qualitative study, the interaction between participant and researcher allows participants to interpret their experiences and construct meaning from their lived experiences (Merriam, 2015). I used phenomenology as a central structure because of its ability to provide direct experiences.

The research design used gave me the ability to ask participants about their perceptions, lived experiences, and attitudes. In the interviews, I had the opportunity to ask participants open-ended questions from a semistructured interview questionnaire. The question guiding the basic qualitative study was: What are administrator and teacher perceptions of instructional coaching as it affects student performance gaps between ethnic/racial groups? Participants had the opportunity to provide their perceptions that identify and address aspects of successful instructional coaching.

Role of the Researcher

I have been employed in a school district located in Region 10 in Texas. My role as the researcher was to gather data for the purpose of this study revealing administrator and teacher perceptions regarding the role of instructional coaching on student

performance. Ten schools within Region 10 participated in the study. I have no relationship with administrators and teachers who were contacted for participation. The only relationship I have is a professional relationship with the administrative team and teachers at my current campus. I focused on selecting secondary campuses due to the high stakes in student achievement. There is no specific conflict of interest as it relates to the content or those participating.

Methodology

The population participating were administrators and teachers within Region 10. Region 10 is located in the region of focus for this study. The insights provided from the perceptions of administrators and teachers toward the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to student performance may addresses barriers to successful instructional coaching. I limited participation in the study to administrators and teachers from Region 10. Once conditionally approved by Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), the district application to participate in the study was submitted. Each district has its own application process, which can be found online and submitted through their human resources personnel for approval. However, prior to submitting the application the Walden University IRB had to approve.

The participating districts have staff members from elementary, middle, and high schools. In Region 10, there were principals, assistant principals, and teachers available for participation. If only a specific number of schools within the region could participate due to scheduling conflict, I was then going to reach out to neighboring districts and submit an application for participation. Another possible alternative was asking middle

school administrator and teachers to participate. The goal was to have an even number of administrators and teachers participating in the study.

To gain insight for the purpose of the study, I used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling focuses on a specific group that has relevancy to the study by providing insight, details, and understanding (Creswell & Plano, 2011). The perceptions provided came from administrators and teachers from campuses within the same region. The participants selected were able to help address the research question and allow me to acquire a more in-depth analysis. With purpose sampling there was a set number of eight administrators and eight teachers. However, exceptions to these numbers could have been made if necessary. Small sampling sizes occur in qualitative studies. Participants in this study had to have an understanding of instructional coaching practices and barriers found in implementation and impacts on student achievement.

Sample Size

The use of purposive sampling was key in identifying perceptions of those closest to the instructional coaching process. Most importantly, purposive sampling gave participants an opportunity to share their lived experiences. Purposive sampling is used in qualitative research to identify and select rich-information related to a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). The purpose of purposive sampling is to identify and select individuals who are knowledgeable in the specific phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) noted that in purposive sampling there is a need for availability and willingness to participate so that experiences are articulated in an expressive and reflective manner. The use of purpose sampling in this study helped to

provide a better understanding of instructional coaching practices and barriers encountered by administrators and teachers as they impact student achievement.

The sample size used came from the small number of sampling sizes used in qualitative studies (Vasileiou et al., 2018). In qualitative studies, it is important to consider sample sizes because of the impact sample size can have on the quality and trustworthiness of the research and the implications it can potentially have on the validity of the study (Vasileiou et al., 2018). The small sample sizes in qualitative research support in-depth analysis relevant to the phenomenon. The number of administrators and teacher participants in this study was equal. However, I made exceptions, depending on availability and ability to participate in the study. Since the focus was secondary schools, eight administrators were selected as well as eight teachers. The eight administrators came come from different campuses as well as the eight teachers. If I had not met these numbers, I would have contacted administrators and teachers in surrounding districts within the same region. I was also able to contact middle school administrators and teachers in Region 10 prior to submitting the IRB application in neighboring districts. Small purposive sampling in qualitative studies supports trustworthiness and quality of the study (Vasileiou et al., 2018). I did not risk validity and addressed possible issues, such as inability to gain participants from one district, by remaining in the same region but allowing participants from other districts within the region.

Selection of Participant Criteria

Both teachers and administrators were selected for participation in this study. The teacher participants I selected all work in the same region; however, neither teachers nor

administrators selected all worked at the same campus. I invited all core content teachers

who teach state-assessed subjects to participate. I used a purposeful selection process for

teachers focused on all core content areas who teach state-assessed subjects: English I,

English II, Algebra I, biology, and U.S. history. Because the study was focused on the

perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding student achievement using student

performance of state assessments, core content teachers had the ability to provide insights

based on their experiences (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Small sample sizes and purposive

sampling focus on trustworthiness within the study as well as quality (Vasileiou et al.,

2018). I recruited teachers by selecting names from the district website and then asking

them to volunteer if they have worked with an instructional coach.

For administrators, I also used a purposive selection process by asking all

secondary principals who have worked with an instructional coach to volunteer. I invited

high school administrators to participate, with the exception of the high school where I

am employed. Those who responded that they were willing to participate became part of

a list, and I could contact them in case anyone previously selected decided to not

participate. Willingness of participation was important in the study as it allowed

participants to express their experiences in an articulate and reflective manner (Bernard,

2002).

All participants worked on secondary school campuses in the region. Each of the

campuses currently has an instructional coach. I did not select instructional coaches to

participate as my study was focused on teacher and administrator perceptions of the

effectiveness of instructional coaching. I selected the participants from the availability of

the district website for each of the campuses. The district website provided information

on all staff members based on work place and the content taught. Those considered were

administrators at secondary campuses and teachers who teach a core subject and have

worked with a coach. If those selected were unable to participate, I would have contacted

aspiring participants to take part in the study. My goal was to have eight principals and

eight teachers participate. Based on these selection criteria, the participants would add

relevancy to the study and provide insights, details, and an understanding of instructional

coaching (Creswell & Plano, 2011).

Instrumentation

Prior to contacting participants for the study, I selected five individuals from the

region not participating in the study to be part of an expert committee. These five

individuals were eliminated from potentially participating in the study. Their

participation could have created biases in the study which would have limited validity of

the study. Their participation only took place as members of the expert committee. In the

expert committee, each member gave feedback regarding interview questions for those

participating in the study. Four members of the committee were assistant principals at one

of the high schools in the district. One of the expert committee members was a principal.

I emailed each expert committee member and asked to meet for feedback on the

development of the interview protocol questions. Seidman (2006) suggested interviewing

expert committee members in a qualitative study for participation to reduce the risk of

bias and ensure the topic of study is being addressed. I used the expert committee to

provide input on the interview questions (see Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2005).

Members of the committee were able to make recommendations based on their expertise in the field and discussed various courses of action. The feedback provided by the expert committee was to first establish the purpose of the interview to encourage participants to begin thinking about the impact of instructional coaching. I asked participants to share their personal experiences, successes, and barriers. Once the participants laid out what instructional coaching is, what makes it successful, and what barriers exist, I addressed performance gaps. The performance gaps had the potential to be challenging questions to obtain feedback on. Therefore, the expert committee members suggested to prime participants by rearranging the interview questions. Another suggestion by the expert committee was to try to create more focus on ethnic and racial groups and how instructional coaching targets these groups. This focus may potentially provide more focus on instructional coaching and how it impacts gaps and performance levels. The resulting interview protocol instrument is located in Appendix A.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The first step in being able to interview the participants was completing the Walden IRB application for approval. Once I had IRB conditional approval, I contacted the director of assessment and accountability via email. The application process by the participating district required an approval letter from Walden's IRB to request approval through the district before contacting participants. Once the district research request was approved and Walden University IRB provided final approval #01-20-22-0991326, I

contacted participants via email and kept their personal names confidential. Invitations

included directions for participation and consent regarding involvement in the interviews.

I also provided the open-ended questions to build trustworthiness. I addressed the

location and time for the interviews in the invitations. I held confidential information

concerning participants and the districts they represent throughout the duration of the

study. Participants who agreed to participate received a consent form by email and reply

"I consent" before scheduling interviews. The data collected came from the teacher and

administrator participants during their interviews, which I personally conducted during

the interviews. By conducting the interviews, I was able to build trustworthiness in the

study. I asked participants to be part of the research via email and allowed them to give

consent to either face-to-face interviews or virtually using Zoom or Google Meets. When

used Zoom, I set it to provide a transcript immediately. The safety of the participants was

of priority as COVID 19 continues to impact society and the well-being of people. Prior

to the interviews, I emailed the interview protocol to each of the participants, to build

trust and a relationship for detailed insights.

I conducted the interviews for an approximate duration of one hour each. Upon

completion of the interviews, I transcribed them verbatim from the recordings. The

interviews conducted were scheduled for an hour for each of the participants in the study

but may take a longer or shorter amount of time. In the interviews, I printed the interview

questions, and as I asked the interview questions, I wrote notes. I recorded the interviews

with each participant with the participants' consent. Once the interviews were completed,

I listened to them and transcribed what each participant said. I uploaded the recordings to

Otter.ai. Otter.ai is used for qualitative data analysis of spoken words of participants. It is

helpful because it highlights specific words and phrases not otherwise understood. I

planned to listen to each interview twice so that I ensured to have listened to the

interview more than once after it was conducted. Each one of the recordings was

uploaded to Google Drive to ensure that they are kept in order and for reference as

needed. Once the interview ended, I then shared with the participants to review the

transcripts to increase validity as well as sending aa thank you email to each of the

participants.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of the organization, examination,

describing, coding and arranging evidence (Creswell, 2014). This form of analysis occurs

when participants provide feedback by answering research question through details of

their lived experiences. In qualitative data Otter.ai supports coding words of participants

allows the researcher to organize data into themes (Manning, 2017). Once words and

phrases are categorized a pattern can provide a deeper understanding of the research

problem in the study (Yin, 2013). Each interview was then analyzed and used to find

similarities and differences.

Saldana's (2012) first cycle methods for coding occur in the initial gathering data

into categories being grammatical, elemental, affective, literacy and language,

exploratory, and procedural methods. For this study, I used Saldana's first cycle of

coding. I was to first focus on the grammatical aspect gathered from the interviews

conducted. A grammatical method can attribute to coding by listing all attributes of the

data. I used the elemental method as it relates to questions being asked throughout the interviews and then broke down data into comparative parts. The affective method allows for labels based on emotions and experiences recalled by the participants to be highlighted. I could describe and compare values, attributes, and beliefs from the participants. Through literacy and language methods I was able to find a generic form of the interview by a precise transcript of the conversation and narratives provided. I then used the exploratory method by looking at themes and issues and analyzing the data to existing knowledge from texts. At the end of the first cycle, I concluded all coding by looking at categories based on beliefs and perceptions which led into themes of the data. By creating themes, I grouped similar ideas among the data.

In the second cycle methods to coding strategies need analytical skills such as classifying, prioritizing, integrating, synthesizing, abstracting, conceptualizing, and theory. Coding methods are applied to interpreting and analyzing information and focus on synthesizing prior research (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2016). After having gone through Saldana's first cycle of coding I then did second cycle of coding to reanalyze and reorganize data (Saldana, 2012). In the second cycle I developed major themes from the data and described category properties related to one another. By categorizing I was able to prioritize themes appropriate for the study and research questions. Integrating and synthesizing of categorizing derived from the coding could then create a theory. I can then conceptualize and categories as they start to move towards a thermotical direction related to the study.

I was also able to conduct analysis by listening to the recording and transcribing the interviews. Transcribing the interviews required that I listen to the interviews through the first cycle of coding. This was the second time I listened to the interviews as the first time was done when the interviews were being conducted. After transcribing and analyzing the interviews in the first cycle of coding I then did it again in the second cycle of coding with a focus on prioritizing and classifying themes. I categorized key words and phrases to identify specific patterns. Each word and phrase was categorized based on the research question and conceptual framework of the study. After the study, I used the data to drive potential development of instructional practices based on the perceptions.

Issues with Trustworthiness

The COVID-19 pandemic limited the study to only virtual interviews via Zoom or Google Meets. The inability to conduct face-to-face interviews is important to recognize as a limitation. Therefore, engaging with the participants through emailing the interview protocol before the interview helped create a relationship of trustworthiness. With the ongoing changes in education due to COVID-19, administrators may be preoccupied. Every participant came from Region 10, so I can have ensured representation from multiple campuses in the study. The target number for this qualitative study was eight administrators using purpose sampling where the sampling size is kept small (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Other administrators besides principals also had the ability to participate in the study. While I highly encouraged principals, I also asked other administrative personnel, such as associate and assistant principals to participate. Availability to participate in the study was a priority.

Credibility

Qualitative researchers ensure credibility by using triangulation, member checking, and peer auditor (Creswell, 2014). I checked credibility using member checking. Through transcript reviews, each participant had the opportunity to review and clarify their responses with me. Each participant had access to the interview transcript. This access allowed for the participant to have access to the content of their interview and verify that the correct transcript was being used for the purpose of the study.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended a thick description of the phenomenon to create transferability in the study. Researchers use thick description in qualitative studies as technique for robust and detailed experiences in data collection. I provided detailed information regarding the experiences during each interview. Other aspects of data collection such as the location of the interview, when it occurred, work exhaustion can give a fuller understanding of the research setting. This form of information may provide a construct scene surrounding the research study and provide insight into the daily lives of participants. This insight has the potential to allow outside researchers to make context of the environments that frame the study and make transferability judgements of their own.

Dependability

I created dependability by using consistency and reliability of the findings with the research to a degree in which if the research procedures can be followed. There was a detailed coverage of the methodology used to allow readers to know the full extent of

appropriate research practices being followed (Shenton, 2004). I ensured to include all methods of data collection to increase dependability to increase research transparency (D'Cruz et al., 2007).

Confirmability

Confirmability served to ensure the degree of findings of the research study can be confirmed by other researchers. Establishing data interpretation of the findings directly from the derived data required that I analyzed all data through a conceptual lens. This analysis aligned with all accepted standards for the particular design. I kept data neutrality by focusing on the grounded data. Also, I created a complete set of notes during the interviews as well as the transcripts from the interview recordings to assist me in maintaining confirmability.

To maintain credibility and transferability participants interviewed were emailed a transcript of the interview recording. Korstejens & Moser (2018) to ensure transferability interview questions allowed for participants to describe not just behavior and experiences, but context that is meaningful to an outsider. Transparently describing the study and finding provide confirmability to study.

<div align="center">

Ethical Procedures

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Walden University requires an IRB application and approval of the study design for ethical and legal regulations. Each district has its own application for research request. To facilitate a review, I submitted a research request in a timely manner, as the district must work to find relevancy and evaluate the request due to the potential impact it can have in programming and district personnel. Depending on the nature of the request,

the district can require additional information. Additionally, the district required a written proposal outlining the purpose and scope of the study. Before submitting the application, I shared a copy of Walden University's IRB approval letter.

I did not use the names of participants and school districts throughout the reporting of the study. Instead, I used pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. I conducted interviews via Zoom or Google Meets. With approval of the participants, I conducted interviews face-to-face. The COVID-19 pandemic caused restriction of face-to-face interviews. Therefore, I did virtual interviews as the first option I provided to participants.

Summary

This basic qualitative study highlighted categories concerning the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to student achievement of students from specific ethnic and racial groups. In addition, the data collected from the interviews from teachers and administrators assisted in the development of effective instructional coaching strategies. The semistructured interviews with open-ended questions helped to clearly define instructional coaching and models that are currently implemented within each district.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding the effectiveness of instructional coaching in addressing gaps among student ethnic/racial groups. A total of 10 schools participated from Region 10 in Texas. Each teacher and administrator who participated had worked with an instructional coach and had experience with instructional coaching. Administrator participants had supported teachers' instructional growth. Teachers who participated in the study all taught or have taught a core content subject that is state assessed.

Through the semistructured interviews, participants were asked open-ended questions. Participants defined instructional coaching, explained how they see instructional coaching as it relates to student achievement, and discussed their perceptions of instructional coaching as it affects student performance between ethnic groups. Specific factors contributing to successful instructional coaching and barriers were also shared by participating teachers and administrators. Both teachers and administrators were able to make suggestions and changes necessary to increase the effectiveness of instructional coaching and share instructional benefits acquired from collaborating with an instructional coach. Barriers to instructional coaching were provided by participants based on their experiences as well as their experiences with different aspects of instructional coaching based on the following student ethnic groups: African American, Hispanic, and European Caucasian.

In this chapter, I present the findings for this basic qualitative study and provide the data collected from the interviews conducted. Included are the setting of the interviews, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results from the study. This section is followed by a discussion of the data collected, conclusion of the study, and recommendations.

Setting

Prior to conducting the interviews, each participant was emailed a detailed invitation including information regarding the study and their role as a participant. All participants came from one of two different districts within Region 10 in Texas. Participants from 10 schools participated in the study. The goal with small sizing through purposive sampling in this qualitative study was to support trustworthiness and the quality of the study (see Vasileiou et al., 2018). Once the participant agreed to participate, they shared their availability, and I emailed them a calendar invite. In the calendar invitation, I included a Zoom link so that each participant had access to the correct interview platform. The Zoom interviews were set up for 1 hour in which each interviewee had the opportunity to respond to all the questions.

Demographics

I focused on interviewing eight administrators and eight teachers in their respective roles. Of the eight administrator participants, five were women and three were men. Of the eight teacher participants, six were women and two were men. In the interviews, administrators and teachers were able to provide their perceptions regarding instructional coaching and their current perceptions of the effectiveness of instructional

coaching as it relates to student achievement. The basic qualitative research approach

gave all participants the ability to interpret their experiences and derive meaning from

those lived experiences (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Teachers and administrators were

able to share their experiences within education with instructional coaching, such as how

coaching has impacted their own instructional practice, how coaching is used at their

campus, and how coaching has impacted student achievement. I created pseudonyms for

teachers and administrators to maintain confidentiality and develop trustworthiness. After

organizing teacher and administrator participants, I then developed pseudonyms as shown

in Table 1.

Table 1

Pseudonyms

Teachers pseudonyms	Administrator pseudonyms
Ms. Ford	Mr. Brown
Ms. Phillips	Ms. Gipson
Ms. Jones	Ms. Cox
Mr. Williams	Mr. Tucker
Ms. Roberts	Ms. Smith
Ms. Donald	Ms. Ross
Mr. Davis	Ms. Duce
Ms. Jones	Mr. Pratt

Data Collection

In Chapter 3, my plan was to collect data from one district in Region 10, but due

to a lack of participation, I used participants from two districts in Region 10. All

interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom. Throughout the interviews, I maintained a

neutral tone and refrained from subjectivity by focusing on neutrality as the interviewee

was responding to each question. When scheduling each interview, I ensured inviting the

participant by focusing on their availability, time, and place they felt most comfortable to them and ensured it was not overwhelming to their current responsibilities. I ensured each participant knew their participation in the study would be kept confidential as it is important to ensure they felt safe when responding. I completed all the interviews in my office because it is a quiet space where I could be an active listener.

The participants included administrators: seven head principals and one assistant principal. All the administrators had experience working with instructional coaches in their current role. The eight teachers who participated had experience with teaching a state-assessed subject, such as English I, English II, Algebra I, biology, and U.S. history. Every person who agreed to participate in the study was able to opt out of participation at any moment. This created an environment in which the participant knew their involvement in the study was of importance but if they felt at risk as the process began, they could also choose to not participate. This is an important factor because it allows participants to articulate their experiences in a reflective manner (Bernard, 2002).

The data came directly from the participants' responses to semistructured open-ended questions developed prior to the study. Semistructured open-ended questions give participants the opportunity to respond without the interviewer influencing their responses (Creswel, 2008). When the participants needed clarification, I repeated the question and annunciation to provide clarity. I used this qualitative method to gain insight into the effectiveness of instructional coaching and the impact it has on student performance among specific ethnic/racial groups. The qualitative methods I used during this study involved recording each interview. I tested the Zoom application prior to each

interview to ensure it worked, and I gave adequate time to each participant. After the interviews were recorded, each interview was also transcribed using Otter.ai.

Data Analysis

I collected the data through interviews with eight administrators and eight teachers, selected using purposive sampling, from the schools willing to participate. The data analysis I conducted involved analyzing key words, phrases, and paragraphs based on meaning. I did this by first transcribing each of the interviews. I transcribed each interview using Otter.ai and then completed the first cycle of coding focusing on key words and phrases. After each interview was transcribed, I created a Google Doc for each transcription. In the first cycle of coding, I used a coding method and focused on spoken words and phrases to organize the data. I focused my analysis of each transcription by identifying relevant words and phrases based on the interview questions, responses, and conceptual framework. I next highlighted key words and phrases in each of the transcriptions to organize the data.

As I was going through each of the administrator and teacher interview transcripts, I left comments or codes to the side where I highlighted single words or phrases. The comments on the side were the specific words and phrases I took from the transcriptions and acted as the codes for first cycle coding. I did this so that I could refer back to it after completing the first cycle. In the comments, I sorted each question based on the key word or phrase from the participant. After thoroughly reviewing each transcript and listening to each interview, I completed the first cycle of Saldana's coding.

After completion of the first cycle of coding, I began the second cycle of coding. I took an affecting coding approach and focused on identifying emergent categories. I listened to each interview a second time. As I was listening to each of the interviews, I also followed along by reading and sorting out the comments I had left from the first cycle. Organizing key words and phrases is an approach needed for the second cycle of coding where the focus was categories and developing a deeper understanding of the research problem. In each interview, I had to interpret and analyze the information by focusing on applying the participant's responses to prior research (see Onwuegbuzie et al., 2016).

In the second cycle, I used an Excel spreadsheet to analyze the data. In the spreadsheet, I created a tab for each question and input all key words and phrases based on the question and the participant. I did a tab for Question 1 and included all administrator key words and phrases. I then created a tab for the same question and included key words and phrases from the teacher interviews. I continued this same approach for all the other questions. Once I sorted all the data, I went back and analyzed each question and the accompanying responses. I analyzed similarities and differences from the responses based on the questions. This approach led me to then develop categories. After organizing and reviewing the data, I then developed categories as shown in Table 2 and discussed under results.

Table 2

Categories from Coding

Questions	Data phrases	Codes	Categories
Q1, Q2, Q3	Instructional coach and teacher relationship, coaching teachers, teacher support and best practices, collaborative process, adult behavior changes, student achievement increases	Supporting, relationship, assist, growing, collaboratively, team	Partnership
Q5, Q6, Q7	Committed to the process, actionable feedback, staying focused on the problem of practice, celebrate the success, little shorthanded this year, practices	Time management, practice, commitment, systematic consistency, priority	Consistency
Q4, Q8, Q9, Q10	Implemented with fidelity support them in providing resources or intervening, using data to make informed instructional decisions, higher scores	Planning, differentiate, resources, learning, solutions	Support
Q11	Pushing you to that next level, encouraging you to go to that next level, skills as instructional leaders or instructional coach, with fidelity, then you learn and you grow	Learn, grow, fidelity, encouraging, collaborate, guide	Build capacity

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

The data for this basic qualitative study on perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the effectiveness of instructional coaching in addressing achievement gaps among student ethnic/racial groups was collected through semistructured interviews. The findings were analyzed for credibility through member checking. Member checking was done after the interviews. I provided each participant

with a summary of their responses to the interview questions to ensure the summary

reflected and affirmed the perceptions they shared through the interview.

Transferability

I provided a detailed experience of each interview through the use of thick

descriptions. Each interview took place via Zoom. I created a safe environment to ensure

each participant had an opportunity to fully express themselves throughout the interview.

I used the data gathered from the participants to focus on the research question. The

primary focus was to identify the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to

student achievement. Committing to the process of instructional coaching with fidelity

was a constant response. A supportive partnership with resources helped build teacher

and administrator capacity. The participants in the two districts are a part of Region 10.

The experiences shared have the potential to be shared at the regional level. There is

potential to impact outside the partnering districts. The experiences shared may be similar

to those across the region.

Confirmability

Confirmability was created in the study by transcribing all the interviews and then

using multiple cycles of coding. This established a clear data analysis through a

conceptual lens. The data interpretation came directly from the findings. I first began by

selecting the recording feature in all interviews prior to conducting them. At the

interview, I reminded the participant that recording would be taken place. Recording each

interview was done to then transcribe and have a written version of the interview. I used

the transcriptions to conduct the first and second cycle of coding. In the first cycle I

focused on key words and phrases from each participant as it relates to answering the perceptions of teachers and administrators towards the effectiveness of instructional coaching for racial/ethnic student performance. Throughout the study I kept all record of the interview videos and transcriptions in Google Drive. I was able to store and refer back to throughout the study. I went through each one of the interviews using the transcription and interview recording. I typed comments on the transcripts to assist me in maintaining confirmability. The comments on the side had key words and phrases for each question. In the second cycle of coding, I created an excel sheet where I input all key words and phrases based on the interview questions. I separated the administrator and teacher data to them compared similarities and differences. The records from the study were also kept for the purpose of the participants and school districts to have access to upon request. I ensured to keep all data neutral and focusing on the grounded data.

Reflexibility

Throughout the study I limited any biases as the researcher. Throughout the interviews I focused on not commenting on any questions. Once the participant had finished answering one interview question, I moved on to the next without comments. I did this to limit any biases or place my conceptual lens in the study. I also focused on the role of the participants rather than my own role and experiences within education. In doing so, I was able to focus on the participants' experience rather than my own. I limited my own preconceptions and values of the effectiveness of instructional coaching by sharing the purpose of the study and focusing on the participants lived experiences and perceptions. My role as a professional in education was shared to provide the participant

with prior experience. However, my own perceptions were not shared throughout the study.

Results

The research question in this qualitative study primarily focuses on administrator and teacher perceptions of instructional coaching as it affects student performance gaps between ethnic/racial groups. The following four categories emerged from this study: partnership, consistency, support, and building capacity showing how administrators and teachers perceived how coaching affected student performance gaps. Below is a detailed discussion of each of the categories that emerged from this study.

Category 1: Partnership

Participants shared how a collaborative relationship with the instructional coach guides them in their instructional practice to affect student performance gaps. Each participant shared their perceptions and highlighted the importance of partnership and collaborating in creating successful instructional coaching. A partnership is a relationship with the instructional coach where the roles and expectations are clear. Each member within the partnership has a clear role and responsibility.

When I asked Ms. Smith, a secondary administrator, how she sees instructional coaching as it relates to student achievement she shared, "I feel that it is a collaborative process that seeks to change adult behavior to positively impact student success." In addition to collaboration for the purpose of increasing student achievement Ms. Smith shared, "…using data to make inform instructional decision," and "provide all students with high quality tier one instruction." At her campus as student performance gaps

become evident Ms. Smith and her team provide an additional level of support by, "…working closely with teachers to support them in providing or intervening." Ms. Smith shared, "It's all about understanding how different ethnic groups learn best and engaging in a root cause analysis." Poverty is a factor that also impacts different student groups. Ms. Smith shared a practice to help students who follow under the poverty category. She stated, "Connect with the content, learn the content, and then demonstrate their learning with mastery." She then added, "At the end of the day, when adult behavior changes, student achievement increases."

A factor contributing to successful instructional coaching from the administrator's perspective is contribution. Ms. Smith shared the importance of collaboration to the process of instructional coaching. From the administrator's perspective Ms. Smith shared her perception of the teacher role in successful instructional by sharing, "They're part of the process, so that collaborative piece, which overlaps, will contribute to a positive or a successful coaching model." Celebrating small successes in student and teacher growth is another layer to creating a successful coaching model.

Ms. Ford, a math teacher, defined instructional coaching as "Collaborating with teachers to help them improve their lessons to have better outcomes for the student performance." Ms. Ford shared a best practice for teacher and instructional coach collaboration by, "…continually improving based on the information that they're gaining from coaches and the feedback from coaches, then the students are also going to improve. "Mr. Davis, math teacher, stated the following regarding instructional coaching, "It helps teachers grow, self-reflect, and improve their practices." In addition, Mr. Davis defined

instructional coaching as, "It is a person that is guiding a new teacher or a veteran teacher to get better and push them to that next level." Ms. Ford views the partnership as, "Collaborating with teachers to help them improve their lessons to have better outcomes for the student performance." A change Ms. Ford suggested to increase the effectiveness of instructional coaching and addressing student ethnic racial performance, "Looking at the data, figuring out why those gaps are there, certainly figuring out patterns for certain ethnicities." The change necessarily focuses on different races and ethnicities to compare performance between ethnic groups.

Participants shared how the instructional coaching partnership goes beyond getting feedback and going into the classroom and implementing. Professional development is a practice used to increase student achievement by continuing to foster growth of teachers. Mr. Davis, a math teacher participant, shared how they are able to "integrate it into the professional learning communities" and can "grow, self-reflect, improve their practices, which in terms helps improve student achievement, and in turn has helped improve school performance scores." In doing so they are able to create meaningful lesson plans and analyze student data. The lesson cycle is positively impacted by collaboration. Student gaps are addressed within the professional learning communities as collaborating with the instructional coach is taking place. Mr. Brown is an administrator who shared that in his experience with instructional coaching he has used it as a tool to develop teachers and meet them where they are. He focuses on the current level of instructional capacity of the teacher as well as then dating data and analyzing it over a period of time. Ms. Ross another administrator participant utilizes

instructional coaching to support teachers by collaborating with them so that they develop reflective practices and build instructional strategies they can then implement in their classes. Ms. Smith defines instructional coaching as a "systematic approach to build teacher capacity to then increase student achievement."

Instructional coaching can impact an administrator's own practice by also focusing on what they can learn in the partnership of instructional coaching. Administrators are able to learn from someone else. As stated by Ms. Ross, an administrator, she can then "sit down, reflect, and discuss with executive directors and colleagues." This is a process where administrators can also receive feedback and know it is not punitive. Overall, it builds capacity in every member involved in the process.

Category 2: Consistency

Consistency is referred to as an investment in the instructional coaching process to ensure teachers are receiving the support they need to positively impact student achievement. The impact instructional coaching has on student achievement is identified through commitment to the process, practicing consistency, implementing interventions, and focusing on tier one instruction. Participants reported being intentional in the process of coaching by investing time. A common answer between participants was consistency to instructional coaching. Consistency requires time investment from everyone to then create a process with fidelity.

Principal Brown shared his approach when coaching teachers. He stated, "Take where the teacher was and where to teach the students at a particular time, and you trace that or you trace that over a period of time." He has seen how it has impacted student

achievement through teacher willingness to put feedback into practice and tracking data over a period of time. He is able to coach teachers to develop interventions for students who are not mastering content. Tracking data from formative and summative assessments, analyzing, and then developing interventions for students are all factors contributing to coaching his teachers. Mr. Brown also shared, "There is a correlation if there's commitment to the process, and so as the instructional coach, or the leader goes through the practice of consistency, the teacher has a better or more effective sense of instructional deliver." He correlates instructional delivery to student achievement. Mr. Brown shared his experience when he was in charge of the English department at a previous district. He learned about instructional coaching by learning the English content and became knowledgeable in persuasive papers and annotating. His commitment to the process of coaching helped him understand just as much as the teachers themselves had learned. One of the most importance aspects shared to the success of coaching stated by Mr. Brown was, "time management is a very important fact." Mr. Brown added on, "it's very important to have time management and to protect that time for instructional coaching," and "it has to be consistent" especially if "you want to be committed, you have to be consistent."

Ms. Donald, an English teacher participant described a barrier to consistency as, "No time to make professional development," or "...observations, finding meaningful resources." The lack of time impacts the consistency in the commitment to instructional coaching. Mr. Tucker an administrator, shared how he stays consistent in the process by, "Have the time to actually meet and walk through that process," and "not allowing that

time to be eaten up by all the other crazy things that's going on in our world." He ensures to prioritize instructional coaching because as an administrator he is pulled in many directions. Instructional coaching has to stay a priority for the purpose of increasing student achievement. Mr. Tucker shared his thoughts on the direct impact of instructional coaching. He stated, "If done with fidelity, and effectively, yes it can close gaps," "working with that teacher to strengthen their areas, and in that you're addressing gaps." Mr. Tucker believes all students can learn and suggested educators need to continue to refine their practice.

A common factor impacting consistency is having multiple roles and responsibilities throughout the campus. Administrator Pratt shared the following concerns, "List of duties and assignments they have to get done." This was a concern from teachers and administrators involved in instructional coaching. Participants reported time constraints as a challenge when trying to be intentional towards instructional coaching. The most common barrier for successful coaching is time. Mr. Pratt, an administrator, shared that aside from lack of time due to multiple responsibilities on campus, another factor impacting successful coaching is the vacancies at his campus. There are limited teachers in the classroom therefore administrators and teachers have to wear multiple hats.

This creates barriers in the constancy of successful implementation of instructional coaching at the campuses. Ms. Tucker, administrator, shared the potential instructional coaching has when implemented with consistency and fidelity, "coaching conversations with the teachers and helping them see what it is that you're seeing, and to

implement those things or implement practices where they're struggling." She believes the approach of the conversation with teachers impacts effectively implementing instructional suggestions from the administrators. Mr. Brown, an administrator, shared the following factors for successful instructional coaching "time management, commitment, and building a trusting relationship." Other contributing factors require modeling of expectations, actionable feedback, and celebrating successes throughout the process. Ms. Gipson, an administrator participant, shared how consistency can be implemented into the teacher's professional or student goals at the beginning of the year.

In Texas, district teachers begin the school year by creating professional goals. Each year teachers have to then submit to their campus appraiser. Throughout the school year teachers are evaluated through the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System rubric. Appraisers use the rubric as they conduct walk-throughs and observations. It can be a topic of focus at the beginning of the year and revising throughout the school year with measurable data. Mr. Brown's perception in relation to this topic is, "There is a correlation if there's commitment to the process, and so as the instructional coach or the leader goes through the practice of consistency, instructional coaching with the teacher, then the teacher has a better or more effective sense of instructional delivery. He adds on that "it would correlate or there will be a correlation between that and student achievement."

Category 3: Support

Support is referred to as a form of facilitating and guiding a teacher to ensure they can improve their instructional practices. Mr. Pratt, an administrator, reported concerns

regarding his ability to provide support. The participant stated, "release times where I can actually go and support people, more instructionally versus operationally." The administrative focus from this participant has been operations on the campus. The perceptions of instructional coaching as it affects student gaps between ethnic groups are utilizing data to make informed decisions and getting to the root of the cause. Mr. Brown supports his teachers by implementation of tier one instruction and differentiation to address gaps. Mr. Pratt another administrator participant highlighted the importance of culturally responsive practices and focusing on getting to know student backgrounds.

Another perception of instructional coaching in addressing gaps is knowing the relevancy of instruction to the targeted audience. For example, Ms. Duce supports her educators through the implementation of the 7 Steps to a language-rich classroom. The 7 Steps is an outline created by Seidlitz and Perryman (2022) to create a language-rich interactive classroom environment for success of all students. The 7 Steps teaches students what to say when they don't know what to say due to language barriers. The 7 Steps supports students to speak in complete sentences and helps teachers to randomize when calling on students.

In relation to the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to student achievement of specific ethnic/racial student achievement, a suggestion from administrator Mr. Pratt is "hiring needs to be culturally sensitive." Therefore, focusing on the specific students at the campus and how teachers impact their way of learning. A specific demographic as stated by administrator Ms. Smith is "understanding how students who live in poverty best learn." Teachers' pedagogy then adapts to those who

they serve. The common benefits from being supported are learning from instructional coaches, providing quality professional development and focusing on solutions to address student achievement. Ms. Cox, an administrator, stated how she can "always learn something from instructional coaches." Administrator Brown stated, "I collaborate with our instructional coaches, so they help guide me drive this bus we are on." He elaborates that instructional coaches have content knowledge and administrators can continue to learn from them after not being in the classroom.

Category 4: Build Capacity

Building capacity is referred to as continuously learning from one another through the strategies and feedback instructional coaches provide in relation to student achievement. Ms. Phillips an English teacher participant views building capacity as, "Pushing you to that next level, encouraging you to go to that next level." Building capacity helps Ms. Phillips become confident in her own practice by growing and learning from one another. Ms. Cox, an English teacher, shared using music as a strategy to target specific student groups in her class. Ms. Cox has seen progress in her students building her capacity in how to best support specific student groups in her class. Ms. Gipson, an administrator, stated, "The goal is to reach that particular student base because that's our student base regardless." Students have different learning styles and getting to know them builds teacher capacity in what specific strategies best support the learning of the students in their classroom.

Administrator Brown's perception on building capacity is having, "skills as instructional leader or instructional coach, with fidelity, then you learn and you grow."

He shared, "building capacity occurs when there is commitment to the process." Ms. Ross, an administrator, was able to build capacity and shared the following statement about how they are able to, "Sit down and reflect and discuss things with my executive directors, my fellow colleagues." Ms. Phillips, an English teacher, shared how she can, "receive the feedback and knowing that is not punitive is to help me grow." Building capacity has helped participants become confident in their instructional practice, providing feedback, implementing feedback, and growing as instructional leaders. One of the participants' shared how building capacity could increase student achievement.

Building capacity is also seen in the delivery methods for different styles of learning. Focusing on specific student demographics by race or ethnicity helps educators become well-rounded on how to best address student achievement. In relation to building capacity, Ms. Ford, a math teacher, stated, "It needs to be more targeted, when looking at the data for different races and ethnicities." Mr. Williams, a science teacher, believes it requires focusing on effectiveness by making it a concern and providing additional training. Ms. Phillips, an English teacher, builds capacity when she has "Tips and tricks on how to do things more efficiently or more effectively." Principal Brown builds his own capacity from learning from the instructional coach and building his content knowledge. He shared that he learned about pedagogy because instructional coaches are a lot closer to the teachers. In one of his statements Mr. Brown stated, "I've also learned about quality professional development from instructional coaches," and "I collaborate with our instructional coaches, so they can help me guide this bus that we're on." Ms. Smith learned the following as an administrator collaborating with an instructional coach:

professional development, resources, high leverage strategies, and coaching

conversations. All these benefits were acquired from collaborating with her instructional

coach. Administrator participants shared the benefits from collaborating and are always

able to learn something from collaborating with their instructional coaches.

Ms. Coach, an administrator, shared how instructional coaches keep her on her

toes. They help her dig a little deeper and think a little hard. Another benefit she shared,

"They taught me to be solution oriented." In her experience as an administrator, she

realized everyone has problems and now focuses on solution conversations. Ms. Gipson,

an administrator, shared her experience with collaborating with an instructional coach

and stated, "They see things that I don't see sometimes or may have a better read on the

teacher because of that peer-to-peer relationship." They know teachers in a different level

than administrators and can help teach the administrator how to better support and grow

teachers to help them increase student achievement.

Summary

The qualitative research design allowed for teacher and administrator participants

to highlight their perceptions of instructional coaching as it relates to student achievement

of specific ethnic/racial groups. A total of 16 teachers and administrators were

interviewed for this student. A narrative form of the findings was reported concerning the

perceptions of administrators and teachers, factors, barriers, and the impact instructional

coaching has on student achievement. In the finding from the study four categories

emerged. After analyzing the results shared by teachers and administrator partnership

emerged as a category. Through partnership teachers perceive instructional coaching as a

practice for growth and self-reflection. Administrators shared viewing partnership as a way to build in their own instructional practice.

Another category that emerged from the results was consistency as teachers view consistency impacting their instructional delivery. The commitment to consistency as shared by administrators can impact how teachers implement feedback in the classroom directly impacting student achievement. Support also emerged through the analysis of the study. Through instructional coaching teachers and administrators feel supported with instructional improvement and addressing instructional gaps. Building capacity also emerged as a category. Instructional coaching is perceived as a practice that builds teachers' and administrators' instructional capacity. Administrators are also able to build capacity by intentionally collaborating with instructional coaches. They are able to grow teachers and have the capacity to increase student achievement.

The data analysis provided the importance of intentionality by focusing on time and commitment to ensure best practices are implemented. Teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of instructional coaching relate to the ability for teachers to be able to grow, reflect and improve on their own practices to improve student achievement. It was found through the data analysis that instructional coaching guides teachers to maximize their pedagogical practices in the classroom through collaboration and utilizing data for instructional growth in the classroom ultimately impacting student growth.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to disparities between African American, Hispanic, and European American students in state assessments in Texas. Between the two school districts for this study, 10 different schools were represented by participants in the study. Each of the campuses had participants who have worked with instructional coaches. Participants' perceptions toward instructional coaching were shared in order to analyze the effectiveness of instructional coaching as it relates to student performance of specific ethnic/racial groups. The results in the study indicate that instructional coaching aims to grow teachers' content knowledge, instructional practice, and effectiveness. In this section, I present the findings, limitations, implications, and recommendations for social change.

Interpretation of the Findings

This qualitative study gave me insight into the perceptions of administrators and teachers toward instructional coaching. The study findings revealed the importance of instructional coaching. The following categories were developed from the data collected: (a) partnership, (b) consistency, (c) support, and (d) building capacity. Instructional coaching is perceived as a collaborative partnership between the administrator, teacher, and instructional coach with the goal of addressing student achievement gaps. Findings in the study indicate that teachers perceive consistent feedback as a practice they benefit

from to grow as instructional leaders in the classroom. Teachers feel supported when there are processes in place for suggestions to allow them to teach more effectively.

A finding in the study was that building a collaborative partnership with teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators; providing actionable feedback; implementing, refining, and analyzing data; and creating interventions help to add to the coherence framework. In the coherence framework, which was used as the conceptual framework for this study, one tenet is that of deep understanding existing around the nature of improving work; therefore, coherence must be developed across groups (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). In my study, the framework served to deepen the understanding of the approach taken with instructional coaching as it relates to student achievement.

The coherence framework (Fullan & Quinn, 2016) focuses on cumulative and ongoing interactions among groups over a period. Through collaboration, individuals can build strong purposeful groups. Teachers and administrators in the study shared how partnership in developing an effective instructional coaching practice has been beneficial in building capacity. An administrator in the study shared how collaboration has supported administrators and teachers to make adult behavior changes to address student achievement gaps. Fullan and Quinn (2016) focused on practice to theory for the purpose of building capacity in teachers and administrators, and the findings in this study showed participants can take professional development and coaching conversations and put them into practice. Effective pedagogical practices can lead to gains in academic achievement. In relation to the coherence framework at the campus level, campuses need to focus on responsibility and accountability (see Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Accountability is seen

throughout the school year through teachers and administrators measuring student outcomes.

When feedback is implemented, an increase in student performance is a way to measure the effectiveness of the practice. Results of feedback can also be seen through teachers' classroom management styles. With coaching, teachers and administrators can build capacity and grow from instructional coaching, confirming Rogers et al.'s (2016) assertion that the demands of standardized assessment require building teacher autonomy to grow teachers and build their instructional capacity. Teachers can build capacity in their instructional practice by applying the feedback they receive from instructional coaching. Teacher participants shared that instructional coaching has helped them in how they manage their classes. Teachers have also benefited through a smoother lesson cycle. Administrators perceive instructional coaching as an intentional collaborative effort. Collaboration was a key feature in the examination of Anderson and Wallin (2018), who encouraged professional learning communities to foster a collaborative effort. Similarly, administrator participants perceive collaboration as an indicator for enhancing instructional coaching; the instructional coach is someone who holds content and instructional knowledge. Administrators can learn from instructional coaching and build on their instructional leadership capacity.

The responsibility of teachers and administrators is specifically seen in the state accountability system at the end of the year after students take their state exams. In the coherence framework, teachers and administrators can develop a common understanding throughout the school year to then address campus and district goals. According to the

findings from this study, teachers felt best supported when they are receiving feedback and can implement changes in the classroom based on effective suggestions made. Fidelity in the collaborative process has helped teachers perceive collaboration as a guidance in building their own instructional practices. Teachers also shared that targeted feedback becomes necessary when addressing student achievement as it relates to accountability. The findings in this study indicate teachers perceive targeted feedback as needing to focus on specific student racial/ethnic groups when analyzing student data. This could help teachers address performance gaps and track student mastery.

From the findings of this study, teachers and administrators perceive instructional coaching as a process in which each feels supported when a consistent system is implemented. This is similar to Tanner et al. (2017), who stated that instructional coaching is a consistent practice to learn, reflect, and commit to change. The lack of commitment to consistency is discouraging for teachers and administrators. Consistency constraints occur when there is a lack of time and commitment to the process. Teachers feel supported when they receive actionable feedback and are able to implement it in their classrooms. Suriano et al. (2018) conducted a case study highlighting meaningful instructional coaching strategies teachers benefit from, including when they feel supported because it creates empowerment. When teachers have access to resources, they feel supported by those involved in the instructional coaching process. Support is a category that helps teachers and administrators improve their instructional practice.

Last, the findings of this study suggest that administrators shared building capacity from the partnership with the instructional coach. Administrators view

instructional coaches as the content experts and can learn from them how to grow in their own instructional leadership. Teachers are also able to build capacity through the partnership of instructional coaching, professional development, and acquiring resources they can implement in their classrooms. Related to the coherence framework, the craft of coherence requires schools to create school-wide goals and strategies that best fit the needs of the students in tandem among administrators, coaches, and teachers. Honig and Hatch (2004) suggested for campuses and districts to build coherence by working together to continually collaborate to achieve student achievement goals.

Limitations of the Study

Through virtual interviews, I was able to ask open-ended questions and participating administrators and teachers were able to share their perceptions of instructional coaching. In Chapter 1, I addressed virtual limitations due to COVID-19. Virtual interviews limited face-to-face interaction between the participants and me. I had to focus on building trust via virtual conversations and ensure I provided a detailed explanation of my study. I did this to create a comfortable environment for the participants. Another limitation was selecting participants using purposive sampling and focusing on participants who could provide the best information for the study. The participants in the study had experience with instructional coaching and teaching in racially/ethnically diverse schools. In addition, the roles and responsibilities at the campus impact the effectiveness of instructional coaching. Confidentiality was maintained for all who participated by using pseudonyms.

Recommendations

The perceptions shared in the study will allow stakeholders in the two participating districts within Region 10 to determine a plan of actions based on the perceptions of teachers and administrators towards effective instructional coaching. When addressing coherence at a campus it is suggested that school leaders be an integral part in the implementation of sustainable change to improve conditions affecting student achievement (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Administrators in the study perceived consistency as a key for sustainability of instructional coaching.

In addition, administrators perceived fidelity in the instructional coaching process as a key factor to improve student performance at their campus. Teachers felt supported when they receive consistent feedback in the instructional coaching process and when they receive instructional strategies and resources to then implement in the classroom. Implications from the study are for positive social change by increasing student achievement through effective partnership of instructional coaches, teachers, and administrators. A consistent partnership approach may result in teachers' feeling supported and able to build capacity. Teachers may then be able to effectively implement strategies from instructional coaching.

A recommendation is for schools to create school wide goals and strategies to build coherence. The role of the coaches for coherence is to the collaborate with teachers and administrators. The instructional coaches serve to build teacher and administrator capacity. Teachers are able to implement feedback in their classrooms and focus on targeted student groups. Administrators also have the potential to grow as instructional

leaders at their campus and help build teacher capacity. Honig & Hatch (2004) suggest for school and districts to work together developing strategies that help increase student achievement. I recommend school districts support school-level processes in crafting coherence. Coherence begins at the district level to then be able to implement at the campus level. As an element of coherence, coaches have the potential to grow teachers because they are the instructional experts on campus. Student achievement can be addressed when coaches focus on collaborating with teachers and target gaps between ethnic/racial groups. Coaches can also share feedback with administrators. This feedback has the potential to create a partnership with the administrator and help them grow as instructional leaders. Teachers and administrators have the potential for feeling supported when creating a partnership with coaches.

Partnership with instructional coaches has the potential to foster teacher growth in data analysis skills. The coaches are the instructional experts on campus and are able to support teachers in data analysis. In this process coaches can model how to analyze formative and summative assessment. This partnership between teacher and coach has the potential for teachers to best support all students in their classroom. They have the potential to differentiate in the classroom and focus on student performance gaps. A data analysis of student performance helps teachers understand students' current mastery. They are able to see what they know at specific measure points. Data analysis may result in creating interventions for specific ethnic/racial student groups. The interventions are to ensure that teachers are meeting the needs of students. The targeted audience has the potential to better understand state assessed curriculum and may better perform. Accurate

supervision of data is a process in education to empower teachers in their instruction and to increase students' ownership of their own work.

Instructional coaching has the ability to empower educators to make informed decisions for the best outcome of student performance. Effective coaching also has the potential to build a campus culture with high expectations for teachers, students, coaches, and administrators. Raising the expectations has the potential to help everyone in the instructional coaching process grow and become experts in student performance. Focusing on raising expectations of everyone at the campus can potentially create a culture where students believe they can achieve their best. Instructional coaching requires guidance within school on how to best address student needs (Kane et al., 2019). Leadership working towards the transformation of instruction in the classroom should then also focus on the school culture (Day et al., 2016). Focusing on how to guide through a collaborative school culture has the potential for positive social change. I recommend further research on building a culture of high expectations when addressing low performing schools. I recommend researching the specific role of coaches in instructional coaching and what perceptions coaches have about the process. I also recommend further research on instructional coaching models where teachers, administrators, and coaches share their perceptions on how they best perceive partnership and support when addressing ethnic/racial student achievement gaps.

Implications

One implication from this study was the lack of fidelity in the implementation of instructional coaching by teachers and administrators. This can create challenges in

relationship building and developing trust (Cutrer-Parraga, 2020). Navigating teacher resistance can impact increasing student achievement due to poor implementation of instructional coaching. Therefore, another implication from the findings in this study is the impact of multiple roles and responsibilities for administrators, teachers, and instructional coaches across campus. Having to wear multiple hats limits everyone involved in the process. The challenges of roles and responsibilities limits collaboration and can create resistance due to the lack of understanding of their role in student success (Mohamad, 2016). Therefore, a third implication from the findings of this study is that the process of instructional coaching has to be systematic and requires detailed goals for success. Clear expectations can help support the process and its success. The limitations create barriers for all stakeholders as well as students because without an effective instructional coaching approach student performance can also be impacted. Instructional coaching can create positive social change and can potentially impact educators and students by increasing outcomes at the campus, district, and state levels.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding the effectiveness of instructional coaching in addressing achievement gaps among student ethnic/racial groups. In this study I analyzed the perceptions of administrators and teachers towards instructional coaching as they relate to student performance on state assessments. Analyzing data of specific ethnic/ racial performance of students on all state assessed contents helps educators get a better understanding of the need. The categories that emerged from this study were (a)

partnership, (b) consistency, (c) support, and (d) building capacity. Student achievement continues to be a topic of interest amongst educators. COVID-19 brought additional challenges and everyone in education has been impacted. Instructional coaching has the ability to improve teacher performance and student achievement. The growth of a teacher also empowers the achievement of a student.

In this chapter, I shared the findings, limitations, and recommendations based on the data gathered throughout the study. This concludes my study; however, my drive to be a change agent has only grown throughout this process. I started this journey with a goal in mind which was to research the effectiveness of instructional coaching. I look forward to continuing to learn and grow in the topic of instructional coaching. The perceptions from administrators and teachers have helped me gain a better understanding of the need on campuses, districts, and state level. My goal is to continue to address student needs through instructional coaching and focus on increasing student achievement.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Good afternoon,

My name is Judith Salazar. I am a doctoral student working on my dissertation through Walden University and was also a Spanish teacher at XYZ High School. I'll be conducting a qualitative study regarding teacher and administrator perceptions on the effectiveness of instructional coaching. I would love to ask for your participation in my study.

I will be conducting my study through interviews. Each interview will be scheduled for an hour but may be shorter or longer. I will use Zoom or Google Meets to conduct each interview. With your permission, the interview will be recorded to allow me time to go back and search for common themes being addressed in the study. During the interview I will be taking notes. I hope to be able to one day publish my dissertation and continue to positively impact XYZ district. In this email, you will be able to see the interview questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Kindest regards,

Research Question

What are administrator and teacher perceptions of instructional coaching as it affects student performance gaps between ethnic/racial groups?

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experience within education with instructional coaching such as how it has impacted your personal instructional practice, how it's been used at your campus, and the impact you've seen with student achievement.

2. How would you define instructional coaching?

3. How do you see instructional coaching as related to student achievement?

4. What are your perceptions of instructional coaching as it affects student performance gaps between ethnic groups?

5. How have you seen instructional coaching impact teachers and administrators in their own practice?

6. What factors contribute to successful instructional coaching from the administrator and teacher perspectives?

7. What factors are barriers to successful coaching from the administrator and teacher perspectives?

8. What changes would increase effectiveness of instructional coaching in addressing student ethnic/racial performance?

9. What instructional benefits have you acquired from collaborating with your instructional coach?

10. What barriers do you believe that instructional coaches face?

11. What has been your experience with differential aspect of instructional coaching based on the following ethnic groups: African American, Hispanic, and European Caucasian?

12. Is there any additional information you would like to share?
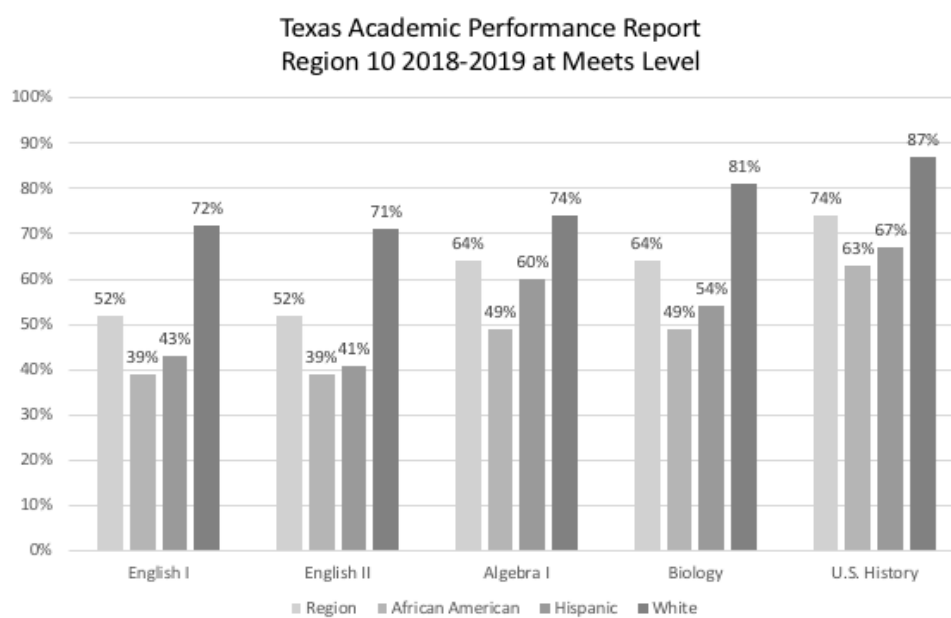
Thank you,

Appendix B: Figures

Figure 1

Texas Academic Performance Report Region 10 2018-2019 at Meets Proficiency

Figure 2

Texas Academic Performance Report Region 10 2017-2018 at Meets Proficiency